



Jagiellonian University in Kraków

Faculty of International and Political Studies

Institute of European Studies

Soso Dzamukashvili

Student ID number: 1169472

Field of study: European Studies

China's Influence on the Quality of Democracy in Georgia

Magister (MA) Thesis

written under the supervision of PhD Marcin Zubek

September 2020

Krakow, Poland

China's Influence on the Quality of Democracy in Georgia

Author

Soso Dzamukashvili

Matriculation numbers

*Jagiellonian University in Kraków – 1169472; University of Glasgow – 2409624D;
University of Tartu – 006108170269*

Supervisors

Marcin Zubek (Jagiellonian University in Kraków); Maili Vilson (University of Tartu)

Word count

24 400

University of Glasgow

International Master (intM) in Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies

University of Tartu

*Master of Arts (MA) in Social Sciences (Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian
Studies)*

Jagiellonian University in Kraków

*Magister (MA) of European Studies (Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian
Studies)*

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors Maili Vilson and Marcin Zubek, for their outstanding commitment and support to my MA thesis. Their guidance has been extremely helpful and valuable to me. I am also utterly grateful to Clair Clarke, Ammon Matthias Cheskin and Rita Hornok for their endless support and technical guidance. Additionally, I would like to thank to my classmate Phoebe Williams for her tremendous work to facilitate the communication with programme coordinators. Furthermore, I am thankful to Aaron Guerra Gonzalez, Eter Glurjidze and Guranda Bursulaia for their intellectual support and encouragement. Last but not the least, I would like to thank my parents for their advice and support.

Author's Declaration

I have written this Master's thesis independently. All viewpoints of other authors, literary sources, and data from elsewhere used for writing this paper have been referenced.

Soso Dzamukashvili

S. Dzamukashvili

/signature/

04 September 2020

The defence will take place on / date / at / time /
..... / address / in auditorium number / number /

Opponent / name / (..... / academic degree /),
..... / position /

Non-exclusive licence to reproduce thesis and make thesis public

I, Soso Dzamukashvili (personal identification code: Jagiellonian University in Kraków – 1169472; University of Glasgow – 2409624D; University of Tartu – 006108170269),

1. herewith grant the University of Tartu a free permit (non-exclusive licence) to reproduce, for the purpose of preservation and making thesis public, including for adding to the DSpace digital archives until the expiry of the term of copyright, my thesis entitled

‘China’s Influence on the Quality of Democracy in Georgia’,

supervised by PhD. Marcin Zubek (supervisor) and MA. Maili Vilson (co-supervisor)

2. I grant the University of Tartu a permit to make the work specified in p. 1 available to the public via the web environment of the University of Tartu, including via the DSpace digital archives, until the expiry of the term of copyright.

3. I am aware of the fact that the author retains the rights specified in pp. 1 and 2.

4. I certify that granting the non-exclusive licence does not infringe other persons’ intellectual property rights or rights arising from the personal data protection legislation.

Done in Salamanca, Spain on 04 September 2020

S. Dzamukashvili

/signature/

Abstract

Despite the Georgian Dream's democratic agenda to change Saakashvili's authoritarian regime and its success in achieving the closest-ever relations with the European Union, the democratic quality in Georgia witnessed a decrease during the six-year period between 2013 and 2019. Georgia thus failed to make a historical move and deliver a genuine democratic system. Simultaneously, China – an external actor promoting authoritarianism – emerged in the region and since 2013 substantially strengthened relations with Georgia. The current scholarship fails to systematically and theoretically explain the Chinese impact on the democratic quality in Georgia. Hence, the aim of the following case study is to fill the existing research gap and analyse how China has affected the quality of democracy in Georgia during the 2013-2019 period.

The study is framed under the combined theoretical framework of the neo-Institutionalism and modified Linkage and Leverage analytical model. The dependent variable of the research is the degree of democracy and the independent variable – the degree of leverage. The study assesses the degrees of economic, political, and normative leverage to evaluate China's impact on democracy in Georgia. Additionally, the analysis evaluates the European Union's as well as Russian leverages to Georgia to avoid merely looking at correlation and instead to be able to demonstrate the causality between the democratic quality in Georgia and China's leverage to Georgia. The research employs secondary statistical data collection and directed (deductive) qualitative content analysis to identify specific data and themes for the assessment of economic, political and normative leverages of China, the European Union and Russia to Georgia.

The research results show that the Chinese leverage to Georgia has been low throughout the entire 2013-2019 period and has remained considerably lower than that of the European Union. The study reveals that China's mechanisms of autocracy promotion in Georgia, i.e. socialisation and soft power, have not influenced the quality of democracy in Georgia during the period between the years 2013 and 2019. Thus, China has had no impact (or minimal) on the quality of democracy in Georgia.

Keywords: autocracy promotion, democracy, leverage, Georgia, China

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	iii
Author's declaration	iv
Non-exclusive licence to reproduce thesis and make thesis public	v
Abstract	vii
Table of Content.....	viii
List of Tables.....	x
List of Figures	xi
List of Abbreviations.....	xii
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 Literature Review	5
2.1 Promotion of authoritarianism abroad by China	5
2.1.1 Socialisation	7
2.1.2 Soft power	8
2.2 China's influence on democracy in the EaP region.....	10
2.3 China's influence on democracy in Georgia	11
2.4 Democracy and autocracy promotion by the EU and Russia	13
2.5 Conclusions	15
Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework	17
3.1 Competitive authoritarianism	17
3.2 Promotion of authoritarianism and the black knights.....	20
3.2 The neo-Institutionalist approach	22
3.2.1 Rational Choice Institutionalism.....	23
3.2.1 Sociological Institutionalism.....	23
3.2.1 Application of the Sociological and Rationalist Institutionalism framework.....	25
3.2.2 The analytical model of Linkage and Leverage.....	26

3.2.2 Limitations and alteration of the Linkage and Leverage model	29
3.3 Summary	32
Chapter 4 Research Design and Methodology	35
4.1 Case selection and timeframe	35
4.2 The degree of democracy	37
4.3 The degree of leverage	39
4.3.1 Economic leverage	40
4.3.2 Political leverage	41
4.3.3 Normative leverage	43
4.4 Data collection and analysis	44
Chapter 5 Research Results and Discussion	47
5.1 Economic leverage	47
5.1.1 Export	47
5.1.2 Import	49
5.1.2 Foreign direct investment	50
5.1.3 Summary	52
5.2 Political leverage	53
5.2.1 Civilian-military presence	53
5.2.2 Diplomatic assistance	56
5.2.2 Membership in regional organisations	59
5.2.3 Summary	60
5.3 Normative leverage	62
5.4 The overall degrees of leverage	66
Chapter 6 Conclusions	70
Bibliography	73
Appendices	91

List of Tables

Table 1 Regime types	18
Table 2 Economic leverage	40
Table 3 Calculation of economic leverage degrees	41
Table 4 Political leverage	42
Table 5 Normative leverage	43
Table 6 Georgia's membership in regional organisations	60
Table 7 Measurement of the degrees of Chinese, the EU and Russian political leverage to Georgia	61
Table 8 The degrees of Chinese, the EU and Russian normative leverage to Georgia	66

List of Figures

Figure 1 External democratic and authoritarian influences on competitive authoritarian regimes	19
Figure 2 The democracy index in Georgia	20
Figure 3 China’s strategies of autocracy promotion and their instrumentalisation through leverages.....	32
Figure 4 The amount of Georgian export to China, the EU and Russia.....	48
Figure 5 The amount of Georgia’s import from China, the EU and Russia.....	50
Figure 6 The amount of Chinese, the EU and Russian FDI in Georgia	51
Figure 7 Dynamics of the degrees of economic leverage of China, the EU and Russia to Georgia	52
Figure 8 Dynamics of the degrees of political leverage of China, the EU and Russia to Georgia	62
Figure 9 The degrees of leverage of China, the EU and Russia to Georgia.....	67
Figure 10 Dynamics of the degree of democracy in Georgia.....	68

List of Abbreviations

AA – Association Agreement

AIIB – Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

ASEAN – Association of Southeast Asian Nations

BBC – British Broadcasting Corporation

BRI – Belt and Road Initiative

CCP – Chinese Communist Party

CEE – Central and Eastern Europe

CIS – Commonwealth of Independent States

CSTO – Collective Security Treaty Organization

DCFTA – Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement

EC – European Commission

EP – European Parliament

EEU – Eurasian Economic Union

EU – European Union

EUMM – European Union Monitoring Mission

FDI – Foreign Direct Investment

FTA – Free Trade Agreement

GD – Georgian Dream

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

LL – Linkage and Leverage

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

OBOR – One Belt One Road (Initiative)

OSCE – Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

RCI – Rational Choice Institutionalism

SCO – Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

SI – Sociological Institutionalism

SREB – Silk Road Economic Belt

UN – United Nations

US – United States of America

USD – United States Dollar

Chapter 1. Introduction

After the 2012 October elections, the Georgian Dream (GD) party came to power with a democratic agenda in Georgia. (Radio Liberty 2012) In the following year, the quality of democracy recovered substantially compared to the previous years. (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2012; 2013) The newly elected incumbents continued the former government's pro-Euro-Atlantic foreign policy direction and in 2014 signed the Association Agreement (AA) with the European Union (EU) as a sovereign choice of the state. (Civil Georgia 2014) Within the AA, the Georgian government agreed to pursue the AA agenda to strengthen the rule of law, reform judiciary system, fight against corruption, protect human rights and freedoms and strengthen democratic institutions. The AA in return entailed the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) and visa-free travel within the EU for Georgian citizens. (European Union External Action 2018) Thus, EU-Georgia relations became as close as never before. Despite these changes, throughout the following six years, the democratic quality started to decrease. (Economist Intelligence Unit 2012; 2019) Thus, Georgia failed to make a historic move from the list of hybrid regimes to democracies.

Simultaneously, after Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, the Chinese foreign policy objectives, which had a low profile of the engagement in international politics, suddenly showed dramatic shifts. (Kaczmarek et al, 2019: 11) These changes followed the global economic crisis, which China efficiently managed to weather, having become the second-largest economy in the world only after the US. (The New York Times 2010) This success surged the confidence of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for devising a new strategy to boost China's international profile. Thus, in 2013, President Xi introduced ambitious plans into the country's foreign policy strategy with the intrinsic idea of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – a mega project aimed to 'shorten the distance between China and Europe' (The Guardian 2017) and to achieve economic growth, greater global political impact and addressing security concerns. (Eder 2018: 13)

Since the introduction of the new strategy, China's engagement with the wider Eurasian region increased considerably. Thus, Georgia, as a natural geographic crossroad between Europe and Asia, acquired much of a significance. Having seen this opportunity, which complied with their strategies to use the geographic location as an opportunity in fostering peace in the region, the GD incumbents started to actively support the Chinese BRI. (The Diplomat 2016) Thus, economic as well as diplomatic relations between the two countries began to deepen. (Larsen 2017: 4) In 2013, China and Georgia signed an Agreement on Technical and Financial

Cooperation to enhance ‘friendly relations between the two countries’. (Legislative Herald of Georgia 2013) Following that, Georgia joined the BRI by concluding the Memorandum of Cooperation with China. (Charaia et al, 2020: 19) In 2018, Georgia became the first country among the post-Soviet as well as Eastern Partnership (EaP) states to conclude the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Beijing. (Emerging Europe 2018) Thus, as a result of the growing relations, approximately 30 Chinese companies started to cooperate with Georgia in the spheres of infrastructure, energy, finances, agriculture, free industrial zones, logistics, telecommunications, etc. (Charaia et al, 2020: 5) Having seen an opportunity in closer engagement with China, the Georgian government started to host the Silk Road Forum in Tbilisi once in two years since 2015. (Forbes 2019) In 2019, the forum hosted more than 2000 delegates from around 60 countries. (Charaia et al, 2020: 32)

China’s influence on democracy in Eurasia has been addressed by a number of scholars. The literature on growing Sino-Georgia relations, however, has been largely overlooked China’s impact on the democratic quality in Georgia. Despite increasing in number, the studies have remained undertheorised. Hence, the broader literature exhibits conceptual gaps and empirical limitations. The studies are not built on theoretical and analytical mechanisms, and their nature is widely semi-academic, being based on the authors’ inductive assumptions without employing much of empirical evidence.

Furthermore, the preponderance of works on Chinese influences on Georgian domestic and foreign policies demonstrates another gap with regard to unsystematic research on the EaP or post-Soviet region at large, making the studies more generic and assumptive. Apart from that, the claims of the studies vary considerably and are sometimes contradictory. While Georgian authors argue that China does not and will not impact the democratic quality in Georgia (Papava and Charaia 2017; Papava 2017), the international scholars claim the opposite. (Makocki 2017; Makocki 2018; Eder 2018; Kaczmarek et al, 2019)

The following research tries to narrow the existing research gaps in the literature, i.e. the lack of empiricism and theorisation, and explore how China has affected the democratic quality in Georgia during the period between the years 2013 and 2019. Thus, the objective of the thesis is to answer the following main research question:

Q: *How does China influence the degree of democracy in Georgia?*

The following study is based on empirical evidence and is framed under the combined analytical framework of neo-Institutionalist theories, i.e. Rational Choice and Sociological

Institutionalism, and analytical model of the Linkage and Leverage (LL).¹ Drawing on the abundant literature on autocracy promotion, China is regarded as an actor promoting authoritarianism abroad in the following thesis.

According to the theoretical framework of Rationalist and Sociological Institutionalism, strategies of autocracy promotion are instrumentalised through leverage. Thus, the study assesses China's leverage to Georgia throughout the period between 2013 and 2019.² Evaluating the degrees of leverage reveals the degree of Georgia's vulnerability (dependence) on China and to what extent the latter has hindered democracy in the former throughout the period under the study. The LL model is modified based on studies on the promotion of authoritarianism, which employ this analytical framework. (Lebanidze 2019; Lebanidze and Grigalashvili 2018) Thus, the thesis answers the question:

Q1: *What are the degrees of China's political, economic, and normative leverage to Georgia?*

Answering this question, the study reveals how strong China's strategies of autocracy promotion are in Georgia and whether a causal inference can be argued between the democracy degree in Georgia and China's leverage to Georgia. With the purpose to avoid illustrating a mere correlation, the research assesses the leverage degrees of other regional actors, which in the broader literature promote democratic or authoritarian regimes in the post-Soviet region – the EU and Russia, respectively. In order to claim that China influences the democratic quality in Georgia, the independent and dependent variables need to demonstrate correlation, and the Chinese leverage to Georgia should outscore that of the EU as well as Russia. Thus, the thesis answers the following questions as well:

Q2: *What are the degrees of the EU's political, economic, and normative leverage to Georgia?*

Q3: *What are the degrees of Russia's political, economic, and normative leverage to Georgia?*

The thesis is divided into six chapters. While the following first chapter introduces the study and its objective, the second chapter provides a discussion of the literature on the topic and identifies the research gap. The objective of the state of art is to provide existing knowledge concerning the subject, promotion of authoritarianism by China, its strategies and impact on the EaP region and Georgia. The review looks at other actors which promote democracy and/or

¹ The analytical framework of Linkage and Leverage is altered in the study. (See chapter 3)

² See chapter 3

authoritarianism in the post-Soviet region, such as the EU and Russia. Consequently, the chapter introduces the research problem, which is addressed in the thesis.

The third chapter of the study evolves around the existing theoretical issues pertaining to the regime trajectories and democracy quality changes in the post-Soviet states. Initially, the first section discusses the concept of competitive authoritarianism and its importance for studying changes in the democratic quality in the post-Soviet states. After that, the second section introduces the concepts of autocracy promotion and the black knights, which have immense significance for understanding the variation of democracy. The third and fourth sections introduce the theories of Rational Choice (RCI) and Sociological Institutionalism (SI) and the analytical model of Linkage and Leverage (LL), which is applied to the research in a modified form. After the introduction of the LL analytical model, the fourth section explains the alteration of the model and its benefits for studying the external actors' democratic as well as authoritarian influences on the democratic quality in Georgia.

The fourth chapter introduces the research design and methodology employed in the thesis. The first section discusses the case selection and timeframe. The next section provides conceptualisation and operationalisation of the dependent variable – the degree of democracy. The first section also provides a discussion on the democracy concept and the approach of democracy degree assessment employed in the study. The third section presents the independent variable of the study – the degree of leverage – and explores its categories (economic, political, normative) and their operationalisation. The last section of the chapter presents the data collection methods.

Thereafter, the fifth chapter discusses the research results and addresses the research question – *how does China affect the quality of democracy in Georgia?* The study assesses China's leverage to Georgia and thus answers the main research question. Lastly, the thesis reveals the (non)causality between the dependent and independent variables, i.e. the degree of democracy in Georgia and China's leverage to Georgia. The last chapter draws conclusions and summarises the research.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

The following chapter explores the broader literature on the promotion of authoritarianism by China. The first section of the chapter explores the scholarship on the autocracy promotion by China abroad. The section presents studies addressing the Chinese domestic and foreign policy goals, which are key to understanding why China promotes authoritarian regime. The section also reviews the literature concerning China's strategies of autocracy promotion.

After reviewing China's autocracy promotion abroad, the second and fourth sections of the chapter focus on the literature regarding the Chinese influence on democracy in the EaP region and Georgia. The following sections look at the scholarship on democratic and authoritarian regime promotion by the EU and Russia, respectively. The last part of the chapter briefly summarises the review and identifies existing research gaps in the literature and the main puzzle of the study.

2.1 Promotion of authoritarianism abroad by China

In the late 1970s, after the death of Mao Zedong, a new leadership led by Deng Xiaoping opted for the change of the revolutionary agenda in the Chinese foreign policy, so that it was in compliance with a domestic reformatory policy. The country's foreign policy became a tool for the Communist Party to remain in power. Jiang Zemin, who co-appointed Xiaoping, stated, 'China should bide its time, hide its brightness, not seek leadership, but do certain things.' (Shambaugh 2013: 18-19) China started to transform domestically but kept a low international profile. The turning point in the situation was the beginning of the 2000s when the ruling party started to immerse the state in multilateral cooperation with neighbouring states in the framework of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). While keeping away from military alliances, China intended to pursue diplomacy for the sake of economic aspirations. Thus, the government sought for establishing bilateral economic relations and finding new markets for the Chinese export. (Kaczmarek et al, 2019: 11)

In 2008-2009, the world witnessed the global economic crisis, which had a game-changer impact on China's foreign policy. The crisis affected the country only negligibly and as a result, having become the second-largest economy in the world after the United States (US), the ruling

party's confidence surged for devising a new strategy to enhance China's international status. (Hameiri and Jones 2016: 72-98)

In 2012, Xi Jinping came to power and changed the country's foreign policy strategy, which previously was utterly limited in terms of engagement in international politics. The new president restructured institutions and further centralised policymaking processes. Xi introduced an ambitious plan into the country's international agenda with the central idea of 'Greater Eurasia' to achieve economic growth and greater international political impact (Eder 2018: 13), aiming at circumventing democratising impact from the West. (Bader 2015: 24- 25) Thus, in 2013, Beijing started to promote the new vision of the Silk Road, embodied through the BRI, for connecting to countries in the neighbourhood as well as wider Eurasia and eventually to Europe. The initiative soon became an intrinsic part of the Chinese foreign policy with the aim of developing infrastructure between China and Europe to promote China's intentions internationally. (Hong'e 2017) Beijing created additional instruments and multilateral institutions, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Silk Road Fund in order to facilitate the execution of this ambitious plan. (Makocki 2018: 3) The CCP has expected to achieve security in the region, maintaining high economic growth as well as regime stability and international status as a regional power in Eurasian. (Blackwill and Tellis 2015: 10-17)

China's foreign strategies, for the most part, pertain to the country's domestic politics. (Kaczmarek et al, 2019: 10) China's ruling party has a rationale to rival democracy promotion since it is problematic for the authoritarian governing system. Hence, it countervails democratic values and norms that promote Western interventions into autocratic states and by doing so, it supports regime stability abroad and fosters persistence of authoritarian states' blocks. (Bader 2015: 24) For instance, China often rejects resolutions of the UN (United Nations) Security Council pertaining to autocratic regimes. (Kleine-Ahlbrandt and Small 2008) The CCP's major objective is to maintain the regime and ruling elites' legitimacy within China. Thus, the foreign policy goals largely derive from these domestic factors and provide an effective environment for the internal legitimacy of the ruling party. The protection of the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity is perceived as non-interference in domestic politics. (Kaczmarek et al, 2019: 10)

The CCP represents a non-democratic approach to governance, which sees the threat in democracy diffusion and pressure from the West. (Gat 2007) Hence, the party has been actively

promoting authoritarianism in the Eurasian region, especially since the Colour Revolutions in the post-Soviet countries. For instance, as a response to these revolutions in the former Soviet space, the incumbent CCP toughened the restrictions on non-governmental organisations inside China. (Wilson 2009: 373) The country, similarly to Russia, started to utilise regional organisations and initiatives for this purpose, for instance, the SCO and ASEAN. (Ambrosio 2010) The scholarship on the promotion of authoritarianism argues that China actively supports autocratic regimes and hinders their democratisation in the region. (Burnell 2010; Gat 2007)

Unlike the 20th century, when democracy was threatened by communist and fascist autocrats with aggressive means, nowadays autocracy promoting actors, such as China and even Russia, choose to shift global conditions in a way that the promotion of democracy becomes difficult and incumbents' capacity to pursue their autocratic agenda in third states is boosted. (Ambrosio 2012: 385; Obedykova and Libman 2015: 2) Thus, autocracy promotion through alternative support strengthens fully authoritarian but also competitive authoritarian regime incumbents, who already display authoritarian 'tendencies and practices'. (Ambrosio 2010: 377- 378) These autocratic external actors – the black knights – become role models for other states to follow. Hence, enjoying the authoritarian support from the black knights, the Western democratising influence on target states decreases and as a result, democratising efforts fail to bring changes. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 41)

Some scholars argue that China does not promote autocracy and merely countervails political instability and shortcomings in the region, following its own pragmatic economic, political and security goals. (Bader et al, 2010: 82) However, even in this case with this pragmatic approach, Beijing still leans towards promoting autocracy, since it impacts the balance between contesting political parties in third states and favours autocrats. (Bader 2015: 24) The official Chinese rhetoric also asserts that Beijing does not interfere in third states' domestic politics, albeit it supports incumbents by resources and development projects, stabilising semi-authoritarian and authoritarian regimes. (Bader 2015: 25)

2.1.1 Socialisation

The growing literature on autocracy promotion by China is largely framed under the neo-Institutionalist theory, according to which, there are two strategies which China pursues to promote authoritarianism abroad: socialisation (integration) and diffusion of norms (soft

power). These strategies are China's efforts to closely integrate with third states and to promote authoritarian norms and values internationally. (Schweickert et al, 2012; Ambrosio 2010; 2012)

It is argued that China does not utilise hard power or conditionality in the Eurasian region, unlike Russia. (Ambrosio 2010: 376) On the contrary, Beijing opts for using 'peaceful' political support and economic cooperation, which are referred to as socialisation strategies. (Schweickert et al, 2012: 6) Socialisation follows the logic of appropriateness and implies establishing economic and political ties with target states. (Schweickert et al, 2012: 3- 4)

China, as a powerful agent, shifts the international norms through political ties with target states. (Pu 2012: 347) For instance, Beijing, along with Russia, has deepened the institutionalisation of the SCO, which aims at delegitimising democracy promotion and protecting autocratic incumbents in the organisation's member-states. (Ambrosio 2009: 9) Thus, one of the major aims of political integration is to shift third states' normative preferences through regional organisations and institutions, such as the SCO. (Pu 2012: 355- 358; Diamond et al, 2016: 30- 31) For instance, China invited Azerbaijan and Armenia to the SCO as dialogue partners, which was also aimed at halting the influence of Western organisations on both states. (Eder 2018: 17- 19) Through the SCO, the CCP seeks to maintain the *status quo* of (semi)authoritarian regimes in the Eurasian region. (Ambrosio 2008: 1341)

Apart from political integration, China pursues establishing dense economic ties in order to increase its economic leverage to target states, for instance, through bilateral trade. (Schweickert et al, 2012: 17) This strategy is often referred to as the 'doing-business' approach. (Ambrosio 2012: 382) Bader (2015: 24) argues that in order to sustain the regime and circumvent Western democratising 'dominos', the CCP utilises close political as well as economic ties with states in the Eurasian region. Establishing and strengthening relations with target states is aimed at undermining democratisation processes and thus keeping the Western democracy reinforcing influence as weak as possible. (Chen and Kinzelbach 2014: 401)

2.1.2 Soft Power

The broad literature on autocracy diffusion claims that the regime is promoted from China, even if Beijing does not have any intention. (Burnell 2010) This type of autocracy promotion, according to Obydenkova and Libman (2015), is an 'unintended' type of promotion. In this context, 'prestigious' states with huge economic and military capabilities (Gilpin 1981: 3), such

as China, utilise their ‘enough weight’ and try to lead third states towards accepting certain authoritarian values or norms. (Ambrosio 2010: 386- 387; Gat 2007) The possibility of normative adoptions by target states increases when the ties are strong (Levitsky and Way 2014: 152), and external policies are deemed efficient, even if they do not fit target states’ domestic conditions. (Florini 1996: 375) Thus, China’s increasing international prominence and immense soft power are aimed at becoming a normative role model for other states. (Ambrosio 2010: 387)

China has achieved economic growth and successfully circumvented democratising pressures. It has not only rejected democracy and countervailed global democracy promotion, but ‘reinvigorated a rival model of development with clear international appeal, a strong-hand approach to political and economic modernisation.’ (Gerrits 2008: 14) Hence, China promotes authoritarian norms through strengthening its soft power to become a role model for third country incumbents. (Cooley 2015)

The Chinese authoritarian ruling system consists of autocracy and a market economy – ‘illiberal capitalism’, which rivals democracy globally. (Barma and Ratner 2006: 57) The CCP has utilised economic growth in China along with social and political order and established the so-called ‘China model’ or ‘Beijing Consensus’, which serves as an alternative to the democratic path to development. (Ambrosio 2010: 382; Ambrosio 2012: 383) The Beijing Consensus became an alternative model after the CPP managed to smoothly overcome the 2007-2009 Great Recession as opposed to the West, which struggled to weather the crisis a great deal. (Zhao 2010: 433) The model has been praised by a number of governments around the world. (Ambrosio 2010: 382) Thus, the ruling party has pursued a strategy to enhance its influence (Kurlantzick 2007: 5) and to gain a ‘soft power appeal’ globally. (Cooley 2015: 58- 60) Even the Russian government *per se* has sought to follow the Chinese way of promotion of authoritarianism. (Levy 2009) The spread of the Chinese authoritarian model is not led by coercion or conditionality, but the Chinese success, which makes it be deemed a role model by third states’ incumbents. (Ambrosio 2010: 383) According to Börzel (2015: 7), China opts to increase its soft power since it can be more attractive for target states than the direct promotion of authoritarianism through conditionality and coercive measures. (Börzel 2015: 7)

2.2 China's influence on democracy in the EaP region

There is thin literature on autocracy promotion by China in the EaP region, which explores whether China influences regimes in the region. The majority of the studies are semi-academic and lack theoretical framework and empiricism. In this regard, the study of Kaczmarek et al. (2017) is the most systematic. The research is framed under the theory of Limited Access Orders (LAO) and Open Access Orders (OAO) to explain China's influence in the EaP states. According to this approach, the countries under the interaction of other powers are influenced and become more closed politically and economically or opened in the same terms. If the interaction is unequal with a politically and economically more powerful state, the influence is more extensive and makes a less powerful country more similar to the political regime of the stronger state. (Kaczmarek et al, 2019: 6)

Kaczmarek et al. argue (2019) that China's expansion across the EaP region leads to benefits as well as challenges with regard to the states' democratic quality. The article examines two cases of Ukraine and Belarus to explore the Chinese impact on the social and political orders. China is an unbalanced closure limited access order, a politically closed and economically open actor, supporting countries' economic openness due to the BRI's economic aims. (Kaczmarek et al, 2019)

China supports the idea of balancing the EU and Russia with regard to politics and security and diversification of the economy. That is why Beijing has criticised Ukraine's pro-Western political direction pursued after the Maidan, and it has supported Belarus' more 'balancing strategy'. (Kaczmarek et al, 2019: 18) China's economic engagement with the EaP countries is not very large. Therefore, the country's influence on these states' domestic policies is somewhat limited. The mechanisms of influence are indirect and pertain to the governments and their economic policies. Beijing fosters economic reforms which are not in line with those of the EU since the latter supports economic efficiency by raising market competition and openness of countries' economies. (Kaczmarek et al, 2019)

Other semi-academic studies exploring China's impact on democratic quality in the EaP region present a similar perspective on the incompatibility of Chinese companies with liberal and democratic values supported by the EU in the region. China-funded projects counter democratic norms, which the EaP states are 'signed up to' under the AA agenda. (Makocki 2017: 2) They tend to involve corruption and strengthen the influence of oligarchs. For instance, Chinese company COVEC, which built a road in Poland, demanded the exemption from labour law for

its workers. (Makocki 2017: 2) Moreover, being supportive of authoritarian regimes, China does not favour democracy and democratic transitions through revolutions. Thus, the CCP tries to reduce the Western influence through FDI in hybrid regimes of the EaP states. The investment projects are not transparent and counter good governance and the rule of law. These economic endeavours continue to challenge democratic reforms and policies in the region. (Rolland 2018)

Another perspective for explaining China's negative influence on democracy in the EaP region focuses on China's close relations with Russia. According to Makocki (2017: 3; 2018: 27), the Chinese approach towards the EaP is 'a double-edged sword', meaning that Beijing's close political and security relations with Russia and its acknowledgement of the Kremlin's interests in the EaP largely hinder the region's democratisation. For instance, despite China's aid to Ukraine to circumvent the Russian transit ban, the Chinese construction companies participated in building a bridge between Russia and occupied Crimea. (Makocki 2017: 3) Furthermore, China did not allow Ukraine and Moldova to join the 16+1 initiative, which could have led to the states' further integration with the EU-member Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. (Makocki 2017: 3)

Another strand of the literature introduces a new approach which puts the emphasis on the economic vulnerability of the EaP states towards China. This semi-academic literature claims that while China's active engagement is beneficial, the EaP states' economic as well as political vulnerability to China increases. Thus, they can become excessively dependent on Beijing due to having immense debts, which undermines their democratic reforms. (Eder 2018) The BRI is a geostrategic project, which can influence the EaP countries' foreign policy directions, hinder the region's integration with the EU and democratic development. (Smolnik 2018) The CCP has an ambitious plan under the framework of the BRI to dominate the Eurasian continent, which affects geopolitical reality in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus. China aims at undermining the Western influence in Eurasia. (Rolland 2018)

2.3 China's influence on democracy in Georgia

Apart from the literature on China's influence on the EaP states' democracy quality, there are growing semi-academic studies discussing China's impact on democracy in Georgia. The papers, for the most part, concentrate on the economic aspects of Sino-Georgian relations. It is

worthwhile to mention that the literature mainly emerged between 2017 and 2018, during the period when Georgia and China concluded the FTA. (Emerging Europe 2018)

One of the major approaches of the discussion on China's influence on the quality of democracy in Georgia, emphasises China's *rapprochement* with Russia and their regional competition with the EU. The studies argue that due to high compatibility between the Russian and Chinese interests in the Eurasian region (Papava and Charaia 2017; Mailyan 2015), the two actors can merge the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and BRI under a single initiative. (Papava 2017) From this perspective, China's active engagement with Georgia can lead to negative effects on the country's democratic quality. (Papava and Charaia 2017) Thus, the GD's pursuit of strengthening ties with China undermines Georgia's domestic doctrine regarding the democratic and pro-Western orientation of the nation. Georgia will find it hard to find the *modus vivendi* between the previous (Saakashvili's) pro-European direction of foreign policy and the engagement in Chinese economic initiatives. (Mailyan 2015)

On the contrary to the previous approach, the similar studies argue that while Russia's main ambition is geopolitical, economic objectives remain the priority for Beijing. Even though the CCP recognises the post-Soviet states as Russia's sphere of interests, the ruling party does not follow Mackinder's Heartland theory and thus, the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) does encompass norms and limitations to impose on the participant countries of the project, such as Georgia. Beijing displays interests towards infrastructural investments, bolstering the development of communication and transportation with the EU through the Batumi, Poti and Anaklia³ ports. (Papava and Charaia 2017)

Furthermore, the same strand of the literature argues that Russia has no capacity to shift China's economic interests towards geopolitics. This is because Beijing is economically much stronger than Moscow, and therefore, Russian cannot influence the Chinese foreign policy. (Papava and Charaia 2017) Furthermore, the CCP has been strengthening relations with the EU, and it is unlikely that the party pairs with Moscow to pose a threat together against the EU and its democracy reinforcing influence in the EaP countries. (Dijk and Martens 2016) Apart from that, having concluded the FTA with Georgia, China merely aims at investing in the country. Hence,

³ The construction of the Anaklia Port has not yet finished. On 9th January, the government of Georgia cancelled the deal with the Anaklia Development Consortium and the implementation of the project has been postponed for an indefinite period of time. (Glurjidze and Dzamukashvili 2020)

China and Georgia are equal partners, despite the fact that they are different-sized countries. This means that the former does not impact the latter's domestic policies. (Charaia et al, 2018) China's geopolitical aim is to adapt the multipolar world tendencies, i.e. to decrease the US global influence, which does not necessarily imply promoting authoritarianism in Georgia. (Larsen 2017)

Larsen (2017) presents another perspective claiming that China does not have any influence on Georgia's democratic quality, focusing on Georgia's diversification of trade and economic ties and geographic distance. Although Georgia is an extremely small country in comparison with China, the risk that Georgia similarly to the Asian small states becomes politically overdependent on China is very low due to immense distance between the two countries and Georgia's close economic relations with other actors.

2.4 Democracy and autocracy promotion by the EU and Russia

Unlike the Chinese influence on the democratic quality in the former Soviet states, the literature has given much attention to the EU and Russia. The scholarship on the promotion of democracy and authoritarianism views the EU as a democracy reinforcing power, while Russia is deemed an autocracy promoting actor in post-Soviet space. (Levitsky and Way 2010; Lebanidze 2019; Schweickert et al, 2012; Ambrosio 2009) The following section will briefly discuss the democracy and autocracy promotion by the EU and Russia in the post-Soviet space, respectively.

The EU's main interest towards its eastern neighbouring post-Soviet states is 'to strengthen the prosperity and stability', which serves to boost the EU's security. (Council of the European Union 2009: 23) The EU perceives state failure, social instability and regional conflicts as security threats. (Council of the European Union 2009: 23- 30) In order to increase its security, the EU looks for partnership and cooperation with the former Soviet states in its neighbourhood. This cooperation is undertaken on the basis of democratic values, such as human rights and rule of law. (Council of the European Union 2009: 23)

The EU has several strategies to promote democracy in the post-Soviet space/EaP. These strategies are political dialogue and soft power. (Lebanidze 2019: 182, 186- 187; Börzel 2010; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005) The democratising strategies not only led to the

democratisation of the 2004 EU enlargement states but targets states in the EU's neighbourhood as well. (Gawrich et al, 2009)

The EU's main democratising power – conditionality – is often criticised by some scholars due to the absence of the membership prospective for the states in its neighbourhood. (Schimmelfennig 2005) Thus, conditionality beyond the EU borders is weak or almost non-existent. (Lebanidze 2019: 21)

Political dialogue is a type of democracy diffusion and follows the logic of appropriateness, which is explained by Sociological Institutionalism. (Börzel and Risse 2000: 7) Through this strategy, the EU aims at promoting its democratic values in neighbouring post-Soviet states. (Börzel and Pamuk 2011: 19- 20) Due to the weakness of the EU's conditionality beyond the organisation, the EU actively employs political dialogue (Börzel and Pamuk 2011: 10) to promote democratic values as the fundamental norms for cooperation with its neighbours. The example of political dialogue is the process of AA ratification with Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia. (Lebanidze 2019: 22)

As opposed to the EU, as it was aforesaid, the broader literature considers Russia as an autocracy promoting power. (Levitsky and Way 2010; Ambrosio 2009; Tolstrup 2009; Obydenkova and Libman 2015) Russia perceives the post-Soviet states as the 'zone of privileged interests'. (Ambrosio 2012: 383; Schweickert et al, 2012: 4) Thus, the Russian government's objective is to maintain the former Soviet states' high economic and political dependence on Moscow. The Kremlin's main foreign policy goal is to avoid the Western democratising influence and spread of Colour Revolutions in its neighbourhood as well as the wider Eurasian region. (Lebanidze 2019: 182, 185) For instance, NATO is deemed the major threat in the Russian National Security Concept document, perceiving itself as a 'power-centre' in the international multipolar system. (Lebanidze 2019: 129) Russia established regional organisations, such as Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), EEU, the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) (Lebanidze 2019: 128, 293- 294) to promote authoritarianism and rival the democratising influences. (Schweickert et al, 2012: 4- 5)

Russia employs strategies to destabilise 'disobedient regimes'. (Lebanidze 2019: 186) The actor utilises conditionality to change third states' incumbents' decisions. Conditionality follows the logic of consequences and aims at shifting the ruling parties' preferences through incentives ('carrots') or coercion ('sticks'). (Schweickert et al, 2012) For instance, Russia utilised its

coercive ‘sticks’ against Georgia in 2008 and employed ‘carrots’ of energy subsidies in different post-Soviet states. (Lebanidze 2019: 183)

As for the strategy of diffusion of norms (soft power), there is a debate in the literature in this regard. Some scholars argue that Russia promotes authoritarianism and non-democratic values abroad through its soft power. (Ambrosio 2009; Schweickert et al, 2012) Others agree that Russia has a negative impact on democratic quality, albeit they argue that Russia does not aim at spreading authoritarian values abroad through its normative power. (Way 2015) Lebanidze (2019: 183) mentions that, when Russian coercive power in Georgia and Ukraine did not bring desired results for the Kremlin, the latter did not have soft power tools to employ instead of opting for other coercive instruments.

2.5 Conclusions

The chapter reviewed the abundant literature on autocracy promotion by China and its influence on the democratic quality in the EaP region and Georgia. The chapter also presented the literature on democracy and autocracy regime promotion by the EU and Russia.

The state of art showed that there is a broad literature on the promotion of authoritarianism by China. The studies are mainly framed under the Institutional approach since it addresses the autocracy promotion strategies following the logic of appropriateness. These strategies are socialisation (integration) and the diffusion of autocratic norms through soft power.

As for China’s influence on democratic quality in the EaP as well as Georgia, there is a growing number of studies which remain undertheorised. The literature shows conceptual as well as empirical limitations with regard to analysing China’s influence in Georgia as well as the EaP at large. The majority of papers are not based on comprehensive theoretical and analytical mechanisms. Thus, the preponderance of the studies are semi-academic and are primarily based on the authors’ inductive assumptions.

In addition, a large number of works do not employ empirical data and are generic. There are contrasting arguments in the papers. For instance, the Georgian authors claim that China does not affect democracy in Georgia (Papava and Charaia 2017; Papava 2017) as opposed to the foreign scholars, who argue the opposite. (Makocki 2017; Makocki 2018; Eder 2018; Kaczmarek et al, 2019) Apart from that, the major foci of the research pertain to the discussion on China’s influence through economic perspectives. Normative and political aspects remain

rather understudied. The following study tries to address the existing research gaps in the literature and analyse how China affects the democratic quality in Georgia from economic, political, and normative perspectives.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Framework

The following chapter introduces the theoretical framework of the thesis. The first section of the chapter presents the concept of competitive authoritarianism and its importance for understanding changes in the quality of democracy. The second section introduces the concepts of authoritarian promotion and the black knights, which are central in studying changes of regimes and quality of democracy. The third section presents the neo-Institutionalist approach, i.e. the theories of Sociological and Rational Choice Institutionalism, which will be applied to the study. The neo-Institutionalist theories see the international environment, i.e. external influence, as a determinant factor, explaining changes in democratic quality. (Bulmer 2008: 56)

After introducing the new Institutional approach, the chapter presents the analytical model of Linkage and Leverage, which evaluates external influences on changes in the quality of democracy. The combination of the neo-Institutionalist theories and the analytical model of Linkage and Leverage will serve to evaluate Chinese, Russian and the EU's influence on the degree of democracy in Georgia.

3.1 Competitive authoritarianism

Competitive authoritarianism is an important concept for understanding changes in democratic quality. (Levitsky and Way 2002; 2010; 2020; Lebanidze 2019) The regime outcomes and changes in democratic quality in the former Soviet states after the end of the Cold War were studied merely from the democratisation perspective. (Carothers 2002: 9- 10) Thus, democratic transition in these states was taken for granted, and the regime outcomes were analysed against a large number of inconsistent categories, such as transitional, flawed, façade, managed, electoral, defect democracies, etc. (Collier and Levitsky 1997; Ottaway 2003; Levitsky and Way 2010; Vanderhill 2013; Schedler 2002) These definitions, however, fail at explaining diverse regime trajectories in these states. (Levitsky Way 2010: 3) The reason is that there is a lack of empirical foundation for the scholarship, which assumes that in the post-Cold war period, all these hybrid regimes started to pursue the path of democratisation. The democratisation theory 'has been an insufficient guide' with regard to explaining regime trajectories since its primary focus has been 'successes rather than failures'. (Lynch 2004: 341-342) Thus, considering the relative characteristics of the degree of democracy, the outcome of the political transformation does not have to be necessarily democratic. (Lebanidze 2019: 29) Instead, these regimes usually neither democratise nor become authoritarian and therefore fall

in ‘the grey zone’, which, according to Thomas Carothers (2002: 9), is a regime category between the aforesaid two. These hybrid regimes are referred to as competitive authoritarian by Levitsky and Way (2010)

	Democracy	Competitive Authoritarianism	Full Authoritarianism
Status of core democratic institutions (elections, civil liberties)	Systematically respected. deemed the only way to power.	Exist but are systematically violated. Are deemed the major way to power.	Do not exist or have a façade status. Not considered to be a route to power.
Status of opposition	Competes with incumbents in equal conditions.	Major opposition is legal and competes but in unequal conditions which favour incumbents.	Opposition is banned, or operate underground or is in exile.
Level of uncertainty	High	Medium - between democracy and full authoritarianism	Low

Table 1. Regime types. (*Levitsky and Way 2010: 13*)

As table 1 demonstrates, competitive authoritarian regimes are based on democratic institutions, albeit their major peculiarity is the abuse of power by ruling elites for obtaining considerable advantage over their opponents. The regimes are referred to as ‘competitive’ since political opponents are still able to compete. Nevertheless, the contest field is significantly tilted towards the incumbents. Therefore, political competition remains unfair. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 3-5; Levitsky and Way 2006: 380) Of note, competitive authoritarian elites utilise external incentives for their political preferences and survival strategies. They ‘push their political agenda’, please their electorates and consolidate their control. (Ademmer and Börzel 2013: 586)

The concept of competitive authoritarianism is the centrepiece in studying changes in democratic quality and regime trajectories. Being in ‘grey zone’, on the threshold between authoritarianism and democracy, the competitive authoritarian regimes show a great deal of susceptibility to external democracy reinforcing and autocracy promoting influences. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 4) Due to these pressures, competitive authoritarian regimes do not democratise, become authoritarian or in some cases continue to remain hybrid regimes with varying degrees of democratic quality. Some competitive authoritarian regimes democratise or become fully authoritarian. (Erdmann 2011: 8- 9; Levitsky and Way 2010: 4, 41)

One of the major factors why competitive authoritarian regimes do not transform into democracies is due to external influence from non-democratic regional actors – the black knights. The black knights promote authoritarianism through direct and/or indirect strategies and interfere in democratisation processes. (Vanderhill 2013: 23- 24) Under these external influences, hybrid regimes with a mixture of democratic and authoritarian features tilt more towards democracy or authoritarianism across time. (Lebanidze 2019: 29)



Figure 1. External democratic and authoritarian influences on competitive authoritarian regimes. *Author’s elaboration*

Between 2013 and 2019, Georgia has been continuously classified as a hybrid regime, showing both democratic and authoritarian characteristics, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit (2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019) as well as ‘partly free’ according to Freedom House (2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019). Therefore, in the following study, it will

be considered as a competitive authoritarian regime. The democracy degree in Georgia during the period between 2013 and 2019 is depicted in figure 2 below.

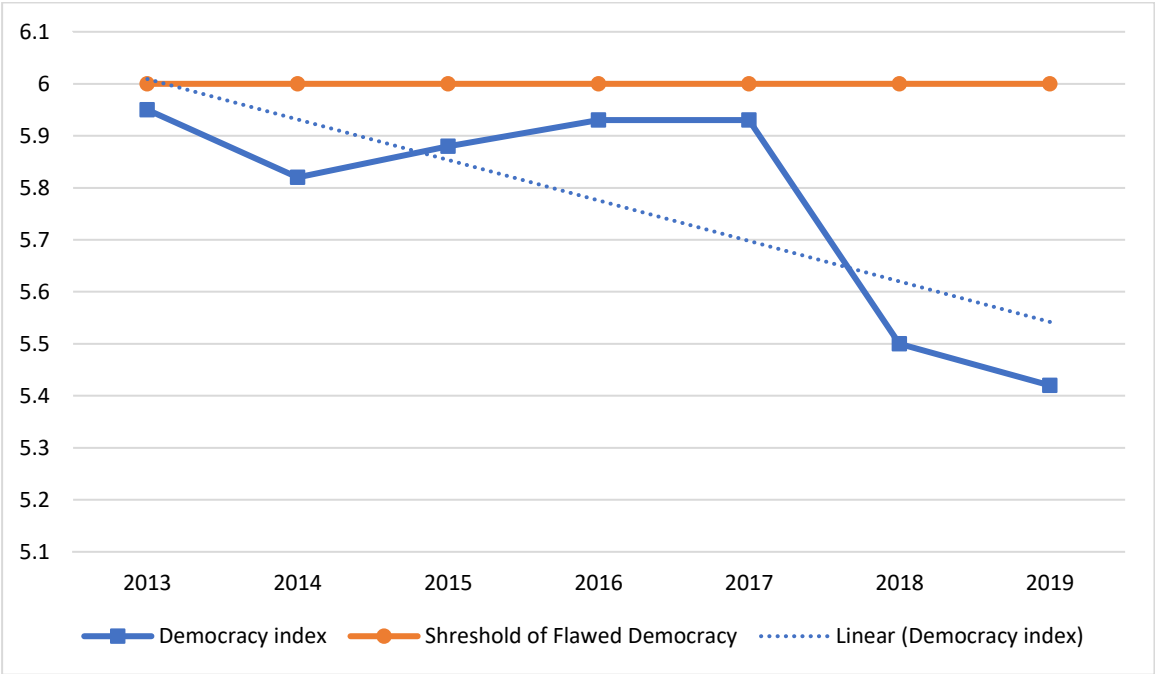


Figure 2. The democracy index in Georgia (2013-2019). *Author’s elaboration (based on the Economist Intelligence Unit 2013-2019)*

3.2 Promotion of authoritarianism and the black knights

The concepts of democracy and autocracy promotion are central when it comes to understanding changes in democratic quality in hybrid regimes. Schweickert et al. (2012), Nelaeva and Semenov (2016), Pavličević (2019), Lebanidze (2019), Ambrosio (2012) and other authors consider that external authoritarian and democratising influences are the major determinants of changes in democratic quality in hybrid (competitive authoritarian) regimes.

The transitologist scholars started to look at promotion of authoritarianism after the crisis of democracy (Ercan and Gagnon 2014: 1) and rise of authoritarian regimes, such as China, Russia, Venezuela, which have been cooperating with the aim of thwarting democracy. (Plattner 2015: 8- 9; Ambrosio 2010: 381) The global balance between democracy and autocracy was weakened due to the failure of democratisation of the Middle Eastern states, the loss of legitimacy caused by the Iraq invasion, 2008-2009 Global Financial Crisis, etc. (Burnell

and Schlumberger 2010: 10) Thus, democracy was not the ‘only game in town’ anymore. (Zielonka 2001: 514; Pu 2012: 364) Hence, it is widely argued that the 21st century marks failures of democracy promotion and success of autocracy diffusion with the emergence of non-democratic states promoting their political and cultural norms. (Chou et al, 2016: 5)

According to the Freedom House reports (2008-2019), since 2008, democracy has witnessed a gradual decrease globally. This demonstrates that authoritarian promotion is real, and due to emerging autocratic regional actors, incumbents have found ways to avoid Western criticism and democratising pressure. (Elkins and Simmons 2005: 7) Relatively stronger normative understandings start shaping third state incumbents’ decisions, complying with novel globally legitimated authoritarian practices. (Lee and Strang 2006: 886)

The recent literature started to look at non-democratic external actors – the black knights – which counter the Western democracy reinforcement efforts and promote autocracy by using soft and hard power instruments. (Melnykovska et al, 2012: 77- 78; Börzel 2015: 3; Ambrosio 2009: 13- 20) The concept of the black knights is essential with regard to studying the promotion of authoritarianism. Hufbauer et al. (1990: 20) introduced the concept to describe ‘counter-hegemonic powers’, which aim at weakening the ‘democratising pressure’ from the EU and US in targeted states through economic, military and diplomatic support. Levitsky and Way (2010: 41) define the black knights as states aiming at halting democratisation by supporting authoritarian regimes’ stability through economic, military and/or diplomatic means. The black knights are ‘rising’ authoritarian actors, such as Russia and China, where autocratic regimes survived, after which these actors started to promote their non-democratic models abroad with the purpose of countering and circumventing democratic spill-overs from the West. (Bader 2015: 24- 25; Levitsky and Way 2010: 41)

The transitologist literature categorises China, Russia, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela and sometimes even France as the black knights since these states have been utilising the aforesaid methods to support authoritarian regimes’ stability in various states. (Ambrosio 2009; 2010; Obydenkova and Libman 2015; Lebanidze 2019; Levitsky and Way 2010; 2020) For instance, Russia supported the authoritarian regime in neighbouring Belarus, whereas France aided autocrat ruling elites in its former colonies in Africa, such as Cameroon and Gabon. The same did not occur in Eastern Europe or the Americas after the end of the Cold War since the EU, as well as the US, were ‘only game in town’ and the pressure on target states to democratise was high. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 41- 42) Thus, the EU’s ‘transformative power’ in the post-

Soviet space was deemed the most important. (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005: 1) However, the democratising influence of the West was gradually considered ineffective. (Schimmelfennig and Scholtz 2008: 207; Lebanidze 2019: 4)

The following thesis draws on the scholarship on the external dimension on regime changes, according to which, the EU is the major democracy-reinforcing power in the post-Soviet space, whereas China and Russia are promoters of authoritarianism, i.e. the black knights. (Levitsky and Way 2010; Obydenkova and Libman 2015: 11; Ambrosio 2010; 2012)

3.3 The neo-Institutionalist approach

The following study draws on the literature on democratisation and promotion of authoritarianism, which explore the causality between changes in quality of democracy and external authoritarian and democratising influences. The existing scholarship is largely framed under the neo-Institutionalist theories, which are central when it comes to studying strategies and instruments of promotion of democracy and authoritarianism abroad. The studies follow two major theories of the neo-Institutionalist school, Rational Choice Institutionalism and Sociological Institutionalism. The major difference between the theories is the focus on different strategies of regime promotion.

According to the neo-Institutionalist approach, promotion of regimes, i.e. authoritarianism and democracy, follow similar strategies – ‘driving forces’. (Schweickert et al, 2012: 4) These are conditionality, socialisation (integration) and diffusion of norms. (Franke et al, 2010: 151- 152) The strategies of regime promotion differ with regard to their nature and therefore follow different logics. (Börzel and Risse 2000: 2) Regimes can be disseminated unintendedly through values and norms as well as through deliberate, active policies, such as, on the one hand, conditionality, and on the other – socialisation (integration) – through which authoritarian values and norms are promoted. (Schweickert et al, 2012: 4- 5) Franke et al. (2010: 151) divide these strategies into two groups: tangible (conditionality and incentives) and non-tangible (socialisation, diffusion of norms) strategies.

3.3.1 Rational Choice Institutionalism

Firstly, one of the strategies (mechanisms) of authoritarian promotion is the conditionality, i.e. ‘sticks and carrots’ mechanism, which implies implementing active policies, such as external pressure or coercion aimed at shifting policy preferences of incumbents. (Lebanidze 2019: 258) Conditionality is based on the logic of consequentialism, meaning that external actors have assumptions that third state incumbents’ preferences can be shifted when provided incentives, such as rewards for loyalty or demands, which can be followed by sanctions or coercive measures, if not fulfilled. (Schweickert 2012: 3; Obydenkova and Libman 2015: 17)

Rational Choice Instrumentalism (RCI) is central in studying external influences on domestic changes through conditionality and incentives. RCI follows the logic of consequentialism and sees actors as ‘rational, goal-oriented and purposeful’. (Lebanidze 2019: 141) The actors have a set of preferences – goals – and in order to achieve them, they act instrumentally with a cost-benefitting manner. (Börzel and Risse 2000: 6) Thus, institutions or in other words, the exogenous ‘game form’ – conditionality and incentives (Shepsle 2006: 24) – influence third state domestic elites’ set of choices to democratise or remain authoritarian. (Hall and Taylor 1996: 12) While external actors employ these instruments to influence target states domestically, the latter follow rational calculations regarding the reactions they will encounter domestically as well as externally in the case of democratisation or becoming authoritarian. (Tolstrup 2013: 726- 727) Thus, the international system, consisting of different actors and their strategies, i.e. conditionality, determines changes of third states’ democratic quality and regime trajectories. (Bulmer 2008: 56)

3.3.2. Sociological Institutionalism

Apart from the logic of consequentialism, autocracy promotion strategies follow the logic of appropriateness, which refers to diffusion of norms, values, and ideas. (Kopstein and Reilly 2000; Obydenkova and Libman 2015: 17) This type of autocracy promotion was referred to as autocracy diffusion by Ambrosio (2010). In contrast to RCI, SI concentrates on autocracy diffusion, which unlike external pressure on third states through conditionality, takes place mainly via linkages (contacts) between external actors and target states. (Schweickert et al, 2012: 4- 6) SI follows the logic of appropriateness and claims that actors are guided by norms and values, and external democracy or authoritarian promotion shifts their domestic ‘value-driven’ policy preferences and strategies. (Börzel and Risse 2000: 2; Lebanidze 2019: 32)

Affected by external autocracy diffusion, third state incumbents start making decisions based on external actors' choices. (Elkins and Simmons 2005: 7) Thus, autocracy diffusion sets international standards, which lead to the condition where appropriateness (balance) between authoritarianism and democracy becomes tilted towards the former. (Ambrosio 2010: 380)

SI argues that diffusion of authoritarianism takes place in two different ways. Firstly, it can be a 'learning process', through which incumbents look for solutions to their problems internationally. (Weyland 2005: 271) Third state governments seek to boost their power domestically following their role models abroad. (Ambrosio 2010: 381; Elkins and Simmons 2005: 10) A good example of that is the Japanese ruling elites, who have reformed the state's ruling system in compliance with 'successful Western prototypes' (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 151), or the Colour Revolutions in the post-Soviet space. (Ambrosio 2012: 383)

Secondly, autocracy diffusion can be undertaken through the socialisation or sometimes referred to as integration strategies of external actors. These strategies also follow the logic of appropriateness and imply various types of integration between two actors. The concept of socialisation has been borrowed by political scientists from sociology to refer to the diffusion of norms and values through integration. (Schweickert et al, 2012: 3- 4) Socialisation is similar to unintended diffusion of norms, albeit it implies a target state's economic and political dependence on an external actor. (Wendt 1999: 82; Pu 2012: 345- 346) Promotion of authoritarianism, in this case, is 'intended' and more active. (Obydenkova and Libman 2015: 17) Thus, external regional actors purposefully disseminate political values and norms and try to create close economic, political and cultural linkages, which work as transmitting channels of authoritarian values to target states. (Ambrosio 2010: 371; Pu 2012) Obydenkova and Libman (2015: 17) refer to the integration strategies of regime promotion as a 'conscious effort' of supporting regimes beyond borders.

It is worthwhile to note that the discrepancy between conditionality and socialisation can be small since both strategies are carried out by active engagement or as Franke et al. (2010: 151) call it 'tangible' strategies of external actors. Nonetheless, the former refers to imposing pressure, i.e. conditionality, on third states, while the latter implies the active establishment of economic and political contacts with a third state. (Schweickert et al, 2012: 4- 5; Burnell 2006: 15)

3.3.3 Application of the Sociological and Rationalist Institutional framework

The theories of Rational Choice and Sociological Institutionalism are applied to the following research. SI frames the assessment of China's and the EU's impact on the quality of democracy in Georgia. China does not utilise hard power or conditionality, unlike Russia and employs strategies of political support and economic cooperation. (Ambrosio 2010: 376) China promotes authoritarianism through its soft power as well. (Ambrosio 2009; Ambrosio 2010) China's strategies of autocracy promotion follow the logic of appropriateness and therefore are framed under SI, which, instead of concentrating on explaining conditionality, focuses on socialisation (integration) strategies and diffusion of norms. (Börzel and Risse 2000: 2) Based on SI, it can be claimed that China's closer integration with Georgia and soft power can change values of the Georgian ruling elites and lead to a lower degree of democracy. As for the EU, its main strategies of democracy promotion in the post-Soviet space are political dialogue and soft power. (Lebanidze 2019; Börzel 2010; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005)

The RCI theory will be applied to the study since strategies of Russia include conditionality. Russia has been employing coercive 'sticks' towards Georgia. (Lebanidze 2019: 141) Thus, RCI, which concentrates on conditionality, will also frame the analysis of external influences on the democratic quality in Georgia.

Georgia, according to the literature on regime changes, is considered as a third state in target and, similarly to other post-Soviet states, is influenced by external actors promoting regimes. (Levitsky and Way 2010; Lebanidze 2019) Georgia, along with other post-Soviet states, is located between democratic and authoritarian actors, which are in normative and ideological competition. (Lebanidze 2019: 32) These actors can shape and/or change target state incumbents' choices and values through different strategies, which were discussed above. (Nilsson 2018: 16- 17) SI explains how external influences, i.e. socialisation and soft power, affect and change the values of the Georgian incumbents. RCI, on the other hand, focuses on the state's foreign policy strategies and how external influences, i.e. conditionality, impact the incumbents' rational and 'cost-benefit calculations' regarding democratisation or becoming authoritarian. (Lebanidze 2019: 31- 32)

Furthermore, Georgia is vulnerable to external influences since it is one of the 'weak states with small, aid-dependent economies' that 'are more vulnerable to external pressure than those of larger countries with substantial military and/or economic power (e.g., China and Russia).' (Levitsky and Way 2010: 41) Apart from that, Georgia is a competitive (hybrid) authoritarian

regime and hence, as it was discussed previously, is highly susceptible to external actors' democracy or authoritarian reinforcing influences. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 4- 5, 39)

In the literature on regime changes, China is considered as an autocracy promoter abroad, which shapes domestic elites' political behaviour. Hence, it can be assumed that China's engagement and instrumentalisation of its strategies of autocracy promotion can lead to the stabilisation of competitive authoritarian regimes and insulate the democracy reinforcing impact from the West. (Ambrosio 2009) Thus, Chinese influence can increase the cost of democratisation for incumbent parties, which leads to the regime stabilisation and decline in the quality of democracy. (Ambrosio 2012)

Apart from analysing external autocracy promoting strategies, which are determinants of changes in democratic quality (Lebanidze 2019: 31), it is also essential that the policy directions and values of domestic elites are not neglected. The incumbents' normative agenda and foreign policy strategies largely impact the state's compliance with external goals (Hermann 1990: 20) Thus, domestic factors, such as incumbents' foreign policy strategies towards external actors and their normative preferences are crucial for analysing changes in democratic quality. (Sasse 2012: 553) The ruling elites' strategies are 'gatekeepers' and have an influence on a state's linkages with actors since they 'actively facilitate or constrain ties to external actors'. (Tolstrup 2013: 718) The neo-Institutionalist approach, which frames the following thesis, does not ditch domestic factors, and considers them equally important as external factors. While SI looks at the incumbents' normative preferences, RCI concentrates on their foreign strategies towards external actors. (Lebanidze 2019: 33- 36; Tolstrup 2013: 727) Therefore, the thesis does not diminish their importance. Domestic incumbent's foreign strategies and normative preferences are included in the analytical model of Linkage and Leverage, which is discussed below.

3.4 The analytical model of Linkage and Leverage

The LL analytical model employed in the following study has been introduced by Levitsky and Way (2006). Since then, only a limited number of scholars have applied this model to their research. The most prominent work of Levitsky and Way (2010) – 'Competitive Authoritarianism, Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War' is based on the LL analytical model and explains the post-Cold War regime outcomes in some 35 states. The authors analyse the difference between the regime trajectories in a variety of competitive authoritarian states by exploring their ties (linkage) and leverages to the West. The authors (2010: 5) assume that there

is a lack of understanding of the international environment and regime changes and the theories cannot alone explain the discrepancies with regard to regime changes between various countries and regions in the post-Cold War period. Hence, Levitsky and Way (2010: 38) identify a variety of strategies of international influence and integrate all of them in a single theoretical framework of Linkage and Leverage.

Levitsky and Way (2010: 41- 44) argue that the success of democracy promotion by the West in third states hinges on two factors – linkages and leverage. Under linkage, Levitsky and Way (2010: 43) imply ‘the density of ties and cross-border flows among particular countries and the United States, the EU and Western-dominated multilateral institutions’. Linkages (ties) between two actors are economic, intergovernmental, technocratic, social, information, civil society. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 43- 44) As for leverage, it is referred to ‘(1) regimes’ bargaining power vis-a-vis the West and/or their ability to avoid Western action aimed at punishing abuse or encouraging political liberalisation; and (2) the potential impact (in terms of economic health or security) of Western punitive action toward target states.’ (Levitsky and Way 2010: 41) In other words, Levitsky and Way (2010, 40- 41) present linkage and leverage to assess how third states’ incumbents are affected by ‘external democratising’ influence. Hence, according to this model, linkage and leverage are the main determinants of change of democratic quality in third states. An external actor can influence a state when the latter’s vulnerability (leverage) to the former is high and ties (linkages) are dense. (Levitsky and Way 2014: 152)

Levitsky and Way (2010: 42) make an important point, stating that target states’ leverage to the West alone cannot lead to their democratisation. If leverage were a decisive factor, the democratisation would be spread equally in different countries with hybrid regimes across the globe. In this case, for instance, Zimbabwe and Slovakia would undergo similar democratisation effects. (Tolstrup 2013: 719) By contrast, differences in degrees of linkages are key to explaining why the Western democracy reinforcing efforts have been successful in some states, whereas it has failed in others. (Tolstrup 2013: 719- 720) Levitsky and Way (2010: 43) acknowledge that linkage is ‘central to understanding variation in the effectiveness of international democratising pressure’.

Levitsky and Way (2010) explain that competitive authoritarian states (hybrid regimes) which showed high linkages (ties) and leverage to the West in the 1990s democratised and those which had low progressed towards authoritarianism. For instance, Belarus did not democratise after

the Cold War since it had low contacts (linkages) with the West and transformed into autocracy. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 201) On the contrary, Slovakia, which had dense linkages with the West, became democratic. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 91)

The framework of LL has been employed by other studies as an analytical model to assess external actors democratising or autocracy promotion influences. One of the prominent examples is Lebanidze's (2019) 'Russia, EU and the Post-Soviet Democratic Failure'. The LL model in this seminal book is shaped under the neo-Institutionalist framework. Another example is 'Mapping China's 'One Belt One Road' Initiative' (Xing 2019), which examines Chinese influence in various regions, such as Southeast Asia, Central Asia, Central Europe, and the Middle East from several theoretical perspectives.

As it was mentioned above, the LL analytical model merely explains to what extent the West influences the quality of democracy in target states. (Levitsky and Way 2010) Despite that, in the following study, the model is employed to measure influences from the actors promoting authoritarianism as well since the major objective of the thesis is to analyse China's impact on the quality of democracy in Georgia. Due to that, the model is modified in accordance with the study aims. In addition, complying with the literature on democracy and autocracy promotion in the post-Soviet space, the leverage of the EU and Russia is analysed and compared to that of China. This helps the study to avoid simply showing the correlation and to argue whether the variation in the degree of democracy is in a causal relationship with the Chinese influence.

It is noteworthy to mention that the model does not assess the leverage of the US to Georgia. First of all, the EU is the most important external actor in terms of promoting democracy in the post-Soviet region, including Georgia. The democratisation strategies of the West has been led by the EU initiatives, such as EaP, AA, etc., whereas the US democratising impact in the region has been varying depending on the governing administration. In this regard, the EU's engagement has been stable. (Lebanidze 2019: 134) Moreover, while the EU has been the biggest trade partner for Georgia, the US-Georgia economic ties have been relatively weak. (geostat.ge) Due to these reasons, it is more rational to look at the EU leverage in comparison with China.

3.4.1 Limitations and alteration of the Linkage and Leverage model

There are several issues to note concerning the Linkage and Leverage model, which makes it challenging to employ the genuine model designed by Levitsky and Way (2010) in the following study. To start with, the most significant limitation pertains to the lack of information on how degrees of linkage are assessed. Levitsky and Way (2010: 43- 44) introduce a number of categories of linkages (economic, intergovernmental, technocratic, social, information, civil society) to analyse to what extent states in target are dependent on external actors. Evaluation categories of linkages, however, are not provided. Moreover, Levitsky and Way (2010) do not evaluate two categories, information and civil society linkages in the study at all.

Secondly, Levitsky and Way (2010) do not assess the domestic factors, such as the ruling incumbents' foreign policy strategies towards external actors. They (2010: 72- 73) argue that linkages are not amenable to ruling elites. Instead, they are 'fixed', 'slow-moving' and mainly depend on geographic proximity and historical factors, which induce 'interdependence among states' and establish an 'opportunity for interaction'. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 44)

The thesis follows the Institutionalist approach and does not diminish the importance of domestic factors. The neo-Institutionalist theory, as it was discussed in the previous section, puts a significant emphasis on domestic ruling elites' foreign policy preferences and normative agenda. (Börzel and Risse 2000: 12) This limitation is highlighted by Tolstrup (2013: 178) as well, who claims that 'the structural determinants (linkages) that constitute the basis of their [Levitsky and Way] explanation are not non-amenable as they claim, but can be influenced to a great extent by what I term the gatekeeper elites of the target country' and that external factors 'should not only be perceived as mere objects of external influence.' (Tolstrup 2013: 721)

Thirdly, the difference between the concepts of linkage and leverage could seem vague at times since they overlap. For instance, the trade ties are attributed to linkage by Levitsky and Way (2010: 153), however, a high share of economic ties increases a state's leverage (vulnerability) to an external actor as well. In other words, linkage and leverage both refer to vulnerability to external actors – leverage. Levitsky and Way (2014: 50, 153) also note that a high degree of leverage and linkage usually overlap since a high degree of leverage (vulnerability) combined with dense linkage (ties) lead to higher vulnerability, i.e. leverage, to the Western pressure. For instance, when linkage to the West increases, the cost of non-democratic behaviour – a state's leverage (vulnerability) to the West – rises. Levitsky and Way (2010: 153) state, 'because linkage raises the cost of international norm-violating behaviour for individual actors (e.g., lost

business, professional, or funding opportunities), it also may be viewed as a form of leverage.’ Due to these reasons, it seems that linkage co-determines target states’ vulnerability to an external actor, and thus it can be considered the same as leverage (vulnerability). Hence, in order to avoid confusion, it is highly rational to combine leverage and linkage into a single concept – leverage. It is relevant since both concepts imply external regional actors’ impact on target states. This is also argued by Obydenkova and Libman (2015: 17) and Lebanidze (2019: 41), who deem both concepts similar. The following study aims to analyse the degree of influence external actors have on the degree of democracy in Georgia, and therefore, it is relevant to combine the concepts of linkage and leverage and evaluate them together. Assessing these factors separately will not bring any added value for the thesis.

Another limitation, which has been briefly touched upon previously is that Levitsky and Way (2010) measure linkage and leverage merely between target competitive authoritarian states and external actors promoting democracy, i.e. the EU and the US. Thus, they somehow disregard analysing linkages and leverages between target states and autocracy reinforcing actors – the black knights. Instead, assessing the influence of the black knights, Levitsky and Way (2010: 373) simply downgrade the level of Western leverage in target countries, for instance, from high to medium, without evaluating the strength of authoritarian actors’ leverages. Hughes and Sasse (2016: 314) point out that the LL framework has limitations since it focuses for the most part on the Western influence ‘without taking into account other relevant international actors’. Other authors, such as Obydenkova and Libman (2015: 19) also claim that the focus of the current literature on the external dimension of institutional transition is democracy promotion and that it is necessary to compare these dimensions in order to ‘investigate a broader picture, accounting for the role of non-democratic actors’. Similarly, Pavličević (2019), Gel’man and Lankina (2008: 58), Ambrosio (2010: 5) and Cumpanasu (2019: 187) also argue that to have influence and ‘exercise leverage’ on third states, autocracy promoting actors’ leverage to the CEE has to outscore the EU leverage. Thus, if the Western influence is greater than that of autocracy promoting power in third states, the trajectory of democracy quality will show an upward trend. Due to this limitation, the modification of the model is necessary so that it can be applicable to assess states’ vulnerability to the authoritarian external actors as well.

Pavličević (2019) and Lebanidze (2019) have successfully modified the LL model and measured Chinese and Russian influences on the democratic quality of the CEE states and post-Soviet states, respectively. The following study will employ Lebanidze’s (2019) altered LL

model since it is more elaborate and precise as opposed to that of Pavličević (2019), who does not present clear-cut categories for measuring degrees of leverage.

Another important issue to note is that while the seminal book of Lebanidze (2019) combines the concepts of linkage and leverage into one – leverage, the altered model puts more emphasis on linkage categories, such as economic and political. Measuring leverages of different external actors (EU, Chinese, Russian) to a single country – Georgia, will not illustrate any difference since it will be constant to all the actors. This is because leverage implies the size and strength of third countries and their bargaining power, which depends on, for instance, oil production or high GDP. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 41, 372- 373) These factors may not be constant throughout time, albeit they show persistence *vis-a-vis* to all external actors. (Tolstrup 2013: 719- 720)

Furthermore, Lebanidze (2019) frames the LL model under the neo-Institutionalism – SI and RCI theories – with the leverage categories to analyse both conditionality and diffusion strategies of both autocracy and democracy promoting actors, i.e. Russia and the EU. Therefore, the application of Lebanidze’s altered model of LL to the following study is relevant, since the latter looks at both types of actors, the black knights, i.e. China and Russia, and democracy reinforcing actor – the EU. Chinese strategies of autocracy promotion encompass economic and political socialization and soft power. (Schweickert et al, 2012: 4- 5) The strength of these strategies can be evaluated by analysing economic, political, and normative leverages, all of which are presented in Lebanidze’s (2019) modified model. (See Figure 3)

Strategies are crucial for studying external influences on the quality of democracy in competitive authoritarian target states. As it was discussed above, external actors that promote democracy or authoritarianism follow strategies based on their goals and values. (Börzel 2015: 5) Schweickert et al. (2012: 4) refer to strategies as frameworks through which regional actors promote authoritarianism through multilateral or bilateral relations. Leverages work as spillover channels of regional actors’ strategies (Obydenkova and Libman 2015: 16, 32) to ‘bind states together’ and/or transfer their norms and change or boost regimes in third states. (Ambrosio 2011: 11) Vachudova (2005: 341) identifies ‘active’ and ‘passive’ leverages. According to her, strategies are ‘passive’ leverages, which are instrumentalized through ‘active’ leverages. Leverages for Ambrosio (2011: 11) are ‘the series of relationships - including trade, alliances, culture, etc. - which bind states together’. The extent of China’s strategies’ effectiveness can be analysed through leverages, which work as spillover channels

(Obydenkova and Libman 2016: 1- 2) or as Levitsky and Way (2010: 44) call it, ‘transmitters’ of regional actors’ efforts to change or boost regimes in third states. Figure 3 below demonstrates China’s strategies of autocracy promotion and leverages through which the strength of these strategies can be assessed.

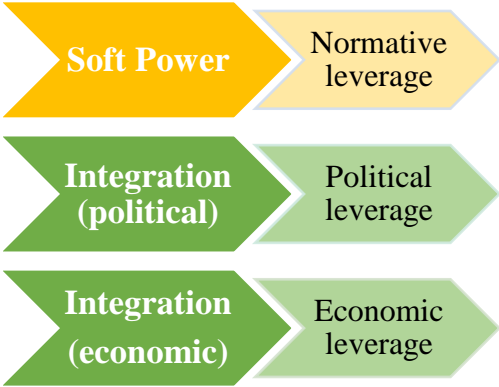


Figure 3. China’s strategies of autocracy promotion and their instrumentalisation through leverages. *Author’s elaboration*

3.5 Summary

The following study aims to analyse how China affects the democratic quality in Georgia. The thesis draws on the literature on regime changes, which deems external democratising and authoritarian influences as determining factors in explaining changes in democratic quality. The regime changes became a focus of the scholarship after the end of the Cold War when the West (the EU and US) started to promote democracy. However, some states, such as Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, etc. successfully circumvented Western democratising pressures. (Levitsky and Way 2010) For instance, the Tiananmen Square protests did not succeed, and China remained autocratic. (Time 1990) In order to avoid possible democratic spill-overs in the future, these authoritarian actors started to rival Western democratising powers through promoting non-democratic values – authoritarianism – abroad, i.e. in their neighbourhood as well as on the global scale. (Schweickert et al, 2012)

External factors are significant determinants, particularly for explaining changes of regimes and democratic quality in hybrid regimes – competitive authoritarian states – with small GDP and a weak economy. Competitive authoritarian regimes demonstrate great susceptibility to external

democracy reinforcing and authoritarian influences. (Levitsky and Way 2010; Lebanidze 2019) Georgia in the literature on regime changes in post-Soviet space as well as in the following study is presented as a competitive authoritarian regime, considering that it has been a hybrid regime since its independence as well as during the entire period between 2013 and 2019. (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019)

China in the abundant literature on autocracy promotion is considered as an external actor promoting authoritarianism, i.e. the black knight, in the Eurasian region. The black knights, which promote autocracy, similarly to democracy reinforcing powers, follow strategies based on their foreign policy goals and values. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 41; Melnykovska et al, 2012: 77- 78; Ambrosio 2009: 13- 20) In the case of China, these strategies, as identified in the scholarship, are socialization (integration) and diffusion of autocratic norms (soft power). (Schweickert et al, 2012; Ambrosio 2010)

The studies on strategies of democracy and autocracy promotion are, for the most part, framed under neo-Institutionalist theories. One of the strands of the new Institutional school is Sociological Institutionalism, which addresses socialisation strategies of regime promotion and diffusion of values. According to the SI, institutions, that is, external norms and values promoted by external actors, influence values and policies of target states. Rational Choice Institutionalism, on the other hand, focuses on external democratising or authoritarian pressure on third states, i.e. conditionality. (Schweickert et al, 2012; Lebanidze 2019; Börzel and Risse 2000; Ambrosio 2012) Thus, located between contesting powers promoting authoritarianism and democracy, third state incumbents', especially in the post-Soviet space, either democratize or become authoritarian, depending on the strength of external influences and the incumbents' values as well as their foreign policy strategies. The balance between these factors determines whether the regime tilts towards democracy or authoritarianism. (Bader 2015; Lebanidze 2019; Pavličević 2019)

The neo-Institutionalist school considers external actors' leverage to target states as the main tool of impact on domestic regimes. (Levitsky and Way 2010; Lebanidze 2019) Thus, the following study assesses the degree of leverage of China to Georgia to analyse the former's influence on the democratic quality in the latter. Leverage degrees are evaluated under the framework of Linkage and Leverage, initially designed by Levitsky and Way (2010). The model, however, is imported from Lebanidze's works (2019; Lebanidze and Grigalashvili 2018) due to several limitations. Firstly, Levitsky and Way (2010) do not present the

measurement categories for evaluating degrees of linkage and leverage, which is solved in the seminal book of Lebanidze (2019). Secondly, the concepts of linkage and leverage will be combined since the difference between linkage and leverage is vague, and both of them evaluate target states' vulnerability (dependence) to external actors. Thirdly, Levitsky and Way (2010) do not analyse the authoritarian external influence in the model as opposed to Lebanidze's (2019) who looks at both democratising as well as autocracy promoting actors. Moreover, Lebanidze's (2019) altered LL model is framed under the Rationalist and Sociological Institutionalism, combining leverages necessary for analysing different strategies, i.e. conditionality, socialization, soft power, which are employed by China, Russia and the EU. Assessing the leverage degrees, according to Lebanidze's model, will show how China's strategies of autocracy promotion have affected the degree of democracy in Georgia during the 2013-2019 period.

Chapter 4. Research Design and Methodology

The following chapter introduces the research design and methodology. The research follows a factor-centric single case design. The first section of the chapter presents the case selection and timeframe. The second section introduces the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the dependent variable – degree of democracy. Following that, the third section introduces the independent variable of the study – China’s leverage to Georgia and presents the analytical framework, which is employed in the thesis for evaluating China’s influence on the democratic quality in Georgia. The last part of the chapter presents data collection methods which are applied in the research.

4.1 Case selection and timeframe

The main aim of the study is to analyse China’s promotion of authoritarianism in Georgia, and thus the research question is:

Q: How does China affect the degree of democracy in Georgia?

The research follows a single case study design and analyses the causality between the Chinese external influence and the shifts of the democratic quality in Georgia during the 2013-2019 period. The case study is a research strategy, which focuses on a contemporary phenomenon and questions: ‘how’ and ‘why’. (Yin 2003: 1) The research thus looks at ‘operational links needing to be traced over time’. (Yin 2003: 6) In other words, case study observes ‘causal processes’ between two or more variables. (Gschwend and Schimmelfennig 2007: 10) Hence, the case study design is employed to ‘cover contextual conditions’ that can be applicable to a phenomenon in question. (Yin 2003, cited in Baxter and Jack 2010: 545) A single case study is a type of case study design when ‘the researcher only wants to study one single thing’. (Yin 2003, cited in Gustafsson 2017) The case study design is often applied to researches in the fields of politics, sociology, and other social sciences. (Yin 2003: 1)

The following case study is factor-oriented since it explains whether and how China affects the quality of democracy in Georgia. The factor-centric case study aims at analysing the impact of a particular effect, i.e. an independent variable (X), on a certain phenomenon – a dependent variable (Y). Thus, a typical question of the factor-oriented case study would be: ‘does X₁ cause Y or what effect does a X₁ have on Y and how much?’. (Gschwend and Schimmelfennig 2007:

7- 8) In the following case study, an independent variable (X) is China's leverage to Georgia, and a dependent variable (Y) is the degree of democracy in Georgia.

The case selection is based on several factors. Firstly, China's economic rise started in 2013, after the Chinese Communist Party Secretary Xi Jinping announced the One Belt One Road (OBOR⁴) Initiative (currently known as the BRI) 'to shorten the distance between China and Europe'. (Larsen 2017b) A drastic change in the Chinese foreign policy turned Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, including Georgia, into a strategic location for Beijing to pursue its goals. Thus, the Sino-Georgian relations, which started in 1992, have intensified since 2013. (Charaia et al, 2020) In 2013, China and Georgia signed the Agreement on Technical and Financial Cooperation to enhance 'friendly relations between the two countries'. (Legislative Herald of Georgia 2013)

Moreover, in 2018, Georgia became the first country in the post-Soviet region to conclude the FTA with China. (Eder 2018: 16- 17) Georgia, on the other hand, became the 11th state to have the agreement in play with Beijing. (Charaia et al, 2020: 4) Furthermore, the first-ever direct railway route, as well as a flight connection between China and Georgia, have been introduced during the same period as well. Nowadays, there are approximately 30 Chinese companies cooperating with Georgia in the spheres of infrastructure, energy, finances, agriculture, free industrial zones, logistics, telecommunications, etc. Apart from that, the Silk Road Forum has been held in Georgia once in every two years since 2015. In 2019, the forum hosted more than 2000 delegates from approximately 60 countries. (Charaia et al, 2020: 5, 32)

Even though the Sino-Georgian relations have seen an upward trend in the six-year period under study, the effect of these relations on Georgia's democratic quality is rather understudied. (See Chapter 2) Thus, it is highly relevant to analyse and assess how China influences the degree of democracy in Georgia. In the framework of neo-Institutionalism, China promotes authoritarianism abroad and thus affects regimes. (Bulmer 2008: 56) Hence, it is interesting to explore the causality between Chinese influence and the degree of democracy in Georgia.

Due to the considerable growth of the Chinese interests towards Georgia and intensification of the relations between the actors, the study timeframe will be between 2013 and now. In addition, throughout these six years, the country remained a hybrid regime (competitive authoritarian),

⁴ Since 2016, One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR) is referred to as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) since OBOR implied solely a single road, whereas BRI better reflects multiple routes of the initiatives. (Stanzel 2017)

and since 2013 the Democracy Index (quality of democracy) saw a significant decrease, from 5.95 to 5.42, the lowest figure in the entire period. (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2013; 2014; 2019) Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that the year 2020 has not ended yet, and the annual data necessary for the analysis is not available. Therefore, the timeframe of the data is limited between 2013 and 2019 years instead of the years 2013 and 2020.

4.2 The degree of democracy

The degree of democracy is a dependent variable in the thesis. Democracy is rather a relative concept since democratic features to different extents are peculiar to democratic, hybrid as well as authoritarian regimes. Despite the fact that hybrid (competitive authoritarian) regimes are neither democracies nor authoritarian, it is still possible to measure the degree of democracy in these regimes against specific attributes. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 5) It is noteworthy to point out that there is no single definition of democracy and framework for its measurement and is largely debated in academia. There are abundant definitions of the concept, according to the scholars' preferences. (Bühlmann et al, 2007: 3- 4) As Horowitz (2006: 1) states in his essay, 'the world's only superpower is rhetorically and militarily promoting a political system that remains undefined – and it is staking its credibility and treasure on that pursuit.'

There are three major strands in the literature on democracy: minimalist, moderate and maximalist. (Lebanidze 2019: 58) According to the maximalist approach, democratic characteristics are the welfare state and social justice. (Bühlmann et al, 2007: 4) This approach encompasses features of representative and participatory democracies and focuses on the level of social inequalities. In this case, merely political and civil rights are not seen as sufficient for becoming a democracy. The necessary prerequisite is the allocation of economic resources equally by the government. Thus, social democracy is the model for the maximalist understanding of democracy. (Bühlmann et al, 2007: 5)

The minimalist conceptualisation of democracy, on the contrary, pertains to the Schumpeterian elitist type of democracy and focuses on competitive elections. (Bühlmann et al, 2007: 4; Lebanidze 2019: 58; Levitsky and Way 2010: 6) The minimalist democracy implies the protection of citizens, who make decisions by whom they will be governed for a particular period of time. Hence, the minimalist type of democracy is usually referred to as 'government of the people'. (Bühlmann et al, 2007: 4)

The moderate conceptualisation falls between the maximalist and minimalist approaches of Schumpeter and Heller, respectively, and represents the neo-Institutionalist approach to understanding the concept of democracy. The moderate democracy does not encompass maximalist characteristics of the concept, such as an equal share of resources, which are not features of democracy *per se* but merely the potential results of democratic policies. (Bühlmann et al, 2007: 15- 16) The moderate democracy encompasses the following partial regimes: ‘a democratic electoral regime (A), political rights of participation (B), civil rights (C), horizontal accountability (D), and the guarantee that the effective power to govern lies in the hands of the democratically elected representatives (E)’. (Bühlmann et al, 2007: 20 Partial regimes are effective provided that they are embedded, meaning that they are interdependent. Thus, democracy is a system of intertwined partial regimes, which support each other’s functioning. Apart from internal embeddedness, democratic regimes are interdependent externally in an international ‘environment that surrounds, enables and stabilizes the democratic regime’. (Bühlmann et al, 2007: 22)

Levitsky and Way (2010) follow the moderate approach to understanding democracy. They introduce five characteristics: ‘1. Free, fair, and competitive elections; 2. Full adult suffrage; 3. Protection of civil liberties, such as freedom of speech, press and associations; 4. The absence of non-elected authorities which restrict elites governing power. 5. The existence of reasonable playing field between ruling elites and opposition’. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 5- 6) Thus, Levitsky and Way (2010: 6) belong to the Institutional understanding of the democracy conception. Since the following study is framed under the neo-Institutionalist theory and largely draws on the seminal books of Levitsky and Way (2010), it follows the moderate (Institutionalist) conceptualisation of democracy.

The midrange (moderate) assessment of democracy has been developed to ‘fill in a gap in empirical democracy measurement’ and for designing a democracy ranking. (Bühlmann et al, 2007: 3) According to Lebanidze (2019), there are a number of democracy indices, whose methodology are ‘insufficient and lack conceptual clarity’. (Lebanidze 2019: 30)

The assessment of the degree of democracy in Georgia during the 2013-2019 period is essential for the following study. Nevertheless, the lack of resources makes it challenging to conduct a proper evaluation of the democracy degree in Georgia throughout the period in question. Therefore, the study imports the democracy index data provided by the Economist Intelligence Unit, a UK-based organisation, which for more than seven decades has worked with businesses,

companies, academic institutions, and governments with navigating ‘the ever-changing global landscape’. (www.eiu.com) The Economist Intelligence Unit is a reliable source since it is frequently referenced in scholarly studies. The Economist Intelligence Unit follows the moderate understanding of democracy, and for assessing the democratic quality, it evaluates five categories: ‘electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture’. (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2017: 64) The Economist Intelligence Unit does not address social and economic equality and considers the categories, i.e. the partial regimes, as ‘interrelated and form a coherent conceptual whole’. ‘The condition of holding free and fair competitive elections, and satisfying related aspects of political freedom, is clearly the sine qua non of all definitions.’ (The Economist Intelligence Unit 2017: 64)

Apart from the Economist Intelligence Unit, there is Freedom House Democracy Index, which is highly reliable as well. However, Freedom House follows a more minimalist approach of the democracy conception, looking at political rights and civil liberties. (www.freedomhouse.org) The Freedom House criteria are similar to those of Dahl’s (1970), whose definitions of democracy are Schumpeterian and thus represent the minimalist approach. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 5- 6; The Economist Intelligence Unit 2017: 64) Thus, due to the abovementioned reasons, the following study will import the data of Democracy Index from the Economist Intelligence Unit reports.

4.3 The degree of leverage

The following study aims to analyse China’s influence on Georgia’s degree of democracy. Merely assuming that China promotes autocracy in the country without evaluating the degree of influence (leverage) is not sufficient to comprehend how, i.e. by what means, an external actor affects the regime or democracy quality of a third state.

As it was widely discussed in the previous chapter, autocratic norms and practices are ‘diffused through organizational fields or across nations’. (Hall and Taylor 2006: 14) Actors have their goals, according to which they employ particular strategies (instruments) to spread their norms. (Börzel and Risse 2000: 8- 9; Lebanidze 2019: 32; Obydenkova and Libman 2015: 11) Strategies are instrumentalized through leverages, which are channels of regional actors’ regime promotion. (Obydenkova and Libman 2015: 16, 32; Levitsky and Way 2010: 44;

Lebanidze 2019: 111) The study evaluates the degree of leverage (economic, political, normative), which shows how strong autocracy and democracy promotion strategies are.

The degree of leverage in the study is an independent variable and refers to the degree of vulnerability of a target state on an external actor. The assessment of the degree of leverage is based on the LL model (Levitsky and Way 2010) altered by Lebanidze (2019). In order to argue whether China influences the quality of democracy in Georgia, it is crucial to compare China's leverage to Russia's and the EU's leverages. The following sub-sections introduce the operationalization of economic, political and normative leverages.

4.3.1 Economic leverage

Economic leverage evaluates to what extent Georgia's economy is dependent (vulnerable) on a regional actor (China, the EU, Russia). The economic dependence on external actors is assessed on the scale of low (0-1), medium (1-2), high (2-3). Three categories are employed for measuring economic leverage: dependence on export, import, foreign direct investment (FDI). Table 2 below presents economic leverage categories and their indicators of assessment.

Categories	Indicators
Export	Dependence on the amount of total export to the external actor
Import	Dependence on the amount of total import from the external actor
Foreign direct investment	Dependence on the amount of total FDI from the external actor

Table 2. Economic leverage. *Author's Elaboration. (based on Lebanidze 2019: 295- 297; Lebanidze and Grigalashvili 2018: 26)*

The economic statistical data (import, export, FDI) is assessed similarly to Lebanidze (2019). The degrees of economic leverage are evaluated on a scale from 0 to 3 (0-1 = low leverage; 1-2 = medium leverage; 2-3 = high leverage). Economic data (export, import, FDI) of each

external actor are compared and thus assigned scores accordingly. For instance, Georgia’s import from the EU in 2017 amounted 2200.7 million USD and was higher than the amount of Georgia’s import from China and Russia, which amounted 732.6 million USD and 786.9 million USD, respectively. Since in 2017, Georgia’s import from the EU was higher than the other two figures, the import category of the EU economic leverage to Georgia is assigned the highest score of 3 (100%). The other two figures, Georgia’s import from China and Russia, are compared (in percentages) to the highest figure and thus are graded from 0 to 3 proportionally. Table 3 below illustrates this example.

External actors’ total economic leverage to Georgia is calculated by averaging the scores of each category. For instance, if the degree of import leverage of an external actor is a score of 3 (high), export leverage a score of 2 (medium) and FDI leverage – 1 (low), the total economic leverage is the arithmetic mean of the three scores, that is 2 (medium). Additionally, overall leverage degree is assessed similarly through the calculation of the arithmetic mean of economic, political and normative leverage degrees (scores) as well.

External actors	Georgian import (2017)	The degrees of leverage (import category)
China	732.6	1 (33%)
EU	2200.7	3 (100%)
Russia	786.9	1.1 (33.5%)

Table 3. Calculation of economic leverage degrees (scores). *Author’s elaboration*

4.3.2 Political leverage

The political leverage category assesses a regional actor’s political dependence on an external actor. For example, if a country has a security-related issue and relies on a regional actor’s assistance for the resolution of the problem, the former’s dependence (leverage) to the latter will be higher. (Lebanidze 2019: 67) Similarly, when a country is a member of a regional political organization led by a regional actor, it has to comply with the organisation rules and therefore its vulnerability to the regional actor increases. (Levitsky and Way 2010: 43) Hence,

under political leverage, the following factors will be assessed: 1) the need of political and diplomatic assistance from external power; 2) membership in regional organisations dominated by an external actor; 3) an external actor’s civil or military presence. The assessment of political leverage categories is demonstrated in table 4 below.

Categories	Indicators
Diplomatic assistance	<p>Low (1) The country does not face any security/political challenge or threat and therefore, the government does not rely on or expect any political assistance from the external actor.</p> <p>Medium (2) The country faces severe security/political challenge or threat, but the government does not rely on or expect political/diplomatic assistance from the external actor.</p> <p>High (3) The country faces acute security/political challenge or threat and the government relies on the political/diplomatic support by the external actor.</p>
Membership in regional organisations	<p>Low (1) The country is not a member of any organization led by the external actor.</p> <p>Medium (2) The country is a member of one organisation led by the external actor.</p> <p>High (3) The country is a member of two or more organisations led by the external actor.</p>
Military/civilian presence	<p>Low (1) The external actor does not have any friendly or unfriendly civilian and/or military presence in the country.</p> <p>Medium (2) The external actor has a friendly or unfriendly civilian and/or military presence, which is insignificant for the country’s security.</p> <p>High (3) The external actor has a friendly (unfriendly) civilian and/or military presence in the country, which is important for the country’s security (or which undermines the country’s security).</p>

Table 4. Political leverage. *Author’s elaboration (based on Lebanidze 2019: 293 -295; Lebanidze and Grigalashvili 2019: 24- 25)*

4.3.3 Normative leverage

Normative leverage refers to domestic factors, which reduce or increase the external influence or pressure. Analysing regime trajectory variation without looking at domestic incumbents' foreign policy strategies and their values is difficult since they have a substantial impact on incumbents' relations with a regional actor. (Tolstrup 2013: 718) These domestic factors influence 'the vulnerability of incumbent regimes vis-a-vis foreign actors'. (Lebanidze 2019: 66, 111)

The analysis of normative leverage follows the SI and RCI framework and imports Lebanidze's (2019: 292) indicators of normative leverage, incumbents' foreign policy aspirations and their declared commitment to democratic values, the rule of law and civil rights. (Lebanidze 2019: 111- 112) Table 5 below presents the normative leverage category and its indicators of assessment.

Category	Indicators
Foreign policy strategies and ideological affinity	The EU:
	Low (1) No aspiration for the membership in the EU; no formal commitment towards democratic values.
	Medium (2) Aspiration for the membership in the EU; no formal commitment to democratic values.
	High (3) Aspiration for the membership in the EU; declared commitment towards democratic values.
	Russia (1) and China (2):
	Low (1) No aspiration for the membership in 1) CIS, CSTO, EEU, 2) SCO; declared commitment towards democratic values.
Medium (2) Aspiration for the membership in 1) CIS, CSTO, EEU, 2) SCO; declared commitment towards democratic values.	
High (3) Aspiration for the membership in 1) CIS, CSTO, EEU, 2) SCO; no formal commitment towards democratic values.	

Table 5. Normative leverage. *Author's Elaboration. (based on Lebanidze 2019: 292- 293)*

It is worthwhile to note that the following thesis does not include the second category of normative leverage, i.e. ‘mass protests’ (Lebanidze 2019: 292), due to the lack of precise data on the number of participants in protests in Georgia during the entire 2013-2019 period. In addition, various reliable sources present different data. For instance, according to British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) (2019), the number of protesters in June 2019 in Georgia reached around 10 000, whereas Reuters (2019) states that approx. 20 000 people gathered in the same rally.

4.4 Data collection and analysis

The following research aims to explore the causal relationship between China’s leverage and the quality of democracy of Georgia.

The analysis evaluates Chinese, Russian and the EU economic, political, and normative leverages to Georgia. In order to assess the degrees of economic leverage, the study looks at secondary data: 1) on Georgian import from the external actors, i.e. China, the EU and Russia during the 2013-2019 period; 2) Georgian export to the external actors; 2) the Chinese, the EU and Russian FDI in Georgia (2013-2019); The annual statistical data are extracted from the webpage of the National Statistics Office of Georgia (geostat.ge)

As for the evaluation of political leverage, the secondary data for categories, such as Georgia’s membership in regional organisations, the military presence of a regional actor in Georgia are analysed. The data are gathered from webpages of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, reliable media sources, such as Civil Georgia, Radio Liberty (RL), BBC, Xinhua, etc.

As for the political leverage category – the need of diplomatic and political assistance from a regional actor – directed (deductive) qualitative content analysis is employed to collect data from Georgian national security concept documents conducted during the period between 2013 and 2019. There are two documents which were adopted by the incumbent Georgian Dream in 2012 and 2019. Analysing the National Security Concept document is essential for studying whether Georgia expects or relies on diplomatic/political assistance from the external actors in question. National Security Concept of Georgia (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012; 2019) are official documents elaborated by the GD ruling party, which explain ‘the vision of the nation’s secure development, threats, risks and challenges, and establishes the main directions for national security policy’.

For normative leverage – foreign policy aspiration of the incumbents and ideological affinity – directed qualitative content analysis is employed. The data on the Georgian government’s foreign policy aspiration towards the external actors in question is collected through directed qualitative content analysis of the Georgian foreign policy strategy documents. The documents explicitly define the Georgian foreign policy strategic goals and priorities elaborated by the incumbent Georgian Dream in 2012 and 2019. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia 2012; 2019) The data for evaluating Georgian incumbents’ ideological affinity with external actors (China, the EU and Russia) is collected from the Georgian National Security Concept documents elaborated during the 2013-2019 period. The National Security Concept of Georgia (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012; 2019) apart from defining the state’s security policy interests, defines ‘fundamental national values’. The data from the documents is collected through directed qualitative content analysis.

Content analysis is a technique employed to assess textual data in different research designs. It is often used for quantification of content, i.e. for lexicometry ‘that relies on the automatic identification of word frequency which can be employed for conducting statistical analysis’. (Crespy 2015: 7)

The following research employs qualitative content analysis since the aim of the research is not to identify all foreign policy strategies of Georgia to a variety of actors at large or the frequency of concepts, such as ‘security’, ‘need of assistance’ in National Security Concept and Foreign Policy Strategy documents. Lexicometry is not any added value due to the already set of leverage categories and scales. Instead, the analysis aims to identify manifest data showing whether Georgia relies on/expects external diplomatic assistance from regional actors (China, Russia, the EU), or whether the Georgian government is aspired for the membership in the EU or any regional organization led by China or Russia. The assessment is made whether the membership of a regional organization led by an external actor (such as the EU, NATO⁵, CIS, CSTO, EEU, SCO) is a foreign policy priority of the state. Hence, the analysis follows a deductive approach and employs *a priori* codes – the so-called codebook based on the leverage categories. (Crespy, 2015: 8- 9; Potter and Levine-Donnerstein 1999)

⁵ NATO will be included since the majority of the organisation’s members are the EU members as well. In addition, NATO is a Western organization based on democratic values and countervails actors such as China, Russia, etc. The literature on external factors of regime changes usually considers as a democracy reinforcing organisation NATO along with the EU. (nato.int; Lebanidze 2019)

The pre-defined topics (codes) are evaluated according to the theoretical framework in the Georgian 'strategies' to 'a pre-established list of actors', that is China, Russia and the EU. The 'topics' are identified in the text 'quotations' – sentences or chunks of sentences 'accounting for an actor, discursive strategy, an object of evaluation, an evaluative statement and a secondary topic related to the central topic examined'. (Crespy 2015: 9)

Lastly, the analysis, the variance of the degree of democracy of Georgia is compared against the variance of the leverage degrees of China, Russia and the EU in the period between the years 2013 and 2019 to depict whether there is causality between the changes in the degree of democracy and the variance of China's leverage.

Chapter 5 Discussion of Research Results

The following chapter analyses the degrees of leverage of China, the EU and Russia to Georgia. As it was discussed in the previous chapter, the modified LL model is employed in the thesis to assess the external actors' economic, political and normative leverages to Georgia. China's leverage to Georgia is compared to that of the EU in order to see whether China has outscored the EU in this regard. This serves to explain whether China has influenced Georgia's quality of democracy during the 2013-2019 period. The degree of leverage of Russia to Georgia will be measured as well in order to minimise finding only correlation and instead to identify the causality between the degree of Chinese leverage and the degree of democracy in Georgia.

5.1 Economic leverage

The following section evaluates the degrees of economic leverage of China, Russia and the EU to Georgia to explore to what extent the country's economy is dependent on the external actors. Thus, according to the modified LL model (See chapter 4), Georgia's dependence on trade (import and export) with the external actors and FDI will be assessed.

5.1.1 Export

Georgian export to China, Russia and the EU has shown an upward trend throughout the period between 2013 and 2019. Figure 4 below depicts the cumulative figures of Georgian export in China. While in 2013, Georgia's export to China was merely 34 million USD, in 2014 it tripled and reached 90.4 million USD. In the following years, the export grew considerably until 2018, when it dropped marginally from 202 million USD to 198 million USD. In 2019, Georgian export to China reached 227.6 million USD, which was seven times higher than the amount in 2013. (geostat.ge) Despite this considerable growth, the share of Georgian export to China in the country's total export has not been higher than 8.2% throughout the period in question. The amount of Georgian export to China has been relatively lower than the export amount to the EU and Russia. (geostat.ge)

Georgian export to the EU amounted around 610 million USD in 2013 as it is illustrated in figure 4. The export started to increase in the following two years, albeit it dwindled to 565 million USD in 2016. After that, it showed a sharp rise in the following years. Thus, in 2019,

Georgian export to the EU peaked at approximately 820 million USD. As a result, Georgian export to the EU increased by 200 million USD throughout the whole period in question. Despite that, the rate of Georgian export to the EU in the country’s total export showed a downward trend between 2015 and 2018, witnessing a recovery in 2019. Nevertheless, the share of Georgian export to the EU remained over 21% during the entire period. (geostat.ge)

In 2013, the amount of Georgian export to Russia was 190.6 million USD. Despite the growth in the following year, the figure showed a significant decrease in 2015. As it is illustrated in figure 4, since 2016, Georgian export to Russia started to recover, reaching approximately 500 million USD by 2019. Overall, the export to Russia has seen a 250% increase during the entire period between the years 2013 and 2019. However, even though there was a considerable growth, the Georgian export to Russia still amounted no more than 13% of the country’s total export by 2019, which is considerably lower than that of the EU. (National Statistic Office of Georgia)

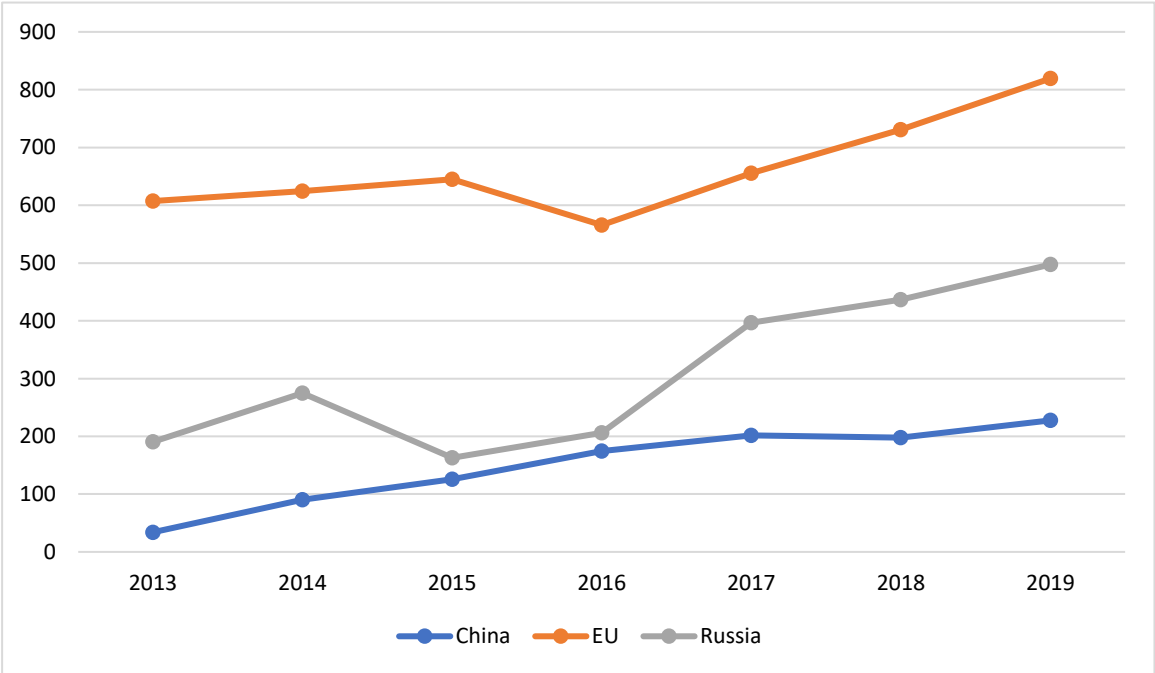


Figure 4. The amount of Georgian export to China, the EU and Russia (2013-2019) (million USD). *Author’s elaboration (based on geostat.ge)*

As figure 4 demonstrates, Georgia has been more dependent on the EU in terms of export than China and Russia. The rate of Georgian export to the EU has been above 20% for the whole period in question. As for the export to China, it has been increasing more steadily than

Georgian export to the EU or Russia. Nonetheless, the rate of export to China has been significantly below that of the EU and Russia.

5.1.2 Import

As it is evident in figure 5, which depicts cumulative figures of Georgia's import, Georgia's import from China amounted 612 million USD in 2013. The amount of import from China increased to 734 million USD in 2014, after which it started to gradually drop in the following two years, falling to approximately 548 million USD in 2016. In 2017, the figure showed an upward trend and reached 859 million USD by 2019. Despite the overall increase, the share of import from China in Georgia's overall import peaked at merely 9.4% in 2019, which compared to the EU's import rate has been almost three times lower. (geostat.ge)

Georgia's import from the EU was the highest among all external actors in question. However, the amount of import has seen fluctuation for the entire period. In 2013, the import from the EU amounted around 2.3 billion USD. In 2014, the figure grew to approximately 2.4 billion USD, after which it fell to around 2.1 billion USD. In the following years, the amount of Georgia's import from the EU started to grow unsteadily, peaking at 2.5 billion USD in 2018. Nevertheless, in 2019, the figure dropped to 2.3 billion USD. (See figure 5) Overall, throughout the 2013-2019 period, the amount of import from the EU has increased, albeit the share of the EU import in Georgia's overall import fell from 28.2% in 2013 to 25.5% by 2019. (geostat.ge)

As for Georgia's import from Russia, it has seen a significant increase since the beginning of the period in question. As it is illustrated below in figure 5, in 2013, the amount of the import was 584 million USD, after which it fell slightly to just above 573 million USD. In the following years, the figure grew considerably, and it almost doubled in 2019, at 976 million USD. Nonetheless, the import from Russia has accounted for no more than 11% of the overall import in the country, which has been much lower than Georgia's import rate from the EU. (geostat.ge)

As it is illustrated in figure 5, similarly to export, Georgia has been more dependent on the EU with regard to import than China and Russia. The rate of Georgia's import from the EU has been fluctuating between 25% and 31% for the period in question. Georgia's import from China and Russia, however, has been much lower than that of the EU.

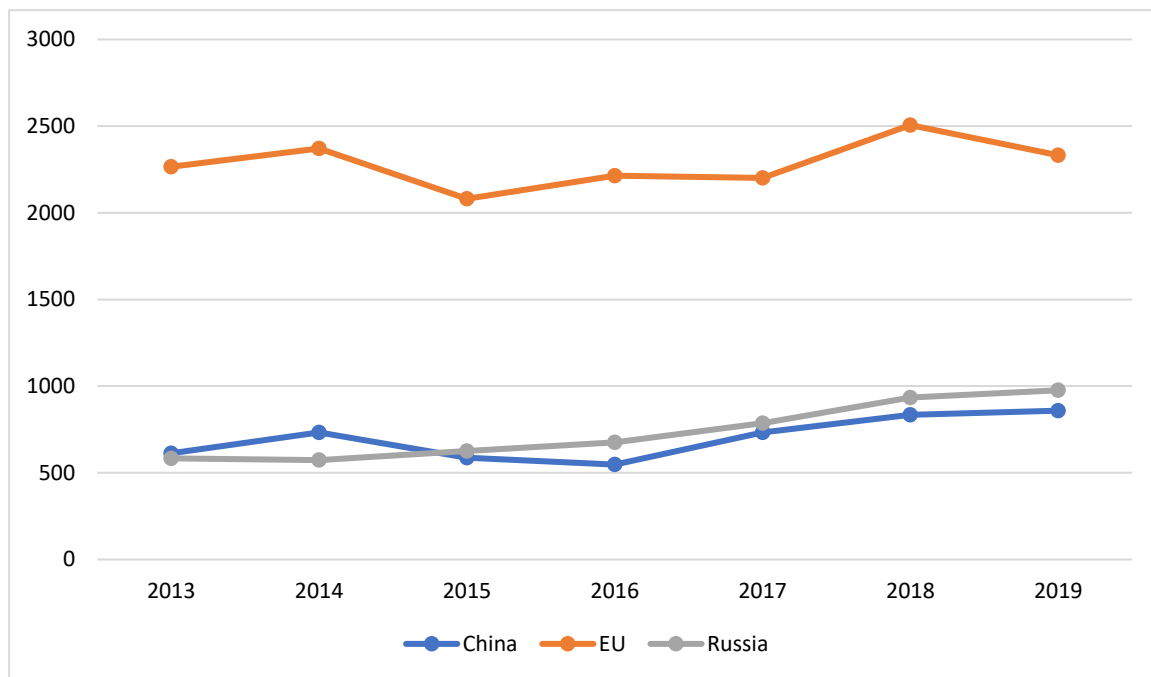


Figure 5. The amount of Georgia’s import from China, the EU and Russia (2013-2019) (million USD). *Author’s elaboration (based on geostat.ge)*

5.1.3 Foreign direct investment

Chinese FDI in Georgia amounted 101 million USD in 2013. In the following year, FDI doubled and reached 220 million USD. Despite this surge, the Chinese FDI started to fall gradually, and by 2019 it fell to approximately 40 million USD. (geostat.ge) This was caused by the fact that the Hualing Group has been the only leading company in terms of the FDI throughout the entire period. (Larsen 2017: 6) However, the counsellor in the economic and trade matters of the Chinese Embassy to Georgia, Liu Bo stated that since Georgia possesses an extremely appealing environment for investments, the decrease in the FDI does not mean that Georgia is not an appealing country for Chinese investors anymore. (Gasanova 2017) Despite that statement, Chinese FDI in Georgia has not shown any significant increase in the second part of the period as it is illustrated in figure 6.

The amount of EU FDI in Georgia was 425 million USD in 2013. In 2014, the number soared to 836, after which it decreased to 816 million USD. From 2016 the EU FDI started to fluctuate and reached approximately 600 million USD in 2019. Despite the decrease since 2014, the amount of the EU FDI in Georgia still witnessed an overall growth between 2013 and 2019, from 425 million USD to around 600 million USD, respectively. The Union’s FDI share in the

total amount of FDI in Georgia accounted for 47.2% in 2019 as opposed to 40.9% in 2013, showing a significant increase. (geostat.ge)

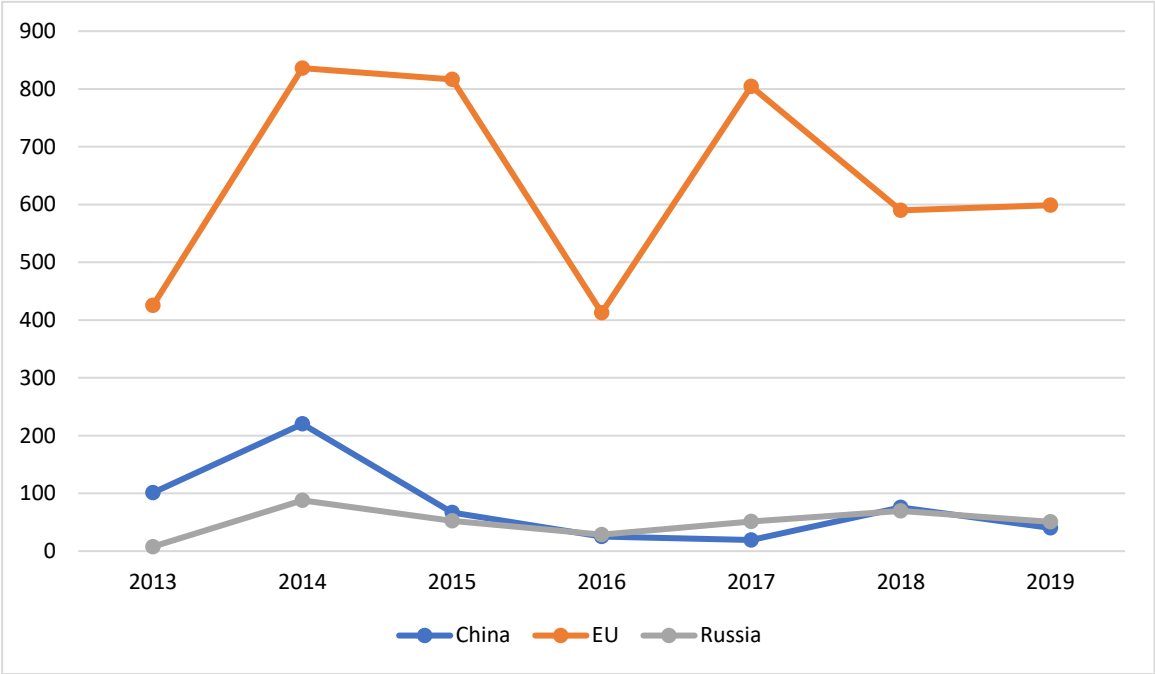


Figure 6. The amount of Chinese, the EU and Russian FDI in Georgia (2013-2019) (million USD). *Author’s elaboration (based on geostat.ge)*

Russian FDI in Georgia started at just around 8 million USD in 2013 and soared in the following year to approximately 90 million USD. In 2015, the figure fell to around 52 million USD, after which it witnessed fluctuation. In 2019, Russian FDI amounted 50.5 million USD. Since 2013 the FDI increased almost seven times throughout the 2013-2019 period. Despite this increase, the share of Russian FDI in Georgia’s overall FDI has been much lower than that of the EU during the entire period. (geostat.ge)

Overall, as figure 6 illustrates, Georgia has been much more dependent on the EU in terms of FDI than China and Russia. The share of the EU FDI in the total amount of investment in Georgia amounted more than 40% throughout the 2013-2019 period, except the year 2016, when the rate plummeted to 25%. Chinese and Russian FDI have been much lower than that of the EU and have not seen any significant increase. However, while investment from Russia has witnessed an overall growth during the period, Chinese FDI has seen a decline.

5.1.4 Summary

Despite the substantial growth of the economic ties between China and Georgia during the 2013-2019 period, the former’s economic leverage to the latter has grown only marginally. As it was discussed above, China has accounted for a growing portion of Georgia’s foreign trade turnover and has become an important source of FDI since 2013. (Larsen 2017: 11) However, China’s economic leverage to Georgia has remained low, compared to the other external actors in the region, such as the EU and Russia. This is due to the unstable growth of Georgian export to China and the decrease of Chinese FDI in Georgia throughout the 2013-2019 period. Hence, China has had the lowest degree of leverage of the other two external actors.

The degree of the EU’s economic leverage to Georgia between the years 2013 and 2019 has outscored that of China and Russia and has remained high for the entire six-year period. The trade turnover between the EU and Georgia has been growing steadily from 2.8 billion USD to 3.2 billion USD between 2013 and 2019. (geostat.ge) The EU’s economic engagement in Georgia has accounted for an average of 25% of the country’s overall trade in the 2013-2019 period. (ec.europa.eu) Apart from that, the EU FDI in Georgia has seen an overall increase as well. Thus, the EU has been the largest economic partner of Georgia, and the latter has been highly dependent on FDI and trade relations with the EU. (geostat.ge)

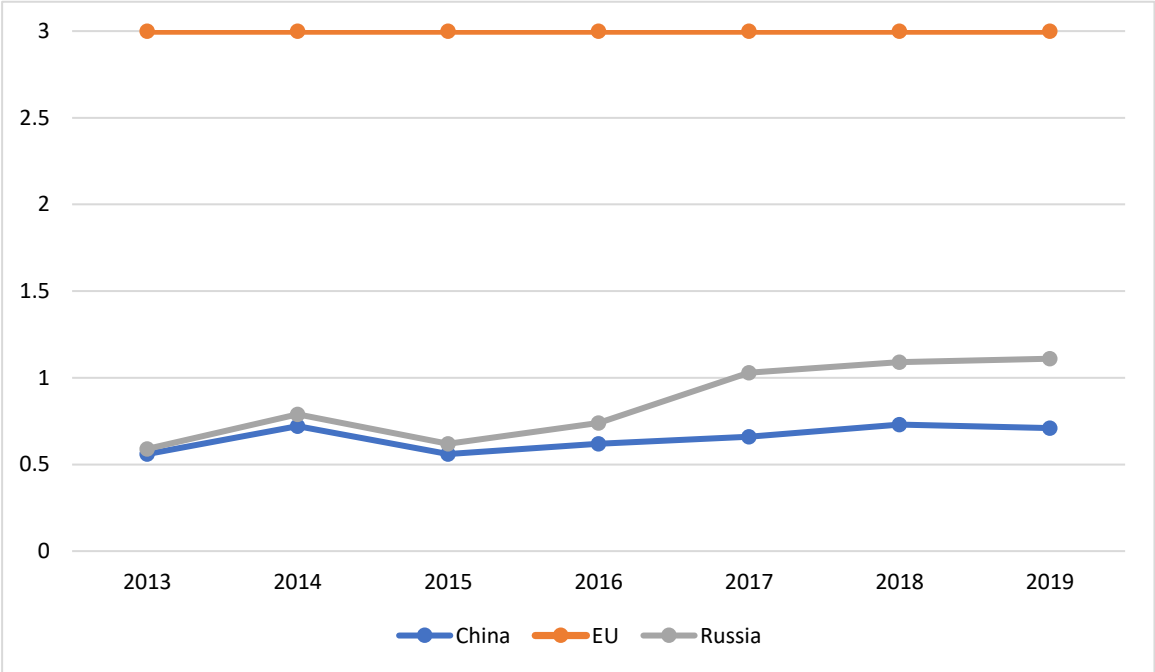


Figure 7. Dynamics of the degrees of economic leverage of China, the EU and Russia to Georgia (2013-2019) (low = 0-1; medium = 1-2; high = 2-3). *Author’s elaboration*

As for Russia's economic leverage to Georgia, it has seen an increase during the 2013-2019 period. This is due to considerable growth in trade turnover between the two countries, even though Russian FDI in Georgia has remained low. The degree of Russia's economic leverage between 2013 and 2016 has fluctuated and remained low. However, since 2017, it rose from low to medium. In 2018 and 2019, the degree of leverage continued to grow, albeit remained medium. Figure 7 above shows the dynamics of China's, EU and Russia's degrees of leverage to Georgia throughout the 2013-2019 period.

5.2 Political leverage

The following section evaluates the degrees of political leverage to explore to what extent Georgia is politically dependent on China, the EU and Russia. The section analyses following: whether Georgia is in need of diplomatic and political assistance from the external actors; whether the country is a member of regional organisations led by the external actors; whether there is a friendly or hostile military presence of the external actors in Georgia.

The degree of political leverage shows the vulnerability of Georgia's political regime towards the external actors in terms of domestic politics and security-related issues. When a target state has a security-related or political problem and necessitates an external actor's diplomatic and/or political aid for its resolution, the state's vulnerability towards this external actor's influence is high. For instance, a country's dependence on the EU's assistance to resolve a security-related issue increases the EU's leverage towards that state. (Lebanidze 2019: 115- 116; Levitsky and Way 2010: 43- 44)

5.2.1 Civilian-military presence

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has played an important role in defining Georgia's foreign policy strategies. Political ties between the two countries have been continuously tense since the 1990s. Even during the period of Eduard Shevardnadze's presidency, the relations were unstable. The major factors were the Kremlin's support to Abkhaz and South Ossetian separatists, Russian military bases in Georgia and the incompatibility between the latter's pro-Western aspirations with Moscow's foreign policy goals. (Lebanidze 2019: 162)

The situation between the two states further worsened after the 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia, when Mikheil Saakashvili's government further undermined tense relations with harsh anti-Kremlin rhetoric. (McFarlane 2015: 4) As a response, Russia employed economic and energy-related mechanisms against Georgia, increasing oil and gas prices and eventually banned Georgian wine and mineral water imports in 2006. This was followed by suspending communication and transport links with Georgia and the deportation of Georgian citizens from Russia. (BBC 2006) The country's economy and energy sector were largely dependent on Russia and Moscow had expectations that the aforesaid 'sticks' would deteriorate the Georgian economy. (Lebanidze 2019: 164) Nevertheless, these measures did not lead to the results Moscow had anticipated. The Georgian government successfully managed to recover the state's economy after the loss of access to its largest export market. Thus, the undermined political and economic relations culminated into the military conflict in August 2008. (Lebanidze 2019: 164-165)

The coercive power directed at Georgia following the war has largely affected Georgia's foreign policy strategy since 20% of Georgia's internationally recognized territory has been under Russian occupation since 2008. Moscow recognised the independence of Georgia's breakaway territories after the end of the war. (Radio Liberty 2019) Having undermined Georgia's territorial integrity, sovereignty and security, Russia tried to maintain political leverage to Georgia. Thus, in 2009, Russia established military bases both in Abkhazia as well as South Ossetia, which have been operating throughout the entire period between 2013 and 2019 with a significant Russian military presence. Amounting approximately 4000 soldiers on the ground only in South Ossetia, Russian military presence has been posing an immense potent security threat to Georgia. (Komakhia 2017)

Despite the tense political relations, the GD incumbents, after winning the 2012 elections, opted for a pragmatic politics towards Russia. The party tried to refresh deteriorated economic relations with Moscow. In 2012, a new position of the Special Representative for Relations with Russia was introduced by the newly elected government. (Agenda 2014) The GD appointed Abashidze as a Special Representative for Relations with Russia, which gave way to the so-called Abashidze-Karasin dialogue solely pertaining to economic matters. (Agenda 2019) The Prague meeting between the special representative of the Georgian Prime Minister, Zurab Abashidze and Russian deputy minister of foreign affairs, Gregoriy Karasin, was followed by the restoration of access to the Russian market for Georgian agricultural production. (Agenda 2019) The ruling party tried to establish a dialogue with Moscow regarding trade issues. This

served to resolve relations between the two counties with discussions on topics ‘that can be calculated’ instead of addressing geopolitical issues. (Kuchins et al, 2016: 12) The major aim of the GD has been the preservation of economic linkages and people-to-people contacts due to the geographic closeness and Russia’s significance as an economic partner. (Kuchins et al, 2016: 12) As a result, economic relations between the two countries recovered. For instance, in 2013, the ban which Moscow had imposed on the Georgian agricultural products and wine in 2006 was lifted. (Buckley 2013) Since then, Russia became one of the biggest trade partners for Georgia. (geostat.ge)

Despite these changes and the Georgian government’s active pursuit of the pragmatic policy and conflict de-escalation, the situation regarding the Russian occupation has not witnessed any positive shifts. (McFarlane 2015: 18; Kuchins et al, 2016: 32) The ‘creeping occupation’ and borderisation from South Ossetia have taken place systematically throughout the period between the years 2013 and 2019. (Information Development Freedom Institute 2015) The continuous hostile military presence has given Russia the main source of its political leverage to Georgia. Thus, the incumbent GD has continuously seen the Russian occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as the primary security threat for the country. (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012; 2019)

In order to infringe upon the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and to limit its free and democratic choice, in August 2008 the Russian Federation perpetrated a further military aggression. (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012: 7)

Unlike Russia, China has neither posed any military threat to Georgia to acquire political leverage through deterrence nor has possessed any friendly military or civilian presence in Georgia. (mfa.gov.ge) Political aspects of the relations between China and Georgia have merely pertained to the issues of mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity. (Stronski and Vreeman 2017; mfa.gov.ge)

Similarly to China, the EU has had no military presence in Georgia during the 2013-2019 period. However, the EU has had an important civil presence in Georgia playing a significant role for the country’s security. The European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) is an unarmed civilian monitoring mission, which was introduced by the EU on 15th September 2008, after the Russo-Georgian war. The EUMM consists of approximately 200 monitors ensuring ‘the stabilization of the situation on the ground’ since the conflict and encompasses the entire

internationally recognized territory of Georgia. (www.eumm.eu) The mission's primary objective is the prevention of new armed conflicts and provision of the security and safety of Georgian citizens in the breakaway territories of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. (www.eumm.eu) The Georgian ruling party has seen the EU's engagement as 'consumption of security' and has been relying on the EUMM's presence at the ABL (Administrative borderline) with regard to circumventing any potential threat from the Russian Federation. (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012: 16; 2019: 17)

International support for Georgia, as well as the presence of the European Union Monitoring Mission on the ground, are important deterrents to possible aggression. (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2019: 10)

Thus, the EU's civilian presence in Georgia increases the former's leverage to the latter, since the mission has played a critical role for the country's security.

5.2.2 Diplomatic assistance

While it has occupied 20% of Georgia's internationally recognized territory, Russia has not fulfilled the 2008 Agreement on Ceasefire and does not take responsibility not to attack the country. (Tabula 2017) Hence, the Georgian government has not expected any diplomatic or political assistance from the Russian Federation with regard to the conflict resolution. For instance, Moscow has blocked the deployment of the UN and OSCE monitoring missions in the conflict zones and has resisted the EUMM to fully implement its mandate in the occupied territories. (Tabula 2017) These actions have continuously raised the Georgian government's expectations regarding another possible security threat from Russia. (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012: 8; 2019: 10)

Despite strengthening relations, the Georgian government has not relied on or expected diplomatic or political support from China either. The 2012 and 2019 National Security Concept documents (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012: 21; 2019: 23) have only emphasised merely deepening economic relations and political dialogue with Beijing. China's goal to connect to Europe, however, complies with one of the priorities of Georgia, which sees its geographical location as an advantageous and aims at utilising it for connecting Europe and Asia. According to the Georgian foreign policy strategy documents, this advantageous location can foster the state sovereignty and territorial integrity. Nevertheless, it does not go beyond this general

statement. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia 2012; 2019) In addition, the meetings between governmental representatives, such as prime ministers and foreign ministers of both countries throughout the 2013-2019 period mostly pertained to trade, economic relations, investments, infrastructure projects. (Kvirikashvili 2014; Gharibashvili 2015; Kvirikashvili 2015; Kvirikashvili 2017; Bakhtadze 2018; Bakhtadze 2019; Bakhtadze 2019b; Zalkaliani 2019) Moreover, the bilateral agreements between the countries have mostly encompassed economic and trade-related issues. For instance, the 2013 Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation and the FTA between the two states. (Legislative Herald of Georgia 2013; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China 2013) In 2017, Georgia and China signed the FTA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia 2017), which came into force in 2018, led to the elimination of tariffs on 96.5% of Chinese and 93.9% of Georgian export products. (Nan and Xu 2017)

It is worthwhile to note that relations between Georgia and China are mostly held on an economic level. The official diplomatic relations between China and Georgia started on 9th June in 1992. (mfa.gov.ge) However, the relations witnessed a considerable growth only in the first part of the 2010s due to China's more active engagement in the region after the introduction of the SREB and Maritime Silk Road (MSR), together referred to as OBOR⁶ (BRI), by Xin Jinping. (Charaia et al, 2020: 4- 6; geostat.ge) The introduction of this project was followed by the strengthening of the Sino-Georgian economic ties. (Shattuck 2019: 3)

Beijing has continuously supported the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia and has not recognised the independence of *de facto* Abkhazia and South Ossetia. For instance, in September 2008, after the Russo-Georgian war, Foreign Minister of China Qin Gang expressed concerns regarding 'the latest developments in Abkhazia and South Ossetia'. (Xinhua News Agency 2008) In response, Georgia has supported 'One China Principle' and has not recognised Taiwan. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia 2018)

Despite the aforesaid, China's engagement in Georgia has not been seen as an important factor for the resolution of the security issues by the government. The GD has deemed it merely an opportunity for developing the country's economy, avoiding the recognition of Georgia's breakaway regions and bolstering peace in the future. Due to that, the ruling party has been aspired to ensure China's continuous support for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

⁶ Since 2016, One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR) is referred to as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) since OBOR implies solely a single road, whereas BRI better reflects multiple routes of the initiative. (Stanzel 2017)

This has been emphasized by various representatives of the Georgian government. (Kvirikashvili 2015b; Kvirikashvili 2017b; Gharibashvili 2015b; Bakhtadze 2019) For instance, in his interview from the city of Dalian, China, Georgia's former Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili (2015b: 2:00- 2:40) pointed out that,

The resurrection of the New Silk Road is creating new opportunities for Georgia. This will lead to new investments, development, trade activation. Our major aim, the mission of our country is utilising our strategic location efficiently at its best. We do not want Georgia to be a reason for confrontations. We would like our country to be a place for reconciliation, negotiations, consensus, and peace for the most part.

In 2019, former Georgian Prime Minister Mamuka Bakhtadze (2019), at the meeting with Chinese Prime Minister in Dalian, China, highlighted China's importance for Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

China and Georgia understand fundamental issues in the same way, among them matters of territorial integrity. I would like to thank you for supporting the territorial integrity and sovereignty of my nation. (Bakhtadze 2019: 1:25-1:42)

On the contrary, while the Georgian ruling elites have not expected China to help Georgia with the resolution of the security issue, they have largely relied on the role of the EU with regard to avoiding possible security threats and achieving de-occupation of the breakaway territories. According to the Georgian foreign policy strategy documents of 2012-2018 and 2019-2022 as well as the National Security Concept of the country (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012: 2019), the membership in the EU along with NATO is one of the major priorities of the ruling party's foreign policy and security priorities to ensure the state's security and conflict resolution. Thus, the incumbent GD has expectance that the EU, along with NATO, are guarantees for the country's security and resolution of the conflict with Russia.

Membership in the EU and NATO is the most important guarantee for security, development and prosperity of Georgia. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia 2019: 4)

Similarly, according to the National Security Concepts of Georgia (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012: 3; 2019: 7, 16- 18), the EU along with NATO are of utmost importance for

Georgia's security. The government has seen the EU as the major mediator in conflict resolution and 'peaceful coexistence' with Russia. (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012: 17; 2019: 17-18) The documents state, 'Georgia places special emphasis on more active EU involvement in resolving the Russian-Georgian conflict.' (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012: 17; 2019: 18-19)

Furthermore, the Georgian ruling elites have been aspired to maintain the effective operation of the EUMM mandate throughout the whole period between the years 2013 and 2019. (Foreign Policy Strategy of Georgia 2012: 4) As it is highlighted in the documents of the National Security Concept of Georgia (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012: 11- 12; 2019: 12- 13), the mission 'is important for Georgia' since it facilitates 'an effective peace process and the establishment of long-term peace'.

5.2.3 Membership in regional organisations

Georgia is not part of any organisations or security-related cooperation led by China, such as the SCO, which was established in 2001 in Shanghai. (mfa.gov.ge; eng.sectesco.org) Hence, China does not have substantial political leverage to Georgia.

Georgia is not a member of the EU or NATO either. (mfa.gov.ge) Political as well as economic integration of Georgia with the EU started to deepen in the framework of the EaP, which was introduced in 2009. (geostat.ge; Chkhikvadze 2019: 59- 60) The EaP is not an alternative to the EU membership. However, it fosters the EaP countries in deepening of integration processes with the EU in different directions, such as spreading democratic values, strengthening security and sustainable development in the region. (ec.europa.eu) The partnership has two dimensions, bilateral and multilateral. The bilateral partnership includes the further deepening of cooperation with the AAs between the EaP states and the EU. As for the multilateral partnership, it fosters cooperation in mutual interest spheres, such as security, migration, trade, transport, energy, environment, etc. (Gogolashvili 2019) Despite these close relations, Georgia has neither become a member of the EU or NATO nor has applied for the EU membership.

Georgia has not been part of Russia-led organisations throughout the 2013-2019 period either. In 2009, one year after the Russo-Georgian war, the United Nationalist Movement (UNM) ruling party made a decision to leave the CIS, which was created by Russia in 1991.

The CIS totally failed as an international organization. It is some kind of post-Soviet kind of thing, that basically could not do anything to prevent this tragedy from happening. And, you know, by leaving the CIS, we are giving final [goodbyes] to the Soviet Union. (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2009)

Since then, Georgia has not become a member of the CIS. Furthermore, as table 6 illustrates, Georgia has not been a member of EEU or CSTO during the six-year period between 2013 and 2019. (mfa.gov.ge)

Organisation	Membership
SCO	No
EU	No
NATO	No
EEU	No
CIS	No (since 2009)
CSTO	No

Table 6. Georgia’s membership in regional organisations (2013-2019). *Author’s elaboration (based on mfa.gov.ge)*

5.2.4 Summary

China’s political leverage to Georgia throughout the 2013-2019 period has remained medium (1.33) since the Sino-Georgian relations have not encompassed political and security-related issues. The focus of diplomatic exchanges between the countries is related to strengthening economic ties between the two actors. As table 7 below shows, political ties have not been strong since 1) China has not possessed any kind of military or civil presence Georgia; 2) Georgia has not relied on China’s political or diplomatic assistance to resolve its security problems with Russia; 3) Georgia has not been part of any regional organisation led by China, such as the SCO. The sole political aspect of the Sino-Georgian relations has pertained to mutual support of sovereignty and territorial integrity, which has not affected the degree of China’s political leverage to Georgia significantly. (See figure 8)

Unlike China, the degree of the EU’s political leverage to Georgia has been high throughout the 2013-2019 period. As table 7 and figure 8 show, the EU political leverage has largely outscored the Russian and Chinese leverage. This is due to the following factors. Firstly, Georgia has largely relied on the EU’s role and presence in resolving the security issue with the Russian Federation. Secondly, the EU has had a civilian presence, i.e. EUMM, in the country which has played a significant role for the country’s security. The only factor that has negatively affected the degree of the EU’s political leverage to Georgia is the lack of membership in the EU or NATO.

Political leverage indicator	Level		
	China	EU	Russia
Diplomatic assistance	2	3	2
Membership in regional organisations	1	1	1
Civil-military presence	1	3	3
<i>Leverage measurements: 1 = low; 2 = medium; 3 = high</i>			

Table 7. Measurement of the degrees of Chinese, the EU and Russian political leverage to Georgia (2013-2019). *Author’s elaboration*

As for the degree of Russia’s political leverage, it has been medium throughout the whole period between 2013 and 2019 as it is depicted in figure 8 below. This is due to Russia’s continuous military presence in Georgia, which has continuously undermined Georgia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and has been perceived as a top security threat by the Georgian ruling elites. Despite that, Russia’s political leverage to Georgia has remained medium since the ruling party has neither been a member of Russian-led regional organisation and nor it has relied on or expected Russia’s diplomatic support for the resolution of the security challenge. Thus, as the figure 8 depicts, Russia’s leverage to Georgia has been lower than the EU leverage and higher than that of China.

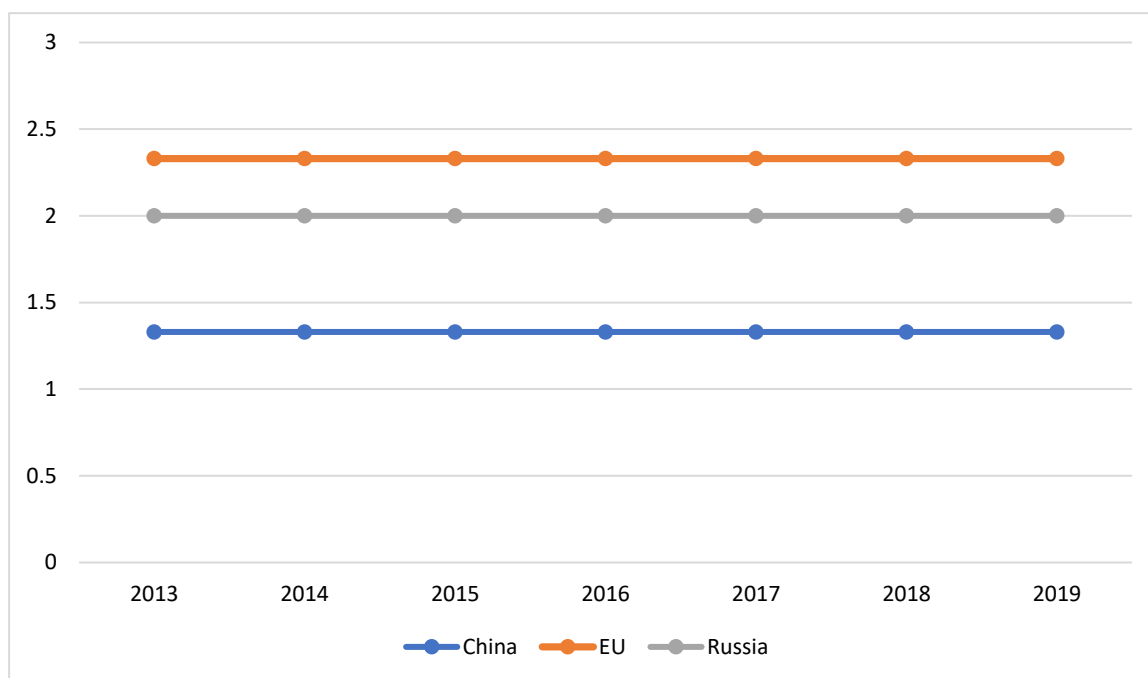


Figure 8. Dynamics of the degrees of political leverage of China, the EU and Russia to Georgia (2013-2019) (low = 0-1; medium = 1-2; high = 2-3). *Author's elaboration*

5.3. Normative Leverage

As it was discussed in chapter 3, under normative leverage two following factors are analysed: 1) the incumbents' foreign policy aspirations for integration with the regional actors and 2) the incumbents' commitment to liberal-democratic values. Thus, normative leverage encompasses domestic incumbents' foreign policy and normative aspirations. (Lebanidze 2019: 111- 112)

The Georgian ruling elites have been at least formally committed to liberal-democratic values, being aspired to develop stronger democratic institutions. According to the documents of the National Security Concept (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012: 4; 2019: 4), Georgia has adhered 'to democratic values and principles', and has been aspired to foster 'a system of democratic governance in which state power is limited by law and distributed among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches'. The Georgian government has been committed to ensuring 'the rule of law, pluralism and the protection of the rights of minorities' and to 'strengthen civil society and other democratic institutions'. The GD's pursuit to the democratic values counters authoritarian norms and values promoted by Russia and China, which affects normative leverage of the external actors. (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012: 4- 5; 2019: 4- 5)

As for the Georgian incumbents' foreign policy strategies, namely aspiration to integrate in regional organisations led by the external actors under the study, the GD has not been aspired to obtain membership of China-led regional organisations, such as the SCO. Strengthening friendly relations and economic cooperation with China has been one of the priorities of Georgia, along with other Asia-Pacific states throughout the 2013-2018 period. The GD has emphasised the importance of cooperation in the spheres of trade, economic, transport and transit. In the 2019 foreign policy strategy document of Georgia, the China-Georgian FTA maximisation is emphasized as well. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia 2012; 2019)

The government of Georgia has seen the Chinese BRI as the means of establishing the country into a transport hub between the East and West, since the country has a strategically significant location with ports in the Black Sea providing the Asian countries, including China, easy access to the European markets. (Gakharia 2019) The GD thus started to brand the country as a 'gateway' and 'bridge' between the two continents, looking at the project as a highly beneficial opportunity. (Shattuck 2019: 2) According to the incumbent GD, this opportunity can lead to the improvement of Georgia's regional connectivity and thus the development of the country's economy and the invigoration of trade flow. (Kvirikashvili 2017) Former President of Georgia Giorgi Margvelashvili (2018), stated, 'we look at China's development as a rare and great opportunity.'

Despite the aforesaid, throughout the six years between 2013 and 2019, the foreign policy strategies towards China has not seen a considerable shift since the objectives have mostly pertained to economic issues. Thus, China's normative leverage to Georgia has been low for the entire period. (See table 8)

Unlike China, the EU's normative leverage to Georgia has been high throughout the whole period under the study. (See table 8) While Georgia has remained beyond the EU's borders, one of the major foreign policy goals of the Georgian incumbents has been the integration and obtaining membership in Euro-Atlantic institutions, i.e. the EU and NATO. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia 2012; 2019) Furthermore, as it was mentioned above, they have been at least formally committed to democratic values. The EU institutions, such as the EC and EP, have been monitoring democratic processes and have contributed to the democratic development of the country. (Lebanidze and Grigalashili 2018)

Furthermore, the aspiration towards the EU and NATO membership has had strong support from the government as well as the majority of the Georgian society. (National Democratic

Institute 2019) One of the major stimuli of this objective has been the Russian occupation and its support to the separatist regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. (Lebanidze 2019: 162) This is due to the increase of the EU's political importance for Georgia after the 2004 enlargement, after which the EU introduced the ENP with the purpose of promoting prosperity, stability, and security across the EU's new neighbouring states 'to avoid new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours'. (ec.europa.eu; Gogolashvili 2019)

The Georgian government's aspiration towards the integration with the EU has been demonstrated by becoming a 'frontrunner' state of the EaP, as recognized from the EC. (Blockmans 2018) In the framework of the EaP, Georgia concluded the AA with the EU, entering into force on 1st July 2016. The AA is an action plan with the objective of Georgia's legislative approximation to the EU law, political association and gradual economic integration. (ec.europa.eu; European Commission 2014) It also included the introduction of the visa regime liberalization for Georgian citizens. The DCFTA is one of the most significant parts of the AA and functions as a mechanism for economic integration and opens up the EU market for Georgia, boosting the country's export potential. (European Union External Action 2018; Information Development Freedom Institute 2014) Under the agreement, almost all customs duties have been removed on all types of Georgian production. (ec.europa.eu; Chkhikvadze 2019: 61-66) Thus, due to the Georgian government's continuous aspiration towards the membership and at least formal commitment towards liberal-democratic values, the EU's normative leverage to Georgia has been high in the 2013-2019 period, as it is illustrated in table 8 below.

Unlike the EU, Russia's normative leverage to Georgia has been low for the entire period between 2013 and 2019, as it is shown in table 8 below. Firstly, the Georgian government has declared a commitment to democratic values, which contradicts Russia's authoritarian norms. (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012; 2019)

Secondly, a low degree of normative leverage has been largely caused by the on-going Russian military presence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. These security challenges posed by the Russian Federation have been the major priority of the Georgian government to resolve. The Russian government has breached the Ceasefire agreement and have continued to occupy the Georgian proper. This has been referred to as 'the creeping occupation' by the Georgian government. (Tabula 2017) Furthermore, Russia has undertaken borderisation of the occupied regions, which has caused deterioration of human rights of the Georgian citizens. (Information

Development Freedom Institute 2015) Thus, the GD has accused Russia of breaching the country's sovereignty, territorial integrity and human rights of Georgian citizens. The documents of the National Security Concept of Georgia (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012; 2019) state,

Regular and severe human rights violations by the proxy regimes and the Russian occupation forces in the occupied regions are alarming. Georgian citizens living in the occupied territories are systematically persecuted because of their ethnicity, while attempts to artificially change the demographic balance continue. Georgia is concerned about the threat that the occupation creates for the ethnic and cultural identity of the Abkhaz. (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012: 8; 2019: 8- 9)

Apart from that, the GD has deemed the Russian occupation not only a threat from a security perspective, but an obstacle aimed at reversing the country's aspiration to integrate in the Western institutions. This position is underlined in the documents of National Security Concept of Georgia (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012; 2019)

The Russian Federation aims to turn Georgia into a failed state, to hinder the realisation of Georgia's European and Euro-Atlantic choice, and to forcibly return Georgia to the Russian political orbit. (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2019: 10)

Hence, the Russian occupation and potential security threat have been deemed as attempts to hinder not only Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity but also to reverse the country's democratic development. The Russian strategy has been aimed at destabilizing democracy and halting liberal international norms. (Lebanidze 2019: 182- 183; Levitsky and Way 2020: 53) The Russian government has seen 'independent and democratic Georgia as an important threat'. (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012: 8; 2019: 9)

Normative leverage indicator	Level		
	China	EU	Russia
Foreign policy strategies and ideological affinity	1	3	1
<i>Leverage measurements: 1 = low; 2 = medium; 3 = high</i>			

Table 8. The degrees of Chinese, the EU and Russian normative leverage to Georgia (2013-2019). *Author’s elaboration*

5.4 The overall degrees of leverage

The chapter evaluated the degrees of leverage of China, the EU and Russia to Georgia. Overall, as figure 9 demonstrates, the EU’s leverage to Georgia has been the highest as opposed to that of China and Russia. This is due to 1) the dense economic and trade ties between the actors; 2) the Georgian incumbents’ pro-Western policies, i.e. aspiration towards the EU membership; 3) the dependence and expectation for political/diplomatic aid from the EU with regard to resolving the Russian occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and avoiding potent security threats in this regard.

Since 2013, The EU’s political leverage has remained substantially high. (See figure 9) The EU’s political leverage pertained to political, military and security issues and the actor’s crucial role for Georgia’s security in terms of the maintenance of peace and conflict de-escalation. The EU’s civilian mission has been the only international presence ensuring the security at the ABL since the 2008 war between Russia and Georgia. Despite the fact that the EUMM does not comprise a military force and its activities are somewhat limited, its presence has been continuously deemed as crucial by the Georgian incumbents, in terms of sustaining peace, preventing further aggression from Russia and fostering conflict resolution. (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012; 2019) Apart from that, an institutional framework between the EU-Georgia, that is the AA, has defined democratic reforms Georgia has pursued to implement. (European Commission 2014)

Russian leverage has been medium for the entire period. Nevertheless, it has seen an increase as it is illustrated in figure 9. The major lever of Russia to Georgia has hinged on the military

presence and occupation of 20% of the latter’s internationally recognised territories. Georgia broke off diplomatic ties with Russia on 2nd September 2008, almost a month after the Russian military aggression. (mfa.gov.ge) Thus, the GD has had no expectations of the Russian diplomatic assistance to resolve the conflict and has primarily relied on the EU’s support, Euro-Atlantic integration and the engagement of the international community. (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012; 2019; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia 2012; 2019) Moreover, in 2014, despite Moscow’s negative warnings, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili signed the AA with the EU. (Jamestown Foundation 2014)

It is worthwhile to note that the economic relations between Georgia and Russia have seen improvement since 2013 and the growth of Russia’s leverage to Georgia largely depended on this factor. Russia’s normative leverage to Georgia has been low throughout the entire 2013-2019 period due to Russia’s coercive measures towards Georgia. The major priority of the Georgian government has been de-occupation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which has not been achieved yet. Apart from that, the Georgian proper has seen continuous ‘the creeping occupation’ and borderisation, which has largely caused deterioration of human rights of the Georgian citizens in the breakaway regions. (Tabula 2017)

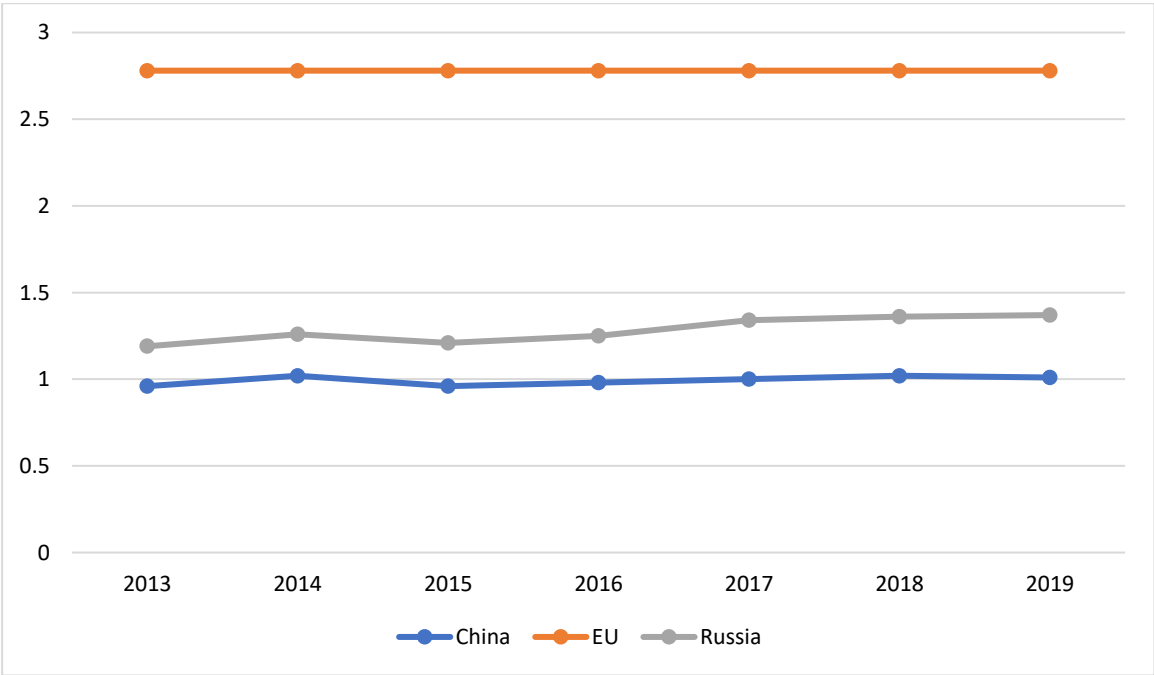


Figure 9. The degrees of leverage of China, the EU and Russia to Georgia during (2013-2019) (low = 0-1; medium = 1-2; high = 2-3). *Author’s elaboration*

As it is depicted in figure 9, China’s leverage to Georgia has remained low for the entire period between the years 2013 and 2019. The degree of Chinese leverage has seen merely a marginal increase during the six-year period, from 0.96 to 1. While the GD has seen benefits in China’s active engagement in the region, the Chinese factor in Georgia’s economy has been relatively lower than that of the EU and Russia. (geostat.ge) The active Chinese engagement in the region has been seen as an opportunity not only for the sustainable development of Georgia but also for transforming Georgia into a peaceful hub – ‘a place for reconciliation, negotiations, consensus, and peace for the most part’. (Gharibashvili 2015b: 2:00- 2:40) Nevertheless, political relations between the two countries have not witnessed any significant growth.

China’s normative leverage to Georgia has been low also due to the lack of the GD’s interest to integrate in the SCO. In addition to that, the Georgian government has been at least formally committed to democratic values and aspired for the EU membership. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia 2012; 2019) Georgia signed the AA with the EU and pursued the harmonization process of the Georgian legislation with the EU law (ec.europa.eu), which are contradictory with authoritarian norms.

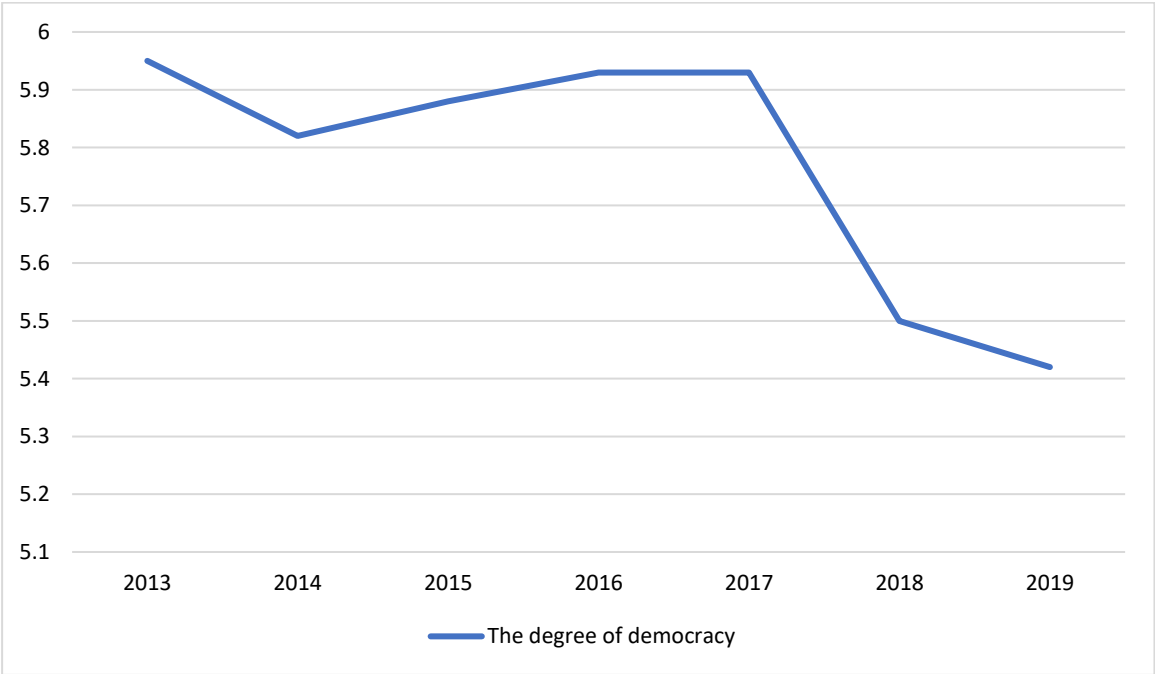


Figure 10. Dynamics of the degree of democracy in Georgia (2013-2019). *Author’s elaboration (based on the Economist Intelligence Unit (2013 -2019)*

The degree of China's leverage has been continuously low and has not seen any significant increase between the years 2013 to 2019. Additionally, as figures 9 and 10 illustrate, the variation of the degree of China's leverage to Georgia does not demonstrate any causal relation with the degree of democracy in Georgia.

Chapter 6. Conclusions

The aim of the following factor-centric single case study was to analyse whether China has affected the quality of democracy in Georgia throughout the 2013-2019 period. The study initially identified the research problem in the literature on China's influence on Georgia's domestic quality and set objectives to answer the following questions:

- *How does China influence the democratic quality in Georgia?*
- *What is the degree of China's economic, political, and normative leverage to Georgia?*

The thesis then introduced the neo-Institutionalist theoretical framework, which frames the promotion of democratic and authoritarian regimes. After that, it employed the combined analytical framework of the Sociological and Rationalist Institutionalism theories and the modified Linkage and Leverage model. This served to explain the puzzle of the study, i.e. lack of empiricism and theorisation, identified in the state of art.

Next, the research moved on to the analysis of the degrees of leverages for evaluating China's influence of autocracy promotion in Georgia. Thus, the Linkage and Leverage analytical model evaluated China's economic, political and normative leverage to Georgia. This showed how strong China's strategies of autocracy promotion have been in Georgia during the 2013-2019 period. Additionally, the analysis assessed leverage of the democracy and autocracy promoting external actors – Russia and the EU to Georgia – in order to avoid merely claiming the correlation and instead to demonstrate the causality between the independent and dependent variables – the degree of democracy in Georgia and the degree of China's leverage to Georgia. The research employed secondary data collection methods, such as statistical data gathering and directed (deductive) content analysis to identify specific data and themes for studying Chinese, Russian and the EU political and normative leverages to Georgia.

The study revealed that the Chinese leverage to Georgia has been constantly low (between 0.96-1.02) for the 2013-2019 period and has remained significantly lower than that of the EU, which enjoyed a constant high leverage degree to Georgia (2.78), as well as the degree of Russia's leverage (1.19-1.37). This means that China has had no impact on the quality of democracy in Georgia throughout the 2013-2019 period.

The EU, unlike China, has been the largest trade and economic partner for Georgia. The EU's diplomatic engagement in the country has been seen as a potential remedy to the top security threat of the country – the Russian occupation – and therefore, the incumbents have been aspired

for gaining the membership in the Euro-Atlantic institutions, i.e. the EU and NATO, for the entire period between 2013 and 2019.

On the contrary, the Georgian government has not shown any interest towards the membership of the China-led SCO. Georgia has been a member of the AIIB, albeit it is worthwhile to note that the broader literature on autocracy promotion by China argues that there is no evidence to claim that the AIIB promotes autocracy. (Levitsky and Way 2020; Vieira 2018: 7) Therefore, it was not considered as a factor for determining the degree of China's leverage in the following study.

The literature review has shown that China employs two strategies to promote autocracy abroad. These are socialisation (integration) and soft power. The research assessed the influence of these strategies in Georgia by measuring the degrees of economic, political and normative leverage. The study has revealed that due to low degrees of these leverage categories, none of China's strategies of autocracy promotion has had any substantial impact on the democracy quality in Georgia during the 2013-2019 period.

Having assessed normative leverage, the study also revealed that, the Chinese soft power in Georgia has remained weak due to the latter's pro-EU aspirations and at the declared commitment to democratic values. The GD signed the AA with the EU, after which it pursued the AA agenda implementation with the objective of Georgia's gradual economic and political integration with the EU, including the harmonisation of the Georgian legislation with the EU law. (European Commission 2014)

As for China's political and economic integration strategies of autocracy promotion, they have had no (or insignificant) influence as well. China has had medium political (1.33) and low economic leverage (between 0.56- 0.73) to Georgia during the 2013-2019 period. The analysis showed that the integration between Georgia and China has been weak since Georgia has not become part of the SCO, nor it has had considerably denser economic ties with China, as opposed to Russia or the EU. Thus, it can be argued that China's both instruments in the region, i.e. soft power and economic and political integration, have not yet found a strong foothold in Georgia and thus cannot influence the democracy quality in the country.

The study encompassed several limitations. The timeframe of the 2013-2019 period, which has been set in the research, can be considered one of them. It can be fascinating to look at a more extended period, which could show different patterns with regard to the democratic quality in Georgia and external influences.

Secondly, the study aimed at illustrating a general empirical picture to reveal whether China possesses an impact on Georgia's democracy quality. Nonetheless, more in-depth analysis can be carried out on domestic policies implemented by the Georgian government and their compatibility with China's or other actors' norms and values. Further research can also employ an alternative structural approach, which has been originally followed by Levitsky and Way (2010). In this case, unlike the neo-Institutionalist approach employed here, the focus can be put on structural factors, i.e. organisational power of domestic incumbents. This will serve to analyse how external influences impact on the state's coercive power, party cohesion, state cohesion, etc.

Another prospective for further research can be a comparative study, exploring influences of more actors in the region, such as the US, Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan, the CIS states, etc. The future studies can also follow a medium and large-N case study design to look at China's impact on democracy trajectories in all post-Soviet or EaP countries as well as other regions, such as CEE. It is also interesting to look at the impact China could have on Russia's foreign and domestic policies in the post-Soviet space. Last but not least, similar research should be conducted to identify any possible change in China's influence on Georgia in the future.

Despite the limitations mentioned above, it can be concluded that the following thesis has demonstrated a relevant and interesting approach to study changes in the democratic quality from the perspective of external factors. The study successfully modified the Linkage and Leverage analytical framework and employed it along with the theories of Sociological and Rational Choice Institutionalism. Following the neo-Institutionalist approach, the research tried to avoid diminishing the importance of domestic factors, such as incumbents' foreign policy aspirations and their commitment to democratic norms. Overall, the thesis has contributed to the literature exploring changes of the quality of democracy, the external dimension of regime changes and promotion of authoritarianism by China in the post-Soviet/EaP region.

Bibliography

- Ademmer, E., Börzel, T., A. (2013) 'Migration, Energy and Good Governance in the EU's Eastern Neighborhood', Europe Asia Studies, Volume 65, Number 4
- Agenda (2019) 'Georgian exports to Russia increase dramatically in 6 years, Georgian envoy to Russia says' <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2019/1556> consulted on 29.06.20
- Agenda (2014) 'Abashidze stresses importance of informal Georgian-Russian dialogue' <https://agenda.ge/en/news/2014/2399> consulted on 29.06.20
- Ambrosio, T. (2008) 'Catching the 'Shanghai Spirit': How the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Promotes Authoritarian Norms in Central Asia', Europe-Asia Studies, Volume 60, Number 8, September
- Ambrosio, T. (2009) Authoritarian Backlash: Russian Resistance to Democratization in the Former Soviet Union, Farnham: Ashgate
- Ambrosio, T. (2010) 'Constructing a Framework of Authoritarian Diffusion: Concepts, Dynamics, and Future Research', International Studies Perspectives, Number 11
- Ambrosio, T. (2012) 'The rise of the 'China Model' and 'Beijing Consensus': evidence of authoritarian diffusion?', Contemporary Politics, Volume 18, Number 4, December
- Bader, J. (2015) 'China, Autocratic Patron? An Empirical Investigation of China as a Factor in Autocratic Survival', International Studies Quarterly, Volume 59
- Bader J., Ringbolt J. and Kastner, A. (2010) 'Would Autocracies Promote Autocracy? A Political Economy Perspective on Regime-type Export in Regional Neighborhoods', Contemporary Politics, Volume 16, Number 1
- Bakhtadze, M. (2018) 'სამუშაო ვიზიტი ჩინეთში' [Business Visit to China] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZbjLztyWGQ> consulted on 01.07.20
- Bakhtadze, M. (2019) 'შეხვედრა ჩინეთის სახელმწიფო საბჭოს პრემიერთან' [Meeting with Premier of China] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLEAcODDKQ0&t=46s> consulted on 01.07.20

- Bakhtadze, M. (2019b) ‘პრემიერ-მინისტრი მსოფლიო ეკონომიკურ ფორუმზე’ [The Prime Minister at the World Economic Forum] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFyjyV1_fT4 consulted on 29.06.20
- Barma, N., Ratner, E. (2006) ‘China’s Illiberal Challenge’, Democracy Journal, Number 2
- Baxter, P., E., Jack, S., M. (2010) ‘Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers’, Qualitative Report, Volume 13, Number 4, January
- BBC (2006) ‘High stakes in Georgia standoff’ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5403714.stm> consulted on 05.07.20
- BBC (2019) ‘Georgia protests: Thousands storm parliament over Russian MP’s speech’ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-48710042> consulted on 03.08.20
- Blackwill, R., Tellis, A. (2015) ‘Revising U.S. Grand Strategy Toward China’, Council on Foreign Relations, Number 72, March
- Blockmans, S. (2018) ‘Georgia’s European Way: What Next?’, Policy Papers: DCFTA implementation, Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, July
- Börzel, T. (2010) ‘The Transformative Power of Europe Reloaded: The Limits of External Europeanization’, KFG Working Paper, Number 11
- Börzel, T., A. (2015) ‘The noble west and the dirty rest? Western democracy promoters and illiberal regional powers’, in N. Babayan and T. Risse (ed.) Democracy Promotion and the Challenge of Illiberal Regional Powers, Volume 22, Number 3, March
- Börzel, T., Pamuk, Y. (2011) ‘Europeanization Subverted? The European Union’s Promotion of Good Governance and the Fight against Corruption in the Southern Caucasus.’, KFG Working Paper, Number 26, April
- Börzel T., A., Risse, T. (2000), ‘When Europe hits home: Europeanization and domestic change’, European integration online papers, Number 4
- Buckley, N. (2013) ‘Georgian wine to flow as Russia lifts ban’ <https://www.ft.com/content/13269432-6ee9-11e2-9ded-00144feab49a> consulted on 30.06.20 consulted on 20.07.20

- Bühlmann, M., Merkel, W. and Weßels, B. (2007) 'The Quality of Democracy: Democracy Barometer for Established Democracies', National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR), Number 10
- Bulmer, S. (2008) 'Theorizing Europeanization' in P. Graziano and M. Vink (ed.) Europeanization: New Research Agendas, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan
- Burnell, P. (2006) 'Promoting Democracy Backwards: Looking forward', Promoting Democracy at the Grassroots
- Burnell, P. (2010) 'Is there a new autocracy promotion?', Working paper, Volume 96, March
- Burnell, P., Schlumberger, O. (2010) 'Promoting democracy – Promoting autocracy? International politics and national political regimes', Contemporary Politics, Volume 16, Number 1, March
- Carothers T., (2002) 'The end of Transition Paradigm', Journal of Democracy, Volume 13, Number 1, January
- Charaia, V., Anguridze, O., Lashkhi, M., Gulbani, S., Kurdghelia, L. and Shatakishvili, D. (2020) 'ჩინეთის ფაქტორი ქართულ ეკონომიკაში' [Chinese Factor in Georgian Economy] Sector 3
- Charaia, V., Papava, V. and Wang, F. (2018) 'China-Georgia Economic Relations in the Context of the Belt and Road Initiative', The Georgian National Academy of Sciences, Volume 12, Number 1
- Chen, D., Kinzelbach, K. (2014) 'Democracy promotion and China: blocker or bystander?', Democratisation, Volume 22, Number 3
- Chkhikvadze V. (2019) 'Georgia Overcoming the Libertarian Legacy', The Eastern Partnership A Decade On, Number 153, July
- Chou, M., Pan, C. and Poole A. (2016) 'The threat of autocracy diffusion in consolidated democracies? The case of China, Singapore and Australia', Contemporary Politics
- Civil Georgia (2014) 'Georgia, EU Sign Association Agreement' <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27417> consulted on 15.07.20
- Collier, D., and Levitsky S. (1997) 'Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research', World Politics, Volume 49, Number 3

- Cooley, A. (2015) 'Authoritarianism Goes Global: Countering Democratic Norms', Journal of Democracy, Volume 26, Number 3
- Council of the European Union (2009) European Security Strategy. A secure Europe in a better world, Brussels: EUR-OP.
- Crespy A. (2015) 'Analysing European Discourses' in K. Lynggaard, I. Manners, K. Kröfgen (ed.) Research Methods in European Union Studies, Palgrave Macmillan
- Cumpanasu B., L. (2019) 'China's linkages and leverages in Central and Eastern Europe – a new challenge for EU', CES Working Papers, Volume 11, Number 3
- Dahl, R. (1970) Polyarchy, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Diamond, L., J., Plattner M., F. and Walker, C. (2016) Authoritarianism Goes Global, Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press
- Dijk, V., P., Martens, P. (2016) 'The Silk Road and Chinese interests in Central Asia and the Caucasus: the case of Georgia', Maastricht School of Management, Volume 12
- DiMaggio, P., Powell, W. (1983) 'The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields', American Sociological Review, Volume 48, Number 2
- Eder, T. (2018) 'Chinese approaches to the eastern neighbourhood', Chaillot Papers, Number 144, March
- Elkins, Z., Simmons, B. (2005) 'On Waves, Clusters, and Diffusion: A Conceptual Framework' The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Volume 598, Number 1
- Emerging Europe (2018) 'China-Georgia FTA Takes Effect' <https://emerging-europe.com/news/china-georgia-fta-takes-effect/> consulted on 15.07.20
- Ercan, S., A., Gagnon J.P. (2014) 'The crisis of democracy: Which crisis? Which democracy?' Democratic Theory, Volume 1, Number 2, Winter
- Erdmann, G. (2011) 'Transition from Democracy. Loss of quality, hybridisation and breakdown of democracy', German Institute of Global Area Studies, Volume 161
- European Union Monitoring Mission. 'About us' https://eumm.eu/en/about_eumm consulted on 03.07.20

European Commission (2014) ‘The EU's Association Agreements with Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine’ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_14_430 consulted on 09.07.20

European Commission. ‘Eastern Neighbourhood Policy’ https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/international-affairs/european-neighbourhood-policy_en consulted on 09.07.20 consulted on 30.06.20

European Commission. ‘Countries and Regions: Georgia’ <https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/georgia/#:~:text=The%20EU%20is%20the%20main,%E2%82%AC%2020billion%20in%202019.> consulted on 30.06.20

European Union External Action (2018) ‘Georgia and the EU’ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/49070/Georgia%20and%20the%20EU consulted on 09.07.20

Florini, A. (1996) ‘The Evolution of International Norms’, International Studies Quarterly, Evolutionary Paradigms in the Social Sciences, Volume 40, Number 3

Forbes (2019) ‘გალტ & თაგარტის პარტნირობით თბილისში “აბრეშუმის გზის საერთაშორისო ფორუმი” გაიმართა’ [With Partnership of Galt and Taggart “The Silk Road International Forum” Was Held in Tbilisi] <https://forbes.ge/news/7275/abreSumis-gzis-saerTaSoriso-forumi> consulted on 28.06.20

Franke, A., Gawrich A., Melnykovska, I. and Schweickert, R. (2010) ‘The European Union's Relations with Ukraine and Azerbaijan’, Post-Soviet Affairs, Volume 26, Number 2

Freedom House. ‘Freedom in the World Research Methodology’, <https://freedomhouse.org/reports/freedom-world/freedom-world-research-methodology> consulted on 02.08.20

Freedom House (2008) ‘Freedom in the World 2008’

Freedom House (2009) ‘Freedom in the World 2009’

Freedom House (2010) ‘Freedom in the World 2010’

- Freedom House (2011) 'Freedom in the World 2011'
- Freedom House (2012) 'Freedom in the World 2012'
- Freedom House (2013) 'Freedom in the World 2013. Democratic Breakthroughs in the Balance'
- Freedom House (2014) 'Freedom in the World 2014. The Democratic Liberty Hub'
- Freedom House (2015) 'Freedom in the World 2015. Discarding Democracy: Return to the Iron Fist'
- Freedom House (2016) 'Freedom in the World 2016. Anxious Dictators, Wavering Democracies: Global Freedom under Pressure'
- Freedom House (2017) 'Freedom in the World 2017. Populists and Autocrats: The Dual Threat to Global Democracy'
- Freedom House (2018) 'Freedom in the World 2018. Democracy in Crisis'
- Freedom House (2019) 'Freedom in the World 2019. Democracy in Retreat'
- Gakharia, G. (2019) 'საქართველოს პრემიერ-მინისტრმა თბილისის აბრეშუმის გზის ფორუმი გახსნა' [The Georgian Prime Minister Opened the Tbilisi Silk Road Forum] http://gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=geo&sec_id=520&info_id=73857 consulted on 28.06.20
- Gasanova, M. (2016) 'Chinese Investments in Georgia to Surge in 2016' <https://www.finchannel.com/world/georgia/56004-chinese-investments-in-georgia-to-surge-in-2016> consulted on 28.06.20
- Gat, A. (2007) 'The Return of Authoritarian Great Powers', <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2007-07-01/return-authoritarian-great-powers> consulted on 19.06.20
- Gawrich, A., Melnykovska, I. and Schweickert, R. (2009) 'Neighbourhood Europeanization through ENP: The Case of Ukraine.', KFG Working Papers
- Gel'man, V., Lankina, T. (2008) 'Authoritarian Versus Democratic Diffusions: Explaining Institutional Choices in Russia's Local Government', Post-Soviet Affairs, Volume 21, Number 1

- Gerrits, A. (2008) 'Democracy Research and Democracy Promotion Under the Shadow of Semi-Authoritarianism', World International Studies Committee Conference, July
- Gharibashvili, I. (2015) 'რა საკითხებს განიხილავს ქართული დელეგაცია ჩინეთში' [What Issues is the Georgian Delegation Discussing in China?] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWz2ORoS_v0 consulted on 01.07.20
- Gharibashvili, I. (2015b) 'საქართველო ჩინეთთან თავისუფალი ვაჭრობის შესახებ მოლაპარაკებას იწყებს' [Georgia Starts Negotiations on the Free Trade Agreement with China] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GCeLD0NXT8> consulted on 07.02.20
- Gilpin, R. (1981) War and Change in World Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Glurjidze E., Dzamukashvili, S. (2020) 'The Anaklia Port: A Venture the Georgian Government Cannot Risk?' <https://www.institutegreatereurope.com/single-post/2020/06/17/The-Anaklia-Port-A-Venture-the-Georgian-Government-Can-Not-Risk> consulted on 15.07.20
- Gogolashvili, K. (2019) '10 წელი აღმოსავლეთ პარტნიორობის დაარსებიდან' [10 Years after the Establishment of the Eastern Partnership] <https://www.gfsis.org/ge/blog/view/949> consulted on 09.07.20
- Gschwend, T., Schimmelfennig, F. (2007) Research Design in Political Science. How to Practice what they Preach, Palgrave Macmillan
- Gustafsson, J. (2017) Single case studies vs. multiple case studies: A comparative study, Halmstad: Halmstad University
- Hall, P., A., Taylor, R.C.R. (1996) Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms, Köln: Max-Planck-Institut für Gesellschaftsforschung
- Hameiri, S., Jones, L. (2016) 'Rising Powers and State Transformation: The Case of China', European Journal of International Relations, Volume 22
- Hermann, C., F. (1990) 'Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy', International Studies Quarterly, Volume 34, Number 1, March
- Hong'e, M. (2017) 'President Xi Says to Build Belt and Road into Road for Peace, Prosperity', <http://www.ecns.cn/business/2017/05-14/257308.shtml> consulted on 25.03.20

- Horowitz, I. L. (2006) 'The struggle for democracy', <https://nationalinterest.org/article/the-struggle-for-democracy-880> consulted on 02.08.20
- Hufbauer, G., Clyde, G., Schott, J. and Elliott, K. (1990) Economic Sanctions Reconsidered: History and Current Policy, Washington: Institute for International Economics
- Hughes J., Sasse, G. (2016) 'Power ideas and conflict: ideology, linkage and leverage in Crimea and Chechnya', East European Politics, Volume 32, Number 3
- Information Development Freedom Institute (2014) 'რა საკითხებს მოიცავს საქართველოსა და ევროკავშირს შორის ასოცირების შესახებ შეთანხმება?' [What Issues does the Association Agreement between Georgia and the EU Encompass?] <https://idfi.ge/ge/the-content-of-the-eu-georgia-association-agreement>, consulted on 20.03.20
- Information Development Freedom Institute (2015) 'საქართველოს შეცვლილი საზღვრები ოკუპაციის შემდეგ' [The Shifted Borders of Georgia after the Occupation] <https://idfi.ge/ge/changed-borders-of-georgia-after-occupation> consulted on 06.02.20
- Jamestown Foundation (2014) 'Russia Warns Georgia Against Signing Association Agreement with European Union' <https://jamestown.org/program/russia-warns-georgia-against-signing-association-agreement-with-european-union/> consulted on 11.07.20
- Kaczmarek, M., Jakóbcowski, J. and Kardaś, S. (2019) 'The effects of China's economic expansion on Eastern Partnership countries', EU STRAT Working paper, Number 17, March
- Kleine-Ahlbrandt S., Small, A. (2008) 'China's New Dictatorship Diplomacy. Is Beijing Parting with Pariahs?' <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2008-06-01/chinas-new-dictatorship-diplomacy> consulted on 19.06.20
- Komakhia, M. (2017) 'ცხინვალის რეგიონში უსაფრთხოების სფეროზე რუსეთის გავლენა იზრდება: მხარდაჭერა სრული ინტეგრაციის სანაცვლოდ' [The Russian Influence on the Security Sphere is Growing in the Tskhinvali Region: Support for the Sake of Full Integration] <https://www.gfsis.org/ge/blog/view/766> consulted on 05.07.20 consulted on 02.08.20

- Kopstein, J., Reilly, D. (2000) 'Geographic Diffusion and the Transformation of the Postcommunist World', World Politics, Volume 53, Number 1
- Kuchins A., C., Mankoff, J. and Backes, O. (2016) 'Georgia in a Reconnecting Eurasia. Foreign Economic and Security Interests', Center for Strategic and International Studies and Eurasia Programme, June
- Kurlantzick, J. (2007) Charm Offensive. How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World, New Haven and London: Yale University Press
- Kvirikashvili, G. (2014) 'კვირიკაშვილის სამუშაო ვიზიტი ჩინეთში' [The Business Visit of Kvirikashvili to China] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJskZesxKR0> consulted on 30.06.20
- Kvirikashvili, G. (2015) 'რა საკითხებს განიხილავს ქართული დელეგაცია ჩინეთში' [What Issues is the Georgian Delegation Discussing in China] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWz2ORoS_v0 consulted on 01.07.20
- Kvirikashvili, G. (2015b) 'ღარიბაშვილი ჩინელ კოლეგას ხვდება' [Gharibashvili is Meeting his Chinese Colleague] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpzdYQL8ELA> consulted on 01.07.20
- Kvirikashvili, G. (2017) 'პრემიერ-მინისტრი: აბრეშუმის გზა უდიდეს შესაძლებლობებს გვამლევს' [Prime Minister: the Silk Road Provides Us Huge Opportunities] <https://ghn.ge/news/167662> consulted on 28.06.20
- Kvirikashvili, G. (2017b) 'პრემიერ-მინისტრი ჩინეთის სახალხო რესპუბლიკის მიღებაზე' [Prime Minister at the Reception of the Chinese People's Republic] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgKWMaw1IBY> consulted on 01.07.20
- Larsen, J. (2017) 'საქართველო-ჩინეთის ურთიერთობები: "სარტყელისა და გზის" გეოპოლიტიკა', [Georgia-China Relations: the Belt and Road Geopolitics] თბილისი: საქართველოს პოლიტიკის ინსტიტუტი
- Larsen, J. (2017b) 'Commentary: Georgia-China Relations are about More than Economics' <https://old.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=30514> consulted on 04.07.20
- Lebanidze B., and Grigalashvili M. (2018) 'Not the EU's World? Putting Georgia's European Integration in Context', Georgian Institute of Politics

- Lebanidze, B. (2019) Russia, EU and the Post-Soviet Democratic Failure, Bremen: Springer
- Lee, C., Strang, D. (2006) 'The International Diffusion of Public-Sector Downsizing: Network Emulation and Theory-Driven Learning', International Organization, Volume 60, Number 4
- Legislative Herald of Georgia (2013) 'შეთანხმება საქართველოს მთავრობასა და ჩინეთის სახალხო რესპუბლიკის მთავრობას შორის ეკონომიკური და ტექნიკური თანამშრომლობის შესახებ' [Agreement between the Government of Georgia and the Government of the People's Republic of China on Economic and Technical Cooperation]
<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/2219590?publication=0> consulted on 04.07.20
- Levitsky, S., Way, L. (2002) 'The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism.' Journal of Democracy, Volume 13, Number 2, April
- Levitsky, S., Way, L. (2006) 'Linkage versus Leverage. Rethinking the International Dimension of Regime Change', Comparative Politics, Volume 38, Number 4, July
- Levitsky, S., Way, L. (2010) Competitive Authoritarianism, Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Levitsky, S., Way, L. (2014) 'External Influence and Democratization. Structure vs. Choice', Journal of Democracy, Volume 25, Number 4, October
- Levitsky, S., Way, L. (2020) 'The New Competitive Authoritarianism', Journal of Democracy, Volume 31, Number 1, January
- Levy, J., C. (2009) 'Russia's Leaders See China as Template for Ruling', <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/18/world/europe/18russia.html> consulted on 18.06.20
- Lynch, D. (2004) 'International "Decentering" and Democratization: The Case of Thailand', International Studies Quarterly, Volume 48, Number 2
- Mailyan, B., V. (2015) 'Основные Тенденции Внешнеполитического Курса Грузии и Некоторые Аспекты ее Сотрудничества с Китайской Народной Республикой' [Major Tendencies of Domestic Political Course of Georgia and Some Aspects of its

- Relations with the People's Republic of China], Вестник РУДН, International Relations Edition, Number 2, June
- Makocki, M. (2017) 'China's Road: into Eastern Europe', Brief Issue of European Union Institute for Security Studies, Number 4
- Makocki, M. (2018) 'China, the new Silk Road and the EU's eastern neighbourhood', Chaillot Papers, Number 144, March
- Margvelashvili, G. (2018) 'Interview: China's development constitutes great opportunity for the world - Georgian president' http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-06/11/c_137246612.htm consulted on 25.06.20 consulted on 28.06.20
- McFarlane, S., N. (2015) 'ოცნების ორი წელი: საქართველოს საგარეო პოლიტიკა გარდამავალ პერიოდში' [Two Years of the Georgian Dream: Georgia's Foreign Policy in Transitional Period], Russia and Eurasia Programme, April
- Melnykovska, I., Plamper H., and Schweickert, R. (2012) 'Do Russia and China Promote Autocracy in Central Asia?', Asia Europe Journal, Volume 10, Number 1
- Ministry of Defence of Georgia (2012) National Security Concept of Georgia
- Ministry of Defence of Georgia (2019) საქართველოს უსაფრთხოების კონცეფცია [National Security Concept of Georgia]
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. 'დიპლომატიური ურთიერთობების ქრონოლოგია' [The Chronology of Diplomatic Relations] http://www.china.mfa.gov.ge/default.aspx?sec_id=1182&lang=1 consulted on 02.07.20
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. 'საქართველო საერთაშორისო ურთიერთობათა სისტემაში' [Georgia in International Relations System] <https://mfa.gov.ge/MainNav/ForeignPolicy/ForeignPolicyStrategy/საქართველო-საერთაშორისო-ურთიერთობათა-სისტემაში.aspx> consulted on 23.06.20
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. 'საგარეო პოლიტიკა. 'ურთიერთობები საქართველოსა და ჩინეთის სახალხო რესპუბლიკას შორის' [Foreign Policy. 'Relations between Georgia and the Chinese People's Republic]

<https://mfa.gov.ge/MainNav/ForeignPolicy/BilateralRelations/ჩინეთის-სახალხო-რესპუბლიკა.aspx> consulted on 28.06.20

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. ‘ურთიერთობები საქართველოსა და რუსეთის ფედერაციას შორის’ [Relations between Georgia and the Russian Federation] <https://mfa.gov.ge/MainNav/ForeignPolicy/BilateralRelations/რუსეთის-ფედერაცია.aspx?lang=ka-GE> consulted on 20.06.20

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (2012) ‘2012-2018 წლების საქართველოს საგარეო პოლიტიკის სტრატეგია’ [The 2019-2022 Foreign Policy Strategy of Georgia]

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (2017) ‘საქართველოსა და ჩინეთს შორის თავისუფალი ვაჭრობის შესახებ შეთანხმება გაფორმდა’ [The Agreement on Free Trade Has Been Concluded between Georgia and China] <https://mfa.gov.ge/News/saqartvelosa-da-chinets-shoris-tavisufali-vachrobi.aspx> consulted on 27.06.20

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (2018) ‘საქართველოსა და ჩინეთის სახალხო რესპუბლიკას შორის პოლიტიკური კონსულტაციები გაიმართა’ [Political Consultations Have Been Held between Georgia and the Chinese People’s Republic] <https://mfa.gov.ge/News/saqartvelosa-da-chinets-sakhalkho-respublikas-sho.aspx?CatID=5> consulted on 02.07.20

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia (2019) ‘2019-2022 წლების საქართველოს საგარეო პოლიტიკის სტრატეგია’ [The 2019-2022 Foreign Policy Strategy of Georgia]

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China (2013) ‘Ambassador to Georgia Yue Bin and Georgian Minister of Finance Nodar Khaduri Sign the Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation Between Chinese and Georgian Governments’ https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zwjg_665342/zwbd_665378/t1110321.shtml consulted on 28.06.20

Nan, Z., Xu, J. (2017) ‘China, Georgia sign FTA’, http://english.www.gov.cn/news/international_exchanges/2017/05/15/content_281475656216746.htmhttps://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjb_663304/zwjg_665342/zwbd_665378/t1110321.shtml consulted on 28.06.20

- National Democratic Institute (2019) ‘NDI Poll: EU and NATO Support Remains Strong but Threatened by Russia and Perception of Harm to Culture and Values; Armenian and Azeri Communities Respond Differently to NATO Membership’, <https://www.ndi.org/publications/ndi-poll-eu-and-nato-support-remains-strong-threatened-russia-and-perception-harm> consulted on 20.08.20
- National Statistic Office of Georgia. ‘External Trade Portal’ <http://ex-trade.geostat.ge/ka> consulted on 20.06.20
- National Statistic Office of Georgia. ‘Statistics Database. Foreign Direct Investments’ <http://pc-axis.geostat.ge/PXWeb/pxweb/ka/Database> consulted on 20.06.20
- National Statistics Office of Georgia (2018) ‘პირდაპირი უცხოური ინვესტიციები საქართველოში’ [The Foreign Direct Investments in Georgia]
- NATO. ‘What is NATO?’ <https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html#:~:text=POLITICAL%20%2D%20NATO%20promotes%20democratic%20values,the%20peaceful%20resolution%20of%20disputes.> consulted on 15.07.20
- Nelaeva, G., Semenov, A. (2016) ‘The EU-Russia Rivalry in the Balkans: Linkage, Leverage and Competition (The Case of Serbia)’, Romanian Journal of European Affairs, Volume 16, Number 3, September
- Nilsson, J. (2018) What Logics Drive the Choices of Public Decision-Makers? Luleå: Luleå University of Technology
- Obydenkova, A., Libman, A. (2015) Autocratic and Democratic External Influences in Post-Soviet Eurasia, London and New York: Routledge
- Ottaway, M. (2003), Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism, Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
- Papava, V. (2017) ‘One Belt One Road Initiative and Georgia’, Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, Volume 93, December
- Papava V., Charaia, V. (2017) ‘Belt and Road Initiative: Implications for Georgia and China-Georgia Economic Relations’, China International Studies, November-December

- Pavlićević, D. (2019) 'A Power Shift Underway in Europe? China's Relationship with Central and Eastern Europe Under the Belt and Road Initiative' in L. Xing (ed.) Mapping China's 'One Belt One Road' Initiative, Palgrave Macmillan
- Plattner, M., F. (2015) 'Is democracy in decline?', Journal of Democracy, Volume 26, Number 1, January
- Potter, W., J., Levine-Donnerstein, D. (1999) 'Rethinking validity and reliability in content analysis', Journal of Applied Communication Research, Volume 27
- Pu, X. (2012) 'Socialisation as a Two-Way Process: Emerging Powers and the Diffusion of International Norms', The Chinese Journal of International Politics, Volume 5
- Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (2009) 'Georgia Finalizes Withdrawal From CIS' https://www.rferl.org/a/Georgia_Finalizes_Withdrawal_From_CIS/1802284.html consulted on 11.07.20
- Radio Liberty (2012) 'ეგზიტპოლების შედეგებით, არჩევნებში "ქართული ოცნება" იმარჯვებს' [According to the Exit poll Results, The Georgian Dream is Winning the Elections] <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/qartuli-ocneba-imarjvebs/24725299.html> consulted on 15.07.20
- Radio Liberty (2019) 'ოკუპირებულთა „აღიარების“ 11 წელი: რუსეთი + 4' [11 Years of the Recognition of the Occupied: Russia +4] <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/ოკუპირებულთა-აღიარების-11-წელი-რუსეთი-4/30130027.html> consulted on 05.07.20
- Reuters (2019) 'Tens of thousands gather in Tbilisi to demand snap elections in Georgia' <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-georgia-politics-protests/tens-of-thousands-gather-in-tbilisi-to-demand-snap-elections-in-georgia-idUSKBN1XR0K1> consulted on 02.08.20
- Rolland, N. (2018) 'China's Ambitions in Eastern European and the South Caucasus', Russia/NIS Center, Volume 112
- Sasse, G. (2012) 'Linkages and the Promotion of Democracy: the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood', Democratization, Volume 20

- Schedler, A. (2002) 'The Menu of Manipulation' Journal of Democracy, Number 13, Volume 2
- Schimmelfennig, F. (2005) 'European neighborhood policy: Political conditionality and its impact on democracy in non-candidate neighboring countries'. Conference paper
- Schimmelfennig, F., Scholtz, H. (2008) 'EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighbourhood. Political Conditionality, Economic Development and Transnational Exchange.' European Union Politics, Volume 9, Number 2
- Schimmelfennig F., Sedelmeier, U. (2005) 'The Europeanization of Eastern Europe: The External Incentives Model Revisited', Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press
- Schweickert R., Melnykovska, I. and Plamper, H. (2012) 'External Drivers of Institutional Change in Central Asia – Regional Integration Schemes and the Role of Russia and China', Kiel Working Papers, Number 1763, March
- Shambaugh, D. (2013) China Goes Global: The Partial Power, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shattuck, T., J. (2019) On the Fault Line: Georgian Relations with China and the West, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Eurasia Programme
- Shepsle, K. (2006) 'Rational Choice Institutionalism' in Hall and Taylor (ed.) Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms, Cambridge: Harvard University
- Smolnik, F. (2018) 'Georgia positions itself on China's new Silk Road: relations between Tbilisi and Beijing in the light of the Belt-and-Road Initiative', Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Volume 13
- Stanzel, A. (2017) 'China's Belt and Road – new name, same doubts?' https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_chinas_belt_and_road_new_name_same_doubts consulted on 08.07.20
- Stronski, P., Vreeman, A. (2017) 'Georgia at Twenty-Five: In a Difficult Spot' <https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/05/25/georgia-at-twenty-five-in-difficult-spot-pub-70074> consulted on 01.07.20

Tabula (2017) ‘MFA: Nine Years After August 2008 War, Russia Does Not Fulfill Terms of Ceasefire Agreement’ <http://www.tabula.ge/en/story/122828-mfa-nine-years-after-august-2008-war-russia-does-not-fulfill-terms-of-ceasefire> consulted on 14.07.20

The Diplomat (2016) ‘Georgia: The Key to China’s ‘Belt and Road’ <https://thediplomat.com/2016/04/georgia-the-key-to-chinas-belt-and-road/> consulted on 15.07.20

The Economist Intelligence Unit. ‘About’, <https://www.eiu.com/n/about/> consulted on 28.07.20

The Economist Intelligence Unit (2012) ‘Democracy Index 2012. Democracy at a standstill’ [A Report from The Economist Intelligence Unit](#)

The Economist Intelligence Unit (2013) ‘Democracy index 2013. Democracy in Limbo’, [A report from The Economist Intelligence Unit](#)

The Economist Intelligence Unit (2014) ‘Democracy Index 2014. Democracy and its Discontents’, [A report from The Economist Intelligence Unit](#)

The Economist Intelligence Unit (2015) ‘Democracy Index 2015. Democracy in an Age of Anxiety’, [A report from The Economist Intelligence Unit](#)

The Economist Intelligence Unit (2016) ‘Democracy Index 2016. Revenge of the “Deplorables”’, [A report from The Economist Intelligence Unit](#)

The Economist Intelligence Unit (2017) ‘Democracy Index 2017. Free Speech under Attack’, [A report from The Economist Intelligence Unit](#)

The Economist Intelligence Unit (2018) ‘Democracy Index 2018. Me too? Political Participation, Protest and Democracy’, [A report from The Economist Intelligence Unit](#)

The Economist Intelligence Unit (2019) ‘Democracy Index 2019. A year of Democratic Setbacks and Popular Protest’, [A report from The Economist Intelligence Unit](#)

The Guardian (2017) ‘What is China’s Belt and Road Initiative?’ <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/ng-interactive/2018/jul/30/what-china-belt-road-initiative-silk-road-explainer> consulted on 15.07.20

- The New York Times (2010) 'China Passes Japan as Second-Largest Economy' <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/16/business/global/16yuan.html> consulted on 15.07.20
- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. 'About SCO' http://eng.sectsco.org/about_sco/ consulted on 25.08.20
- Time (1990) 'How Many Really Died? Tiananmen Square Fatalities' <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,970278,00.html> consulted on 07.08.20
- Tolstrup, J. (2009) 'Studying a negative external actor: Russia's management of stability and instability in the "Near Abroad"', Democratization, Volume 16, Number 5
- Tolstrup, J. (2013) 'When can external actors influence democratization? Leverage, linkages, and gatekeeper elites', Democratization, Volume 20, Number 4
- Vachudova, M., A. (2005) Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Vanderhill, R. (2013), Promoting Authoritarianism Abroad, Colorado USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers
- Vieira, V., R. (2018) 'Who Joins Counter-Hegemonic IGOs?', Research and Politics, April-June
- Way, L., A. (2015) 'The limits of autocracy promotion: The case of Russia in the "near abroad"', European Journal of Political Research, Volume 1, Number 16.
- Wendt, A. (1999) Social Theory of International Politics, New York: Cambridge University Press
- Weyland, K. (2005) 'Theories of Policy Diffusion: Lessons from Latin American Pension Reform', World Politics, Volume 57, Number 2
- Wilson, J., L. (2009) 'Coloured Revolutions: The View from Moscow and Beijing', Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics, Volume 25, Number 2-3
- Xing, L. (2019) Mapping China's 'One Belt One Road' Initiative, Macmillan

- Xinhua News Agency (2008) 'China 'concerned' of situation in South Ossetia, Abkhazia'
http://www.china.org.cn/international/foreign_ministry/2008-08/28/content_16349443.htm consulted on 01.07.20
- Yin, R., K. (2003) Case Study Research. Design and Methods, Washington: Vanderbilt University
- Zalkaliani, D. (2019) 'საქართველო - ჩინეთი' [Georgia-China]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BnoHHGI3vk> consulted on 01.07.20
- Zhao, S. (2010) 'The China model: Can It replace the Western Model of Modernization?',
Journal of Contemporary China, Volume 19, Number 65
- Zielonka, J. (2001) 'Conclusions: Foreign Made Democracy' in J. Zielonka and A. Pravda (ed.)
Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe. International and Transnational Factors,
Volume 2.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Georgian export to China, the EU and Russia (million USD). (*geostat.ge*)

Regional actor	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
China	34	90.4	125.8	174.3	201.7	198	227.6
EU	607.2	624.2	644.7	565.7	655.4	730.7	819.3
Russia	190.6	274.8	162.9	206	396.7	436.6	497.3
World	2910.3	2861	2204.2	2113	2735.8	3355.8	3769.4

Appendix 2. Shares of Georgian export to China, the EU and Russia. *Author's Elaboration*
(based on *geostat.ge*)

Regional actor	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
China	1.2%	3.1%	5.7%	8.2%	7.4%	5.9%	6%
EU	20.9%	21.8%	29.2%	26.8%	24%	21.8%	21.7%
Russia	6.5%	9.6%	7.4%	9.3%	14.5%	13%	13.2%

Appendix 3. Georgia's import from China, the EU and Russia (million USD). (*geostat.ge*)

Regional actor	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
China	612.2	733.5	587.3	547.5	732.6	833.9	858.6
EU	2266.1	2372	2080.9	2215	2200.7	2506.1	2331.5
Russia	583.9	573.3	625.1	675.6	786.9	934	976.2
World	8022.5	8601.8	7300.2	7293.9	7943	9136.5	9151.2

Appendix 4. Shares of Georgia's import from China, the EU and Russia in total import.

Author's Elaboration (based on geostat.ge)

Regional actor	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
China	7.6%	8.5%	8%	7.5%	9.2%	9.1%	9.4%
EU	28.2%	27.6%	28.5%	30.4%	27.7%	27.4%	25.5%
Russia	7.3%	6.7%	8.6%	9.2%	9.9%	10.2%	10.7%

Appendix 5. Chinese, EU and Russian Foreign Direct Investment in Georgia (million USD).

(geostat.ge)

Regional actor	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
China	101.1	220.1	66.9	25.5	19.3	75.7	40.4
EU	425.1	836	816.3	412.6	804.3	590.1	598.5
Russia	7.8	87.9	52.4	28.4	51.3	69.7	50.5
World	1039.2	1837	1729.1	1650.3	1962.6	1265.2	1267.7

Appendix 6. Shares of Chinese, EU and Russian Foreign Direct Investment in Georgia.

Author's Elaboration (based on geostat.ge)

Regional actor	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
China	9.7%	12%	3.9%	1.5%	1%	6%	3.2%
EU	40.9%	45.5%	47.2%	25.2%	41%	46.6%	47.2%
Russia	0.1%	4.8%	3%	1.7%	2.6%	5.5%	4%

Appendix 7. The Degrees of Economic Leverage of China, the EU and Russia to Georgia.

Author's elaboration

Regional actor	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
China	0.56	0.72	0.56	0.62	0.66	0.73	0.71
EU	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Russia	0.59	0.79	0.62	0.74	1.03	1.09	1.11

Appendix 8. The Degrees of leverage of China, the EU and Russia to Georgia. *Author's elaboration*

Regional actor	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
China	0.96	1.02	0.96	0.98	1	1.02	1.01
EU	2.78	2.78	2.78	2.78	2.78	2.78	2.78
Russia	1.19	1.26	1.21	1.25	1.34	1.36	1.37

Appendix 9. Content Analysis. (National Security Concept of Georgia 2012-2018)

Questions:

1. Does Georgia expect diplomatic/political assistance from a regional actor to solve its security challenge and/or threat, such as the EU, China, Russia?
2. Does Georgia rely on diplomatic/political assistance from a regional actor to solve its security challenge and/or threat, such as the EU, China, Russia?

The EU

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Dependence on assistance	Reliance on support	'International support for Georgia, as well as the presence of the European Union Monitoring Mission on the ground, are important deterrents to possible aggression.'

	<p>(this code refers to Georgian government's reliance on political/diplomatic assistance from an external actor to resolve the security issue/threat)</p>	<p>'The Government of Georgia believes that the only efficient means for defusing tensions is the creation of a peaceful mechanism to provide for the withdrawal of Russian troops from the occupied territories, and the deployment of international peacekeeping/police forces there. Consequently, the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) is important for Georgia.'</p> <p>'Georgia is not only a consumer of security, but also shares responsibility for collective security and actively participates in international missions.'</p> <p>'Deepening cooperation with the EU supports the further strengthening of Georgia's democratic institutions and security, as well as its economic integration with the EU.'</p> <p>'Georgia places special emphasis on more active EU involvement in resolving the Russian- Georgian conflict.'</p> <p>'It is of principal importance to Georgia that the EU, as the mediator of the Russian-Georgian Ceasefire Agreement of August 12,</p>
--	--	--

		<p>2008, exercise effective influence on the Russian Federation to fulfil the norms of international law and the international obligations it has undertaken.’</p>
	<p>Expectance for support (this code refers to Georgian government’s expectation of political/diplomatic assistance from an external actor to resolve the security issue/threat)</p>	<p>‘Broadening the integration processes in Europe is important for the security of Georgia. Georgia is a part of the European and Euro-Atlantic space. Therefore, the expansion eastward of NATO and of the European Union is important for Georgia.’</p> <p>‘The EUMM also must cover the occupied territories, consistent with the EUMM’s mandate. This will facilitate an effective peace process and the establishment of long-term peace.’</p> <p>‘Integration into NATO and the EU is Georgia’s sovereign choice, one which will strengthen Georgia’s security and ensure its stable development.’</p> <p>‘Georgia aspires to become part of European and Euro- Atlantic structures, which will enable it to consolidate its democracy and strengthen its national security.’</p>

China

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Dependence on assistance	Expectance for support	N/A
	Reliance on support	N/A

Russia

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Dependence on assistance	Expectance for support	N/A
	Reliance on support	N/A

Appendix 10. Content Analysis. (National Security Concept of Georgia 2019-2022)

Questions:

1. Does Georgia expect diplomatic/political assistance from a regional actor to solve its security challenge and/or threat, such as the EU, China, Russia?
2. Does Georgia rely on diplomatic/political assistance from a regional actor to solve its security challenge and/or threat, such as the EU, China, Russia?

The EU

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Dependence on assistance	Reliance on support (this code refers to Georgian government’s reliance on political/diplomatic assistance from an external actor to resolve the security issue/threat)	<p>‘ყოველივე ზემოაღნიშნულიდან გამომდინარე, არსებობს ახალი რუსული აგრესიის პოტენციური რისკი. თუმცა საქართველოსადმი გამოხატული საერთაშორისო მხარდაჭერა, მათ შორის ევროკავშირის სადამკვირვებო მისიის ყოფნა, ამ რისკის შემაკავებელი მნიშვნელოვანი ფაქტორია’</p> <p>‘საქართველოსთვის მნიშვნელოვანია ევროკავშირის სადამკვირვებლო მისიის საქმიანობა, ქვეყნის ხელისუფლებას მიაჩნია, რომ ამ მისიამ უნდა მოიცვას ოკუპირებული ტერიტორიებიც, როგორც განსაზღვრულია მისი მანდატით. ეს ხელს შეუწყობს სრულყოფილი სამშვიდობო პროცესის დაწყებას და გრძელვადიანი მშვიდობის დამყარებას.’</p>

		<p>‘ქვეყანა არა მხოლოდ უსაფრთხოების მომხმარებელია, არამედ იზიარებს კიდევ კოლექტიური უსაფრთხოების პასუხისმგებლობას.’</p> <p>‘საქართველო განსაკუთრებულ მნიშვნელობას ანიჭებს ევროკავშირის უფრო აქტიურ ჩართვას რუსეთ-საქართველოს კონფლიქტის მოგვარების პროცესში.’</p> <p>‘საქართველოსთვის პრინციპული მნიშვნელობა აქვს იმას, რომ ევროკავშირი, როგორც 2008 წლის 12 აგვისტოს რუსეთსა და საქართველოს შორის ცეცხლის შეწყვეტის შესახებ შეთანხმების შუამავალი, ეფექტიან ზემოქმედებას ახდენდეს რუსეთის ფედერაციაზე რათა მან სრულად შეასრულოს ნაკისრი საერთაშორისო ვალდებულებები და დაიცვას საერთაშორისო სამართლის ნორმები.’</p>
	<p>Expectation political for support</p> <p>(this code refers to Georgian government’s expectation of</p>	<p>‘საქართველო ევროპული და ევროატლანტიკური სივრცის ნაწილია. შესაბამისად, მისი უსაფრთხოებისთვის მნიშვნელოვანია ევროპაში მინდინარე ინტეგრაციული პროცესები, კერძოდ, ნატოსა</p>

	<p>political/diplomatic assistance from an external actor to resolve the security issue/threat)</p>	<p>და ევროკავშირის აღმოსავლეთით გაფართოება’</p> <p>‘საქართველო ესწრაფვის, გახდეს ევროპული და ევროატლანტიკური სტრუქტურების წევრი, რაც მას საშუალებას მისცემს მოახდინოს დემოკრატიის კონსოლიდაცია, ასევე განიმტკიცოს კეთილდღეობა და ეროვნული უსაფრთხოება.’</p> <p>‘ევროპულ და ევროატლანტიკურ ინსტიტუტებში საქართველოს ინტეგრაცია ხელს შეუწყობს კავკასიაში მშვიდობასა და სტაბილურობას, ეს კი, თავის მხრივ, განაპირობებს რუსეთის ფედერაციის სამხრეთი საზღვრების უსაფრთხოებას, რაც რუსეთის ინტერესიც უნდა იყოს.’</p> <p>‘საქართველოს სუვერენული არჩევანია ჩრდილოატლანტიკური ხელშეკრულების ორგანიზაციასა და ევროკავშირში ინტეგრაცია, რაც განამტკიცებს ქვეყნის უსაფრთხოებას და უზრუნველყოფს მის სტაბილურ განვითარებას.’</p> <p>‘ევროკავშირთან თანამშრომლობის განვითარებას ხელს უწყობს ქვეყანაში</p>
--	---	---

		დემოკრატიული ინსტიტუტების გამლიერებას, უსაფრთხოების განმტკიცებას და ევროკავშირთან ეკონომიკურ ინტეგრაციას.’
--	--	---

China

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Dependence on assistance	Expectance for support (this code refers to Georgian government’s reliance on political/diplomatic assistance from an external actor to resolve the security issue/threat)	N/A
	Reliance on support (this code refers to Georgian government’s expectation of political/diplomatic assistance from an external actor to resolve the security issue/threat)	N/A

Russia

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Dependence on assistance	Expectance for support (this code refers to Georgian government's reliance on political/diplomatic assistance from an external actor to resolve the security issue/threat)	N/A
	Reliance on support (this code refers to Georgian government's expectation of political/diplomatic assistance from an external actor to resolve the security issue/threat)	N/A

Appendix 11. Content Analysis. (Foreign Policy Strategies of Georgia 2012-2018)

Questions:

1. Are Georgian incumbents aspired to become a member of a regional organization led by China, Russia and the EU?

The EU

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Integration	Aspiration for membership	‘ევროკავშირისა და ნატოს წევრობა საქართველოს უსაფრთხოების, განვითარებისა

	<p>(this code refers to Georgian government's aspiration for the membership in the EU or NATO)</p>	<p>და კეთილდღეობის უზრუნველყოფის უმთავრესი გარანტია, რომელიც ეფუძნება საქართველოს ცივილიზაციურ არჩევანს, არის ფართო საზოგადოებრივი თანხმობის შედეგი და გამყარებულია ქვეყნის კონსტიტუციით.’</p> <p>‘საქართველოს ევროკავშირში გაწევრიანება წარმოადგენს საგარეო პოლიტიკის სტრატეგიულ მიზანს’</p> <p>‘მნიშვნელოვანი ძალისხმევა მიმართული იქნება საქართველოს ევროკავშირში გაწევრიანების პერსპექტივის აღიარებისკენ.’</p> <p>‘საქართველოს საგარეო და უსაფრთხოების პოლიტიკის მტკიცე და ურყევ მიზანს ჩრდილოატლანტიკური ხელშეკრულების ორგანიზაციაში გაწევრიანება წარმოადგენს.’</p> <p>‘საქართველოს წლიური ეროვნული პროგრამის, როგორც ერთ-ერთი მნიშვნელოვანი ინტეგრაციული მექანიზმის ეფექტიანად გამოყენება, ნატო-ში გაწევრიანების პროცესის ხელშეწყობის მიზნით.’</p>
--	--	--

		‘ქვეყნის ევროკავშირში გაერთიანების სტრატეგიული მიზნის მისაღწევად, საქართველო-ევროკავშირის ურთიერთობებში ახალი დინამიკის შეტანა;’
--	--	--

China

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Integration	Aspiration for membership (this code refers to Georgian government’s aspiration for the membership in the SCI)	N/A

Russia

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Integration	Aspiration for membership (this code refers to Georgian government’s aspiration for the membership in the EU or NATO)	N/A
	Aspiration (this code refers to Georgian government’s aspiration for	N/A

	economic cooperation with a regional actor)	
--	---	--

Appendix 12. Content Analysis. (Foreign Policy Strategies of Georgia 2012-2018)

Questions:

1. Are Georgian incumbents aspired to become a member of a regional organization led by China, Russia and the EU?

The EU

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Integration	Aspiration for membership (this code refers to Georgian government's aspiration for the membership in the EU or NATO)	<p>‘ევროკავშირისა და ნატოს წევრობა საქართველოს უსაფრთხოების, განვითარებისა და კეთილდღეობის უზრუნველყოფის უმთავრესი გარანტია, რომელიც ეფუძნება საქართველოს ცივილიზაციურ არჩევანს, არის ფართო საზოგადოებრივი თანხმობის შედეგი და გამყარებულია ქვეყნის კონსტიტუციით.’</p> <p>‘საქართველოს ევროკავშირში გაწევრიანება წარმოადგენს საგარეო პოლიტიკის სტრატეგიულ მიზანს’</p> <p>‘მნიშვნელოვანი ძალისხმევა მიმართული იქნება საქართველოს ევროკავშირში გაწევრიანების პერსპექტივის აღიარებისკენ.’</p>

		<p>‘საქართველოს საგარეო და უსაფრთხოების პოლიტიკის მტკიცე და ურყევ მიზანს ჩრდილოატლანტიკური ხელშეკრულების ორგანიზაციაში გაწევრიანება წარმოადგენს.’</p> <p>‘საქართველოს წლიური ეროვნული პროგრამის, როგორც ერთ-ერთი მნიშვნელოვანი ინტეგრაციული მექანიზმის ეფექტიანად გამოყენება, ნატო-ში გაწევრიანების პროცესის ხელშეწყობის მიზნით.’</p> <p>‘ქვეყნის ევროკავშირში გაერთიანების სტრატეგიული მიზნის მისაღწევად, საქართველო-ევროკავშირის ურთიერთობებში ახალი დინამიკის შეტანა;’</p>
--	--	---

China

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Integration	<p>Aspiration for membership</p> <p>(this code refers to Georgian government’s aspiration for the membership in the EU or NATO)</p>	N/A

Russia

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Integration	Aspiration for membership (this code refers to Georgian government's aspiration for the membership in the CIS, CSTO, EEU)	N/A

Appendix 13. Content Analysis. (National Security Concept of Georgia 2012-2018)

Questions:

1. Is the Georgia government (formally) committed to liberal-democratic values?

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Values	Commitment to liberal-democratic values (this code refers to Georgian government's formal statement to be committed to liberal-democratic values. Sub-codes: <i>democratic values rule of law, civil rights</i>)	'Freedom: The rights and freedoms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on Civil and Political Rights, and the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms are recognized by Georgia and guaranteed by its Constitution. Georgia guarantees the rights and freedoms of all citizens and groups residing in Georgia, respects their right of free choice, guarantees the right to freedom of speech, thought, conscience, religion, and belief, and creates a favourable environment that enables each citizen to realize his or her potential. Georgia recognizes that economic freedom is a precondition for the realization of all other rights and freedoms.'

		‘Democracy and rule of law: Georgia adheres to democratic values and principles, and based on these, establishes a system of democratic governance in which state power is limited by law and distributed among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Georgia ensures the rule of law, pluralism, and the protection of the rights of minorities, and seeks to strengthen civil society and other democratic institutions.’
--	--	--

Appendix 14. Content Analysis. (National Security Concept of Georgia 2019-2022)

Questions:

1. Is the Georgian government committed to liberal-democratic values?

Themes	Codes	Quotes
Values	Commitment to liberal-democratic values (this code refers to Georgian government’s formal statement to be committed to liberal-democratic values. Sub-codes: <i>democratic values rule of law, civil rights</i>)	‘თავისუფლება: ადამიანის უფლებათა საყოველთაო დეკლარაციით, სამოქალაქო და პოლიტიკური უფლებების საერთაშორისო პაქტითა და „ადამიანის უფლებათა და ძირითად თავისუფლებათა დაცვის“ ევროპის კონვენციით გათვალისწინებული უფლებები და თავისუფლებები საქართველოს მიერ აღიარებული და გარანტირებულია მისი კონსტიტუციით. საქართველო უზრუნველყოფს მის ტერიტორიაზე მცხოვრები ყველა ადამიანისა და ჯგუფის საყოველთაოდ აღიარებული უფლებებისა და თავისუფლებების დაცვას, პატივს სცემს მათი

		<p>თავისუფალი არჩევნის უფლებას, უზრუნველყოფს სიტყვის, აზრის, სინდისის, აღმსარებლობისა და რწმენის თავისუფლებას და ქმნის ხელსაყრელ გარემოს თითოეული მოქალაქის შესაძლებლობების რეალოზებისთვის. საქართველო აღიარებს, რომ ეკონომიკური თავისუფლება პიროვნების ყველა სხვა უფლებისა თუ თავისუფლების წინაპირობაა.’</p> <p>‘დემოკრატია და კანონის უზენაესობა: საქართველო დემოკრატიული ღირებულებებისა და პრინციპების ერთგულია და მათ საფუძველზე ამკვირდებს მმართველობის დემოკრატიულ სისტემას, რომელშიც ძალაუფლება კანონით არის შეზღუდული და განაწილებულია საკანონმდებლო, აღმასრულებელ და სასამართლო შტოებს შორის. საქართველო უზრუნველყოფს კანონის უზენაესობას, პლურლისმს და უმცირესობათა, მათ შორის ეთნიკური და რელიგიური უმცირესობების, უფლებების დაცვას და ხელს უწყობს სამოქალაქო საზოგადოებისა და სხვა დემოკრატიული ინსტიტუტების გაძლიერებას.’</p>
--	--	--

