

ANTI-EU PROPAGANDA IN GEORGIA: ANALYSIS OF MASS MEDIA SOURCES

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to reveal the key tendencies of the anti-EU propaganda in Georgia in 2021 based on the analysis of two pro-Russian media agencies (*Saqinformi* and *Georgia and the World*). In recent years the strengthened relations between the EU and Georgia resulted in the increased flow of the anti-EU propaganda disseminated especially by the Kremlin-supported mass media. This paper is aimed at identifying the main themes and tools employed against the EU in Georgia along with the extent to which the strategies of the two media agencies coincide/differ from each other. The paper is based on an analysis of articles from the two media sources, which revealed diverse strategies of propaganda used against the EU and the attempt to shape the negative perception of the EU in Georgia. The relevance of this study stems from the attempt to study the anti-EU propaganda as a distinct component of the broader category – anti-Western propaganda and to identify the strategies that media agencies employ in order to affect the EU image in Georgia.

Keywords: propaganda, EU, Georgia, Kremlin propaganda, pro-Russian media

Introduction

Propaganda has become one of the leading topics in today's world. It has developed into a widely used mechanism for achieving certain purpose without employing violent activities.

The aim of the paper is to study the anti-EU propaganda in Georgia and to reveal the employed strategies. The anti-EU propaganda has long been a topical issue in Georgia however it has become more acute after Georgia's membership application. The anti-EU propaganda is mainly studied alongside anti-Western propaganda in Georgia. The previous studies on this topic do not pay particular attention to the tools of propaganda. Hence, the factor – impact on people's perceptions is not outlined specifically. Lastly, no systemic comparison of the media agencies is provided.

To fill these gaps, the paper will approach the following research questions: 1. What are the most frequent themes employed in the articles of *Saqinformi*, and *Georgia and the World* with reference to the EU? 2. Do the afore mentioned articles contain any tools of propaganda against the EU and, if it is the case what are these tools? 3. What are the differences/similarities between *Saqinformi*, and *Georgia and the World* in terms of the employed themes and tools?

Analysis of all articles from both media is beyond the scope of this paper. Choosing only two agencies is limiting the relevance of the analysis for the whole picture of the situation in Georgia. The latter is envisaged to be a topic for the future research.

1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical mechanism is explained by Jowett and O'Donnell through the 'purpose model of propaganda'. The authors present 'persuasion' that includes three types of 'responses'. *Response shaping (R-s)* – this is a process when the 'persuader' tries to be in a position of an instructor to the public. *Response reinforcing (R-r)* – this process takes place when the 'persuader' has a desired response, but further encouragement is needed

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to make people not forget their duties. *Response changing (R-c)* is regarded to be the most complicated goal to accomplish, because it includes 'switching' people's minds from one pole to another.²

Apart from this model, propaganda is also observed based on its specificity. Douglas Walton supports the view that propaganda is a "convenient fiction".³

According to Walton, there are ten typical features of propaganda.⁴ These features are:

1. *Dialogue Structure*. Propaganda is a 'discourse' between two parties – *proponent* ('sender') and *respondent* ('receiver'). Its structure is based on the actions by *respondent* which is evaluated by *proponent*.
2. *Message Content*. The *proponent* elaborates arguments that are expressed differently, be them in 'verbal' and non-verbal forms, or the combination of them.
3. *Goal-Directed Structure*. The *proponent* aims to get the desired response and make the *respondent* perform the dictated actions.
4. *Involvement of Social Groups*. Propaganda is sometimes employed by a particular person but s/he always depicts the position of someone or something.
5. *Indifference to Logical Reasoning*. Logical code does not mainly apply to propaganda, the *proponent* employs 'discourse' that is not logically correct but affects people better.
6. *One-Sided Argumentation*. *Proponent* provides convincing arguments for their 'side' instead of making unbiased conclusions.
7. *Involvement of Persuasion Dialogue*. The main aim of propaganda is to make people react. Within this plan, persuasion is employed "in a secondary but essential way" to get the desired effect.
8. *Justified by Results*. Since propaganda aims at getting the desired 'action', propagandists 'justify' their activities "by citing a danger to the group, and then stressing that the adoption of a particular point of view is needed to combat or guard against that danger."
9. *Emotive Language and Persuasive Definitions*. The connotative aspect of lexical units is employed in propaganda to strengthen the position. As for *persuasive definitions*, its aim is to portray certain things negatively or positively by deviating from their original definition.
10. *Eristic Aspect*. Propaganda takes the form of debate, stressing that propaganda 'fights' the 'evil' (hence it outlines a 'dichotomy', 'good guys' versus 'bad guys').

Apart from these characteristics, Walton adds some features outlined by Marlin, such as 'photomontage techniques', and *orchestration* – when media outlets publish the same 'message'.⁵

Jacques Ellul describes *propaganda of agitation* whose general rule is that it affects "the less educated" part of society.⁶ Other types are – *rational and irrational propaganda*. Information and data (even if they are accurate) become *rational propaganda* when they serve as a tool to demonstrate the 'superiority' of a certain regime. *Irrational propaganda* directs people's attention to 'emotions' rather than on information.⁷

Jowett and O'Donnell distinguish three types of propaganda: *white, black, and gray*. *White propaganda* is said to originate from the known source. On the contrary, the origin of the *black propaganda* is not identified. *Gray propaganda* shares the features from both *black* and *white propaganda*, namely the origin is not always known.⁸

The features of Kremlin propaganda should also be taken into consideration, such as *jamming, Maskirovka*, and *Active Measures*. *Jamming* denotes the employment of several agencies to fulfill a common goal.⁹

² Gareth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (Washington DC: SAGE Publications, 2012), 33-35.

³ Douglas Walton, "What is Propaganda, and What is Wrong with it?" *Public Affairs Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (1997): 409.

⁴ Douglas Walton, "What is Propaganda, and What is Wrong with it?" 396-400.

⁵ Ibid, 400.

⁶ Jacques Ellul, trans., *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 74.

⁷ Ibid, 84-86.

⁸ Gareth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 17-20.

⁹ John B. Whitton, "Cold War Propaganda," *The American Journal of International Law* 45, no. 1 (1951): 151.

Maskirovka implies scrutinizing 'deception' techniques.¹⁰ *Active Measures* is attributed to the incorporation of 'experts' "who are not necessarily experts in the literal sense of the word, but voice, justify and defend positions that are in line with pro-Kremlin narratives".¹¹ Kremlin propaganda is perceived to be: *high-volume and multichannel, rapid, continuous, and repetitive, lacking commitment to objective reality, and lacking commitment to consistency*. The tactics employed are based on '4-D approach': *dismiss the critic, distort the facts, distract from the main issue, and dismay the audience*.¹²

All in all, this theoretical framework will assist in outlining the scope of the anti-EU propaganda in Georgia. An analysis of this issue from various angles will reveal the direction that is applied against the EU.

2. Methodology

The research is based on content analysis. The study combines the quantitative and qualitative content analysis. The latter is said to concentrate on the 'content' but not on the 'intentions' of specific data.¹³ To fill the gap of showing the 'intention' qualitative content analysis will be supplemented with *Critical Discourse Analysis* (CDA).

As concerns the data sample, there were two agencies selected *Saqinformi* and *Georgia and the World*. The reason for their selection is that the domain of both media agencies is owned by Taras Gagnidze, who is a founder of pro-Kremlin 'organization' *Historical Heritage*.¹⁴ According to the *Media Development Foundation* (2020), *Georgia and the World* ranks first as a source of propaganda; *Saqinformi* ranks second in the same data.¹⁵ The analyzed period will cover the last week of each month of 2021. The year was selected because it is not yet scrutinized. The final weeks are chosen because the media publish a high number of articles in the final weeks. The sample size is 191 articles, distributed between 128 articles for *Saqinformi* and 63 articles for *Georgia and the World*.

3. Findings

3.1. The themes depicted in the articles of Saqinformi

Within the last week of each month of 2021, *Saqinformi* published 128 articles;¹⁶ however the features of propaganda were detected in 22 articles.¹⁷

Continuing the line of quantitative data we will now focus on the most frequently used five words in the articles. The most frequently used five words are: 'Georgia', 'EU', 'Russia', 'Saakashvili', and 'Europe'. As for 'Georgia' and 'Russia', they are mentioned in a positive or neutral context; whereas 'EU', 'Saakashvili', and 'Europe' are referred negatively. Furthermore, the frequency of 'Saakashvili' points to the direction followed by *Saqinformi*. Namely, EU-Georgia relations are mainly (but not solely) centered on Mikheil Saakashvili. Figure 3.1 shows the frequency of these units.

¹⁰ Nicholas J. Cull et al., "Soviet Subversion, Disinformation and Propaganda: How the West Fought Against it An Analytical History, with Lessons for the Present," London School of Economics and Political Science (2017): 18.

¹¹ Irakli Sirbiladze, "Russia's Disinformation Campaigns in Georgia: A Study of State and Civil Society Response," PMC Research Center (2019): 15.

¹² Ibid, 16.

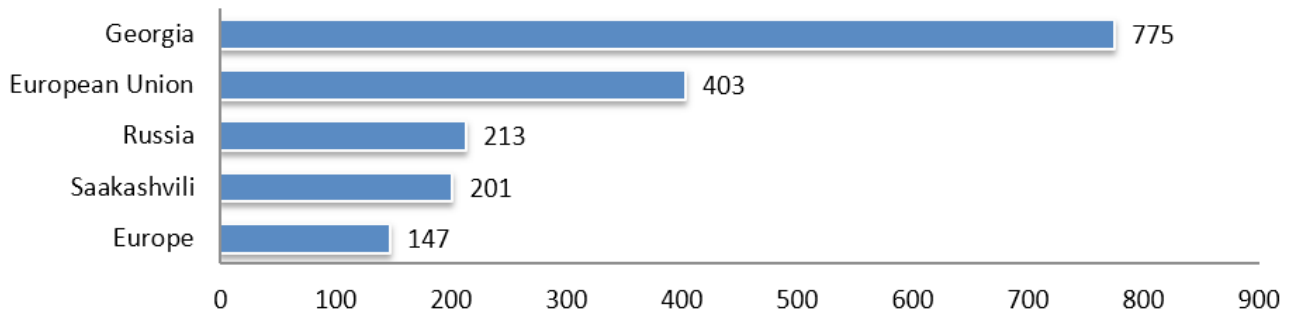
¹³ E. Bardach-Yalov, "Analyzing Russian Propaganda: Application of Siegfried Kracauer's Qualitative Content Analysis Method," Journal of Information Warfare 11, no. 2 (2012): 26.

¹⁴ „საქინფორმი“[«Saqinformi»], Myth Detector, June 7, 2017, accessed March 9, 2022, <https://mythdetector.ge/ka/profiles/saqinphormi/>

¹⁵ Tamar Kintsurashvili, "Anti-Western Propaganda 2020," Media Development Foundation (2021), 22.

¹⁶ The real number of the articles is 141, however 13 out of 141 articles are available twice.

¹⁷ The real number of such articles is 35, however 13 articles are available twice.

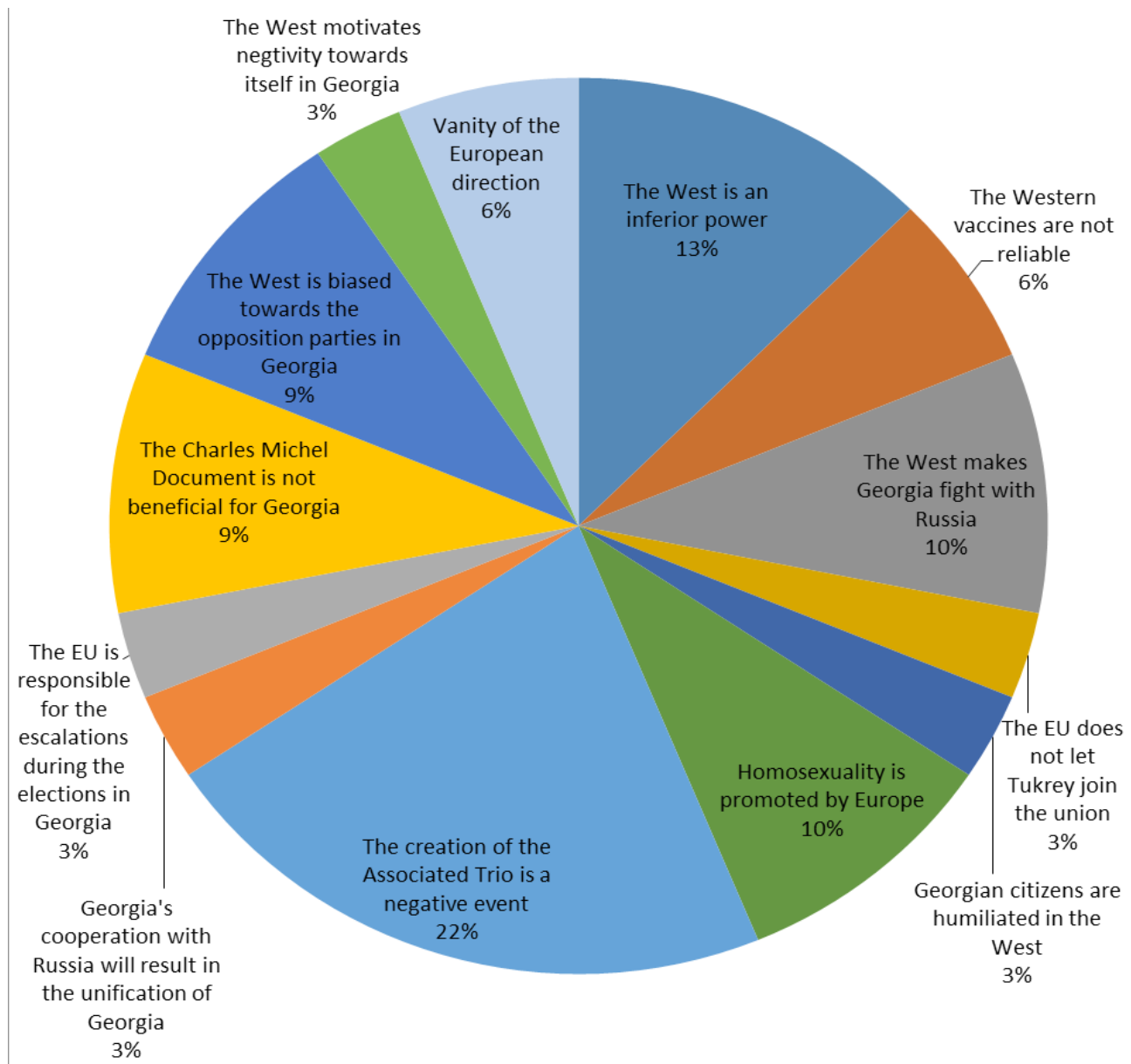
Figure 3.1: Frequency of words (*Saqinformi*)

The scrutiny of the articles revealed the tendency of accentuation on certain phenomena. The themes depicted in the articles that contained the features of propaganda can be classified in the following groups:

1. The West is an inferior power
2. The Western vaccines are not reliable
3. The West makes Georgia fight with Russia
4. The EU does not let Turkey join the union
5. Georgian citizens are humiliated in the West
6. Homosexuality is promoted by Europe
7. The creation of the Associated Trio is a negative event
8. Georgia's cooperation with Russia will result in the unification of Georgia
9. The EU is responsible for the escalations during the elections in Georgia
10. The Charles Michel Document is not beneficial for Georgia
11. The West is biased towards the opposition parties of Georgia
12. The West motivates negativity towards itself in Georgia
13. Vanity of the European direction

Figure 3.2 summarizes the proportion of each theme in the total number of themes.

Figure 3.2: The frequency of themes (Saqinformi)



The analysis revealed 13 clusters of themes. The most frequent among them is the critique towards the Associated Trio. It is portrayed as a political event that can undermine the territorial integrity of Georgia.¹⁸ Such depiction aims at undermining the value of the project.

Other thematic clusters accomplish the goal of creating the image of the EU (West) as a non-influential power in the world politics through stressing that it cannot help its partners and it treats them as the tools against Russia. A similar path is continued in depicting the vaccination where Western vaccines are mocked. Having emphasized these trends, the agency presents Russia as a political alternative for Georgia's stable future.

¹⁸ Arno Khidirbegishvili, „საქართველო-ევროკავშირი: წარიღტვა სიყვარული, დაშთა ოდენ ევრო! – არნო ხიდირბეგიშვილი“ [“Georgia-EU: Love is gone, only the EURO is remained! – Arno Khidirbegishvili”], Saqinformi, July, 26, 2021, accessed February 5, 2022, <http://saqinform.ge/news/51566/saqarTvelo-evrokavshiri%3A+wariltva+siyvaruli%2C+dashTa+oden+evro%21+-+arno+xidirbegishvili.html>

Furthermore, the issue of sexual minorities and subjectivity to the opposition parties stress the incompatibility of the EU to the social life and internal affairs of Georgia. This line is used to discern another theme where such actions from the EU (West) are said to promote negative attitudes towards it. This theme tries to direct the reader's attention to the performance of the EU and affect the 'cognitions' of the readers through obscuring the real reasons of the phenomenon.

Last but not least, direct themes about the EU include its refusal to Turkey's accession. This course is complemented through making the EU accountable for political chaos in Georgia. The European direction is also depicted as disadvantageous. The primary objective of these themes is to sow the frustration among the public.

To conclude, the above mentioned themes aim at the depreciation of the EU (West) and the introduction of Russia as a solution to the 'problems' created by the EU (West) in Georgia.

3.2 The tools of propaganda employed in the articles of Saqinformi

3.2.1 Emotive Language

The first tool represents emotionally colored words. The lexical units fall under this category for the reason that they carry negative associations (*connotation*). The first category of this tool is dedicated to the description of the main actors in EU-Georgia relations (*individualization*). The second category includes indirect and direct references to the EU.

The first category deals with the key figures in EU-Georgia relations such as: Carl Hartzell (Ambassador of the EU to Georgia), Charles Michel (President of the European Council), Tamar Kintsurashvili (director of MDF), and Salome Zourabichvili, Maia Sandu, and Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Carl Hartzell is depicted as an incompetent person.¹⁹ On its part, Charles Michel's mediation is said to be against the will of Georgia²⁰ to encourage hatred against him.

Tamar Kintsurashvili is a target of the tool due to her research field – anti-Western propaganda in Georgia. To diminish her service, her reports are referred as 'stupidity'.²¹ A slightly different depiction is seen in terms of the Presidents as they are portrayed within the Batumi International Conference.²² Their negative portrayal directs *irony* to the Conference dedicated to the Associated Trio to mock the project (*collectivization*).

The second category consists of the expressions that directly and indirectly mention the EU. The actors are described as the weak powers. The Euro-Atlantic direction is referred as "strange Euro-Atlantic family."²³ This seemingly simple expression highlights that this political direction and Georgian society are alienated. Furthermore, the EU itself is depicted ironically by stating – "Georgia-EU: Love is gone, only the EURO is

¹⁹ „თურქეთი არ გაუშვებს საქართველოს ევროკავშირში, ანუ რატომ შეადარა ევროკავშირის ელჩმა პარცელმა საქართველო ბალისტიკურ რაკეტას, რომელიც ცაში ვერ აიჭრა – საქინფორმი“ [“Turkey will not let Georgia join the EU, why the EU ambassador Hartzell compared Georgia with the Ballistic missile that could not fly into the air – Saqinformi”], Saqinformi, May 31, 2021, accessed March 13, 2022, <http://saqinform.ge/news/50888/TurqeTi+ar+gaushvebs+saqarTvelos+evrokavshirshi%2C+anu+ratom+sheadara+evrokavshiris+elchma+arcelma+saqarTvelo+balistikur+raketas%2C+romelic+cas+hi+ver+aiWra+--saqinformi.html>

²⁰ Arno Khidirbegishvili, „არნო ხიდირბეგიშვილი: რატომ გაფრინდა ვაშაძე კიევში, გახარია კი ვენაში, რატომ იხდის არუთუნიათი უვადო პატიმრობას, სააკიანი კი თავისუფლებაზეა“ [“Arno Khidirbegishvili: Why Vashadze fled to Kyiv, Gakharia to Vienna, why Arutunian is sentenced to life imprisonment and Saakiani is free”], Saqinformi, September 27, 2021, accessed March 16, 2022, <http://saqinform.ge/news/52306/arno+khidirbegishvili%3A+ratom+gafrinda+vashaZe+kievshi%2C+gaxaria+ki+venashi%2C+ratom+ixdis+aruTuniani+uvado+patimrobas%2C+saakiani+ki+Tavisuflebasea.html>

²¹ Arno Khidirbegishvili, „არნო ხიდირბეგიშვილი: რატომ გაფრინდა ვაშაძე კიევში, გახარია კი ვენაში, რატომ იხდის არუთუნიათი უვადო პატიმრობას, სააკიანი კი თავისუფლებაზეა“ [“Arno Khidirbegishvili: Why Vashadze fled to Kyiv, Gakharia to Vienna, why Arutunian is sentenced to life imprisonment and Saakiani is free”], Saqinformi.

²² Arno Khidirbegishvili, „საქართველო-ევროკავშირი: წარიღტვა სიყვარული, დამთა ოდენ ევრო! – არნო ხიდირბეგიშვილი“ [“Georgia-EU: Love is gone, only the EURO is remained! – Arno Khidirbegishvili”], Saqinformi.

²³ Arno Khidirbegishvili, „არნო ხიდირბეგიშვილი: ვის მოუწოდა პუტინმა „გაანალიზონ თავისი საქციელი“ და რატომ უბიძგებენ უკრაინასა და საქართველოს რუსეთთან შეარღებული კონფლიქტისკენ“ [“Arno Khidirbegishvili: Who Putin called to “analyze their behavior” and why Ukraine and Georgia are encouraged towards the armed conflict with Russia”], Saqinformi, December 27, 2021, accessed March 18, 2022, <http://saqinform.ge/news/53435/arno+khidirbegishvili%3A+vis+mouwoda+putinma+%E2%80%9CEgaaanalizon+Tavis+saqcieli%E2%80%9C+da+ratom+ubiZgeben+ukrainasa+da+saqarTvelos+ruseTTan+sheiaraRebuli+konfliqtisken.html>

remained!”²⁴ A Georgian version of this headline depicts *code switching* (between Modern Georgian and Old Georgian) – “საქართველო-ევროკავშირი: წარიღტვა სიყვარული, დაშთა ოდენ ევრო!”²⁵ It aims at attracting the readers’ attention and introducing *irony* as a tool of influence.

All in all, the main lines of *emotive language* are centered on the issue of incompatibility. This line is chosen to have an impact on Georgian citizens. The media tries to diminish the role of key figures through portraying them negatively. The lexical units are of negative *connotation* which falls under the feature outlined by Cantril – the power of words that makes propaganda triumphant.²⁶

3.2.2 Eristic Aspect

Apart from the language-related aspects the articles also revealed the tool – *eristic aspect* through the opposition between the ‘good guys’ and ‘bad guys’. Such excerpt comprehends: the difference between the Eurasian Union and the EU is that “the priority in the countries of the Eurasian Union is traditional religions that do not prevail the propaganda of sexual minorities.”²⁷ This difference is shown through religious aspects and the issue of sexual minorities which increases the scope of influence.

Hence, in the above mentioned case ‘good guy’ is the Eurasian Union whereas ‘bad guy’ is the EU.

3.2.3 One-sided Argumentation

The third tool is a one-sided representation of events. Such case is depicted in connection with moral standards. Namely, homosexuality is said to be the core European value;²⁸ on the other hand, the values of the EU are stated in the *Treaty of Lisbon* as follows – “respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.”²⁹ This aspect can be approximated to *convenient fiction* as it accentuates on the argument that is made up by the author himself to convince the readers.

Having scrutinized the examples of this tool, the agency avoids giving full picture of the case purposefully to mislead the readers.

3.2.4 Indifference to Logical Reasoning

The fourth tool detected in the articles is *indifference to logical reasoning*. The examples falling under this feature fail to satisfy the criterion of following the logical chain. This tool is similar to the feature of Kremlin propaganda described by Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews as *lacking commitment to objective reality*.³⁰

A good illustration of this tool is focused on Carl Hartzell. The article asks that may be Carl Hartzell implied Turkey when he compared Georgia to “the ballistic missile that could not fly into the air.”³¹ This question is already answered in the headline (*rhetorical question*) – “Turkey will not let Georgia join the EU, why the EU ambassador Hartzell compared Georgia to the Ballistic missile that could not fly into the air”.³² On the other

²⁴ Arno Khidirbegishvili, „საქართველო-ევროკავშირი: წარიღტვა სიყვარული, დაშთა ოდენ ევრო! – არნო ხიდირბეგიშვილი“ [“Georgia-EU: Love is gone, only the EURO is remained! – Arno Khidirbegishvili”], Saqinformi.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Handley Cantril, “Propaganda Analysis,” *The English Journal* 27, no. 3 (1938): 219.

²⁷ Arno Khidirbegishvili, „საქართველო-ევროკავშირი: წარიღტვა სიყვარული, დაშთა ოდენ ევრო! – არნო ხიდირბეგიშვილი“ [“Georgia-EU: Love is gone, only the EURO is remained! – Arno Khidirbegishvili”], Saqinformi.

²⁸ Arno Khidirbegishvili, „საქართველო-ევროკავშირი: წარიღტვა სიყვარული, დაშთა ოდენ ევრო! – არნო ხიდირბეგიშვილი“ [“Georgia-EU: Love is gone, only the EURO is remained! – Arno Khidirbegishvili”], Saqinformi.

²⁹ “Treaty of Lisbon Amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community,” *Official Journal of the European Union*, December 17, 2007, accessed February 5, 2022, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12007L%2FTXT>

³⁰ Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews, 2016, apud Irakli Sirbiladze, “Russia’s Disinformation Campaigns in Georgia: A Study of State and Civil Society Response”, 16.

³¹ „თურქეთი არ გაუშვებს საქართველოს ევროკავშირში, ანუ რატომ შეადარა ევროკავშირის ელჩმა ჰარცელმა საქართველო ბალისტიკურ რაკეტას, რომელიც ცაში ვერ აიჭრა – საქინფორმი“ [“Turkey will not let Georgia join the EU, why the EU ambassador Hartzell compared Georgia with the Ballistic missile that could not fly into the air – Saqinformi”], Saqinformi.

³² Ibid.

hand, in the original text of the speech Carl Hartzell claims that the reasons for the barriers are “the pandemic and increased challenges in the region”.³³ He does not mention Turkey as an obstacle to Georgia’s integration. Therefore, the author employs an assertive sentence to demonstrate something that has not been confirmed.

On the whole, the aim of *indifference to logical reasoning (lacking commitment to objective reality)* is to convince the readers about the implausibility of the European direction.

3.2.5 Dialogue Structure

Dialogue structure is among the tools that can affect the ‘cognitions’ of readers. The examples of it include the address to the readers as follows – “[f]riends and non-friends!”³⁴ “[p]lease [you readers] tell me why the creation of the Associated Trio was necessary...”³⁵

The aim of such constructions is to remain closer ties with the readers, and stress that the articles published by *Saqinformi* are beneficial for everyone despite their attitudes to it.

3.2.6 Orchestration

This category comprises the identical articles of *Saqinformi* with *Sputnik* and *News Front*. The examples deserved special attention in view of the fact that they depict the positions of Russian officials.³⁶

Furthermore, *News Front* is said to be an active role player in spreading fake news.³⁷ *Sputnik* is referred as a “Russian state-funded and state-directed” agency.³⁸ Hence, the agency relies on pro-Russian media companies.

The reliance on other media agencies is not only functional for detecting the traits of the sources. At the theoretical level, it helps us see the shades of *white propaganda* – propaganda that it is said to originate from the known source.³⁹ Hereinafter this phenomenon will be approximated to the notion in Kremlin propaganda – *jamming* as several agencies are employed to fulfill a “single purpose.”⁴⁰

³³ „ევროკავშირის ელჩის, კარლ ჰარცელის მისასალმებელი სიტყვა საქართველოს მთავრობისა და აღმოსავლეთ პარტნიორობის სამოქალაქო საზოგადოების ფორუმის საქართველოს ეროვნული პლატფორმის ერთობლივ კონფერენციაზე“ [“Welcoming speech by the Ambassador of the EU, Carl Hartzell, at the joint conference of the Government of Georgia and the Georgian national platform of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum”], Delegation of the European Union to Georgia, May 27, 2021, accessed March 13, 2022, https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/angola/9151/%E1%83%94%E1%83%95%E1%83%A0%E1%83%9D%E1%83%99%E1%83%90%E1%83%95%E1%83%A8%E1%83%98%E1%83%A0%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1-%E1%83%94%E1%83%9A%E1%83%A9%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1-%E1%83%99%E1%83%90%E1%83%A0%E1%83%9A-%E1%83%B0%E1%83%90%E1%83%A0%E1%83%AA%E1%83%94%E1%83%9A%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1-%E1%83%9B%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1%E1%83%90%E1%83%A1%E1%83%90%E1%83%9A%E1%83%9B%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%94%E1%83%9A%E1%83%98-%E1%83%A1%E1%83%98%E1%83%A2%E1%83%A7%E1%83%95%E1%83%90-%E1%83%A1%E1%83%90%E1%83%A5%E1%83%90%E1%83%A0%E1%83%97%E1%83%95%E1%83%94%E1%83%9A%E1%83%9D%E1%83%A1-%E1%83%9B%E1%83%97%E1%83%90%E1%83%95%E1%83%A0%E1%83%9D%E1%83%91%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1%E1%83%90-%E1%83%93%E1%83%90-%E1%83%90%E1%83%A6%E1%83%9B%E1%83%9D%E1%83%A1%E1%83%90%E1%83%95%E1%83%9A%E1%83%94%E1%83%97_ka

³⁴ Arno Khidirbegishvili, „არნო ხიდირბეგიშვილი: რუსული პური კარგია, რუსული ვაქცინა – ცუდი!“ [“Arno Khidirbegishvili – Russian bread is good, Russian vaccine – bad?!“], *Saqinformi*, March 30, 2021, accessed March 11, 2022, <http://saqinform.ge/news/50194/arno+xidirbegishvili%3A+rusuli+puri+kargia%2C+rusuli+vaqcina+--+cudi%3F%21.html>

³⁵ Arno Khidirbegishvili, „საქართველო-ევროკავშირი: წარიღტვა სიყვარული, დაშთა ოდენ ევრო! – არნო ხიდირბეგიშვილი“ [“Georgia-EU: Love is gone, only the EURO is remained! – Arno Khidirbegishvili“], *Saqinformi*.

³⁶ „სერგეი ლავროვი: არამეგობრული სახელმწიფოების სიაში ქვეყნებს განურჩევლად არ შევიყვანთ“ [“Sergey Lavrov: We will not include all the countries in the list of non-friendly states“], *Saqinformi*, April 29, 2021, accessed March 12, 2022, <http://saqinform.ge/news/50548/sergei+lavrovi%3A+aramegobruili+saxelmwifoebis+siashi+qveynebs+ganurchevld+ar+sheviyvanT.html>

³⁷ Iakob Lachashvili et al., „პრორუსული და ანტიდასავლური დეზინფორმაციისა და პროპაგანდის წლიური ანგარიში“ [“The annual report of pro-Russian and anti-Western disinformation and propaganda“], *Georgia’s Reforms Associates* (2020): 53.

³⁸ “Report: RT and Sputnik’s role in Russia’s Disinformation and Propaganda Ecosystem,” U.S. Department of State, January 20, 2022, accessed March 12, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/report-rt-and-sputniks-role-in-russias-disinformation-and-propaganda-ecosystem/>

³⁹ Gareth S. Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion*, 17.

⁴⁰ John B. Whitton, “Cold War Propaganda”, 151.

Hence, the media agency relies on pro-Russia media companies and reveals the cases of *orchestration*, *white propaganda*, and *jamming* simultaneously.

3.2.7 Goal-directed Structure

This tool labels the events that fulfill certain goals. The above mentioned cases serve a specific purpose. At the theoretical level, the effect is achieved through *rational propaganda* – the information is accurate, but it is used for accomplishing a certain purpose.⁴¹ In this case the goal is to promote the positions of Russian officials in Georgia.

3.2.8 Photomontage Techniques

The analysis of the articles disclosed the use of photographs as a tool of propaganda. This feature is detected in the article dedicated to the Associated Trio. A photograph of the participants of the Conference is put in an old-fashioned ornament frame⁴² to strengthen the *irony* to the project (see the **picture 3.1** in the appendix).

In short, the photograph is employed to stress *irony* as well as to reinforce the intended messages.

3.2.9 Maskirovka

The articles also contain the feature of Kremlin propaganda – *Maskirovka* (deception).

The article that reveals such feature is about the report of MDF on anti-Western propaganda.⁴³ *Saqinformi* does not indicate that it is referred as one of the “main sources of anti-Western propaganda”.⁴⁴ *Saqinformi* relies on the media agency *Civil Georgia* however the context for *Civil Georgia* is different as it is not mentioned in the report. This event aims to hide the information.

3.2.10 Manipulation with the Headline

Apart from the features outlined in the theoretical framework the articles depicted some additional characteristics.

The first feature is *manipulation with the headline*. Namely, the agency employed it when publishing the speech by Carl Hartzell – “Carl Hartzell – Georgia has everything to fly into the air, however a certain number of stone fragments still remain on the runway”.⁴⁵ In the same statement Carl Hartzell stated that “Georgia’s European road is being built on a solid foundation.”⁴⁶ Instead of choosing a neutral headline or the mentioned citation the author created the impression that Georgia has many obstacles on the way to the EU and indicating that these words belong to Carl Hartzell (Ambassador of the EU to Georgia) strengthens the frustration.

To put it succinctly, the goal of this tool is to mislead the readers through creating the first erroneous impression.

3.2.11 Multiplicity of the Articles

The second tool in this series is the tendency of making the articles that contain propagandistic features available twice on the website of *Saqinformi*. Such application increases the probability of viewing the articles that depict the subjective information.

⁴¹ Jaques Ellul, trans., *Propaganda The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, 79.

⁴² Arno Khidirbegishvili, „საქართველო-ევროკავშირი: წარიღტვა სიყვარული, დაშთა ოდენ ევრო! – არნო ხიდირბე-გიშვილი“ [“Georgia-EU: Love is gone, only the EURO is remained! – Arno Khidirbegishvili”], *Saqinformi*.

⁴³ „მედიის განვითარების ფონდი: საქართველოში ანტიდასავლური პროპაგანდა მომძლავრდა“ [“Media Development Foundation: anti-Western propaganda is intensified in Georgia”], *Saqinformi*, September 24, 2021, accessed March 16, 2022, <http://saqinform.ge/news/52290/mediis+ganviTarebis+fondi%3A+saqarTveloshi+antidasavluri+propaganda+momZlavrd+html>

⁴⁴ Tamar Kintsurashvili, “Anti-Western Propaganda 2020”, 21.

⁴⁵ „კარლ ჰარცელი – საქართველოს ყველაფერი აქვს ცაში ასაჭრელად, თუმცა გარკვეული რაოდენობის ქვის ნატეხებისა კვლავაც რჩება საფრენ ბილიკზე“ [“Carl Hartzell – Georgia has everything to fly into the air, however a certain number of stone fragments still remain on the runway”], *Saqinformi*, May 28, 2021, accessed March 13, 2022, <http://saqinform.ge/news/50877/karl+arceli+saqarTvelos+yvelaferi+aqvs+cashi+asaWrelad%2C+Tumca+garkveuli+raodenobis+qvis+natexebisa+kvlavac+rcheba+safrin+bilikze.html>

⁴⁶ Ibid.

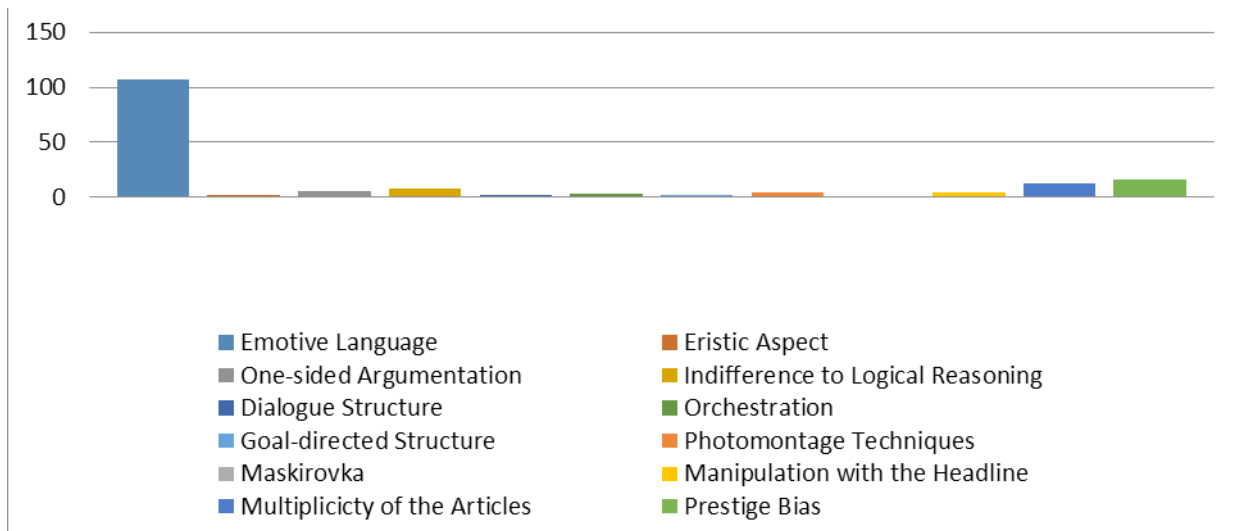
3.2.12 Prestige Bias

The final additional feature concerns the reliance on official status. This effect is achieved by mentioning *Saqinformi* (hence the agency itself) and Arno Khidirbegishvili in the headlines. Furthermore, the articles contain special indication that they belong to the editor-in-chief.

All in all, mentioning them in the headline aims at attracting a high number of readers because people are prone to believe in someone/something that has a higher status.⁴⁷

To sum up, *Saqinformi* employed 12 tools of propaganda. Among them, 8 features are the tools of general propaganda; 2 of them belong to Kremlin propaganda, and 3 tools were identified additionally. Figure 8.3 summarizes the frequencies of the identified features.

Figure 3.3: Propagandistic features and their frequency (*Saqinformi*)

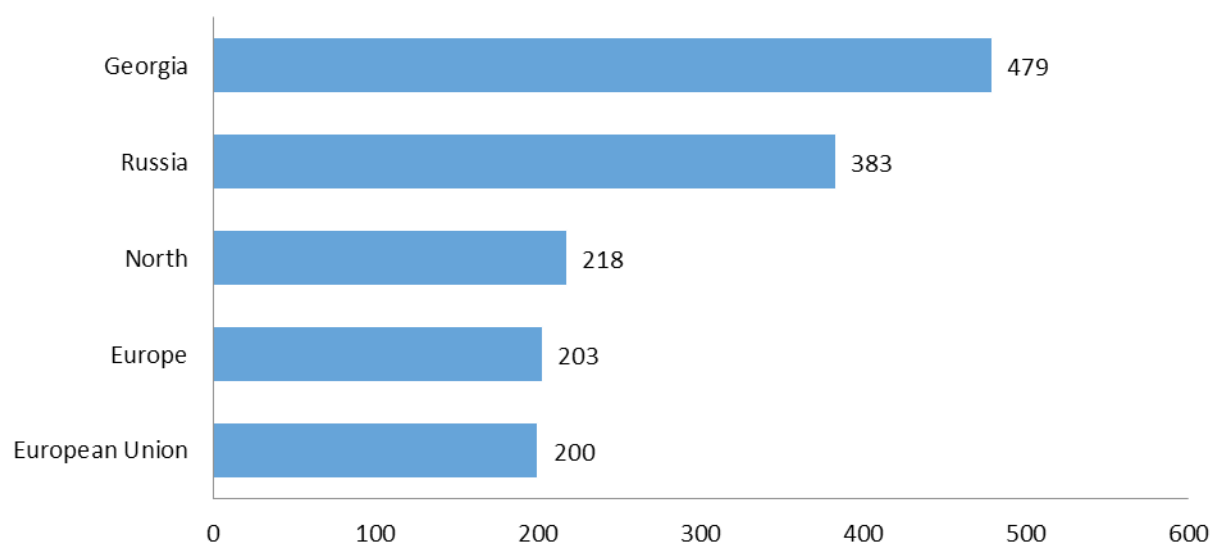


3.3. The themes depicted in the articles of Georgia and the World

Within the last week of each month (2021), it published 63 articles. Propagandistic features were detected in 59 articles. To remain objective, in addition 1 article depicted such characteristics as an individual article but not as a part of the whole picture.

At the level of word occurrence, the most frequently used five words are: 'Georgia', 'Russia', 'West', 'Europe', and 'EU'. As for the first two lexical units, they are depicted either positively or in a neutral manner. As for 'Europe', it is portrayed both negatively and in a neutral way. In contrast, 'EU' and 'West' are mentioned negatively. The word occurrence does not only help to observe quantitative data but it also serves as a way to discern the main tendency of the agency (alongside the themes). Namely, the representation of 'Georgia' as a political victim of 'Europe', 'EU', 'West' and introduce 'Russia' as a power that can save 'Georgia' from them. Figure 3.4 summarizes the frequency of the words.

⁴⁷ Handley Cantril, "Propaganda Analysis", 219-220.

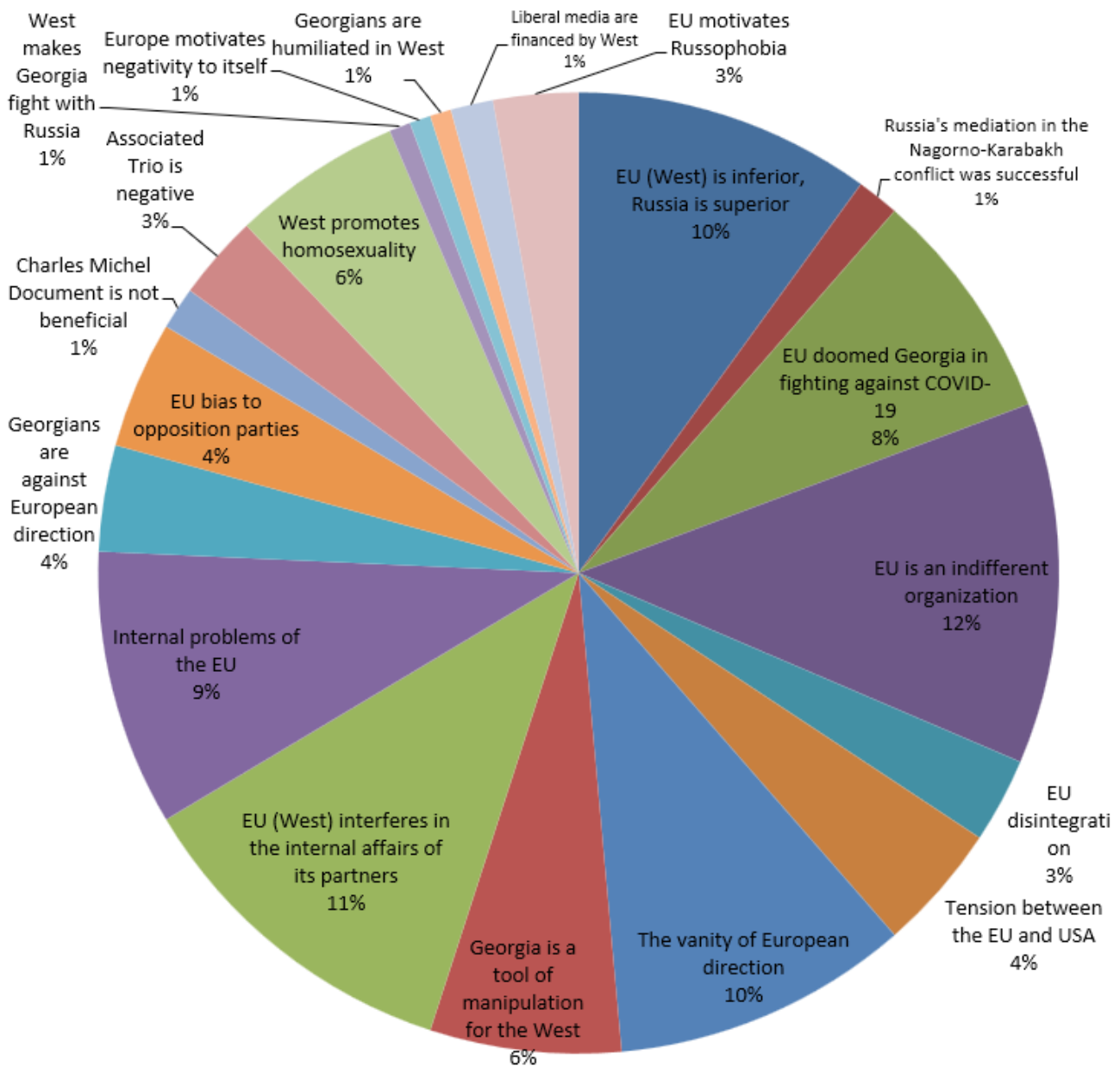
Figure 3.4: Frequency of words (*Georgia and the World*)

The main themes detected in the articles that contained the features of propaganda are as follows:

1. The EU (West) is inferior, Russia is superior
2. Russia's mediation in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was successful
3. The EU doomed Georgia in fighting against COVID-19
4. The EU is an indifferent organization
5. EU disintegration
6. Tension between the EU and USA
7. The vanity of the European direction
8. Georgia is a tool of manipulation for the West
9. The EU (West) interferes in the internal affairs of its partners
10. Internal problems of the EU
11. Georgian citizens are against the European direction
12. Biases of the EU towards the opposition parties
13. The Charles Michel Document is not beneficial for Georgia
14. The creation of the Associated Trio is a negative event
15. The West promotes non-traditional family/sexual orientation
16. The West makes Georgia fight against Russia
17. Europe motivates negativity towards itself in Georgia
18. Georgians are humiliated in the West
19. Liberal media are financed from the West
20. The EU (West) motivates Russophobia in Georgia

Figure 3.5 summarizes the proportion of the themes for Georgia and the World.

Figure 3.5: The frequency of themes (Georgia and the World)



As the figure shows, *Georgia and the World* revealed 20 clusters of themes. Among them “the EU is an indifferent organization” ranks first. At the international level, this theme is illustrated through blaming the EU for inaction within the context of the Balkan Syndrome, and the conflict of Yugoslavia. Indifference is presented in connection to Georgia in terms of vaccination, and the August War. The flow of these themes aims at reinforcing distrust towards the EU.

Other themes are depicted through the issue of sexual minorities, and the illustration of Georgia as a shield for the EU (West) against Russia. Having described these events the agency sees Russia as a power that can help Georgia succeed at the international arena.

Additionally, the agency underlines internal problems of the EU, and its disintegration to show that joining the EU is a temporary event. Furthermore, blaming the EU for taking sides and diminishing the values of the EU-related documents reinforce the idea of contrast between the EU and Georgia.

All things considered, these themes aim at stressing the self-centered nature of the EU that is not beneficial for Georgia. The articles serve the goal to outline Russia as a power in compliance with the Georgian political and social realities.

3.4 The tools of propaganda employed in the articles of *Georgia and the World*

3.4.1 Emotive Language

The first tool of emotionally charged words will be divided into two parts. The first category comprehends the main actors in connection with the EU. The second category will deal with the expressions that mention the EU indirectly and directly.

The actors consist of Christian Danielson (Director-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations), Charles Michel, and Carl Hartzell. Christian Danielson is said to severely interfere in the internal affairs of Georgia.⁴⁸ Charles Michel is depicted as an external actor who dictates Georgian politicians the ways of political behavior.⁴⁹ Carl Hartzell is referred in the context of the appointment of judges in the Supreme Court of Georgia to highlight his interference in internal affairs.⁵⁰

The second category in this series includes direct and indirect references to the EU. The latter is shown as a source of disappointment for Georgian people especially during the August War. That is why Georgia is said to be a 'hostage' of the EU.⁵¹ This assumption is also fortified as follows – the Western orientation "is the way of permanent defeat, constant disappointment and never-ending hell..."⁵² or the West "was buying everything [in Georgia]".⁵³ The last example is of utmost importance. The author incorporates a 'miniature' by the Georgian writer Niko Lortkipanidze – "Georgia is for Sale"⁵⁴ – to reinforce the impact of the intended goal (*allusion*).

All in all, *emotive language* criticizes the EU (West) through the most sentimental issue for the citizens of Georgia. The language units contain negative colorings.

3.4.2 Eristic Aspect

In the articles of the media agency *eristic aspect* is achieved through the opposition between the 'good guys' and 'bad guys'. For instance, Russia is said to 'save morality', whereas Europe is portrayed as the continent that

⁴⁸ Beso Barbakadze, „დასავლეთი ცდილობს, ქართველ ხალხს ხელისუფლებაში კვლავ „ნაციონალური მოძრაობა“ ჩაუდოს გუგულის კვერცხით“ [“The West is trying to put the “National Movement” in the power to Georgian people as the egg of a cuckoo”], Georgia and the World, March 31, 2021, accessed March 9, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/dasavleti-cdilobs-qartvel-xalxs-nacionalebi/>

⁴⁹ Beso Barbakadze, „ქართველი პოლიტიკოსები ბჭობდნენ და შარლ მიშელი იცინოდა“ [“Georgian Politicians propose, Charles Michel disposes”], Georgia and the World, July 27, 2021, accessed March 15, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%a5%e1%83%90%e1%83%a0%e1%83%97%e1%83%95%e1%83%94%e1%83%9a%e1%83%98-%e1%83%9e%e1%83%9d%e1%83%9a%e1%83%98%e1%83%a2%e1%83%98%e1%83%99%e1%83%9d%e1%83%a1%e1%83%94%e1%83%91%e1%83%98-%e1%83%91%e1%83%ad/>

⁵⁰ Armaz Saneblidze, „პურის ნატეხი მაინც მიანოდეთ სამართალს“ [“Bring at least a piece of bread for justice”], Georgia and the World, November 30, 2021, accessed March 18, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%9e%e1%83%a3%e1%83%a0%e1%83%98%e1%83%a1-%e1%83%9c%e1%83%90%e1%83%a2%e1%83%94%e1%83%ae%e1%83%98-%e1%83%9b%e1%83%90%e1%83%98%e1%83%9c%e1%83%aa-%e1%83%9b%e1%83%98%e1%83%90%e1%83%ac%e1%83%9d/>

⁵¹ Valeri Kvaratskhelia, „ი, ესა ვართ დღევანდელი ქართველები!“ [“This is what we are today's Georgians!”], Georgia and the World, September 28, 2021, accessed March 16, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%90%e1%83%98-%e1%83%94%e1%83%a1%e1%83%90-%e1%83%95%e1%83%90%e1%83%a0%e1%83%97-%e1%83%93%e1%83%a6%e1%83%94%e1%83%95%e1%83%90%e1%83%9c%e1%83%93%e1%83%94%e1%83%9a%e1%83%98-%e1%83%a5%e1%83%90/>

⁵² Valeri Kvaratskhelia, „ქართველები დასავლეთის ტყვეობაში“ [“Georgians in captivity of the West”], Georgia and the World, February 24, 2021, accessed March 10, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%a5%e1%83%90%e1%83%a0%e1%83%97%e1%83%95%e1%83%94%e1%83%9a%e1%83%94%e1%83%91%e1%83%98-%e1%83%93%e1%83%90%e1%83%a1%e1%83%90%e1%83%95%e1%83%9a%e1%83%94%e1%83%97%e1%83%98%e1%83%a1-%e1%83%a2%e1%83%a7/>

⁵³ Valeri Kvaratskhelia, „დამნაშავეთა სახელმწიფო“ [“The state of criminals”], Georgia and the World, May 26, 2021, accessed March 13, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%93%e1%83%90%e1%83%9b%e1%83%9c%e1%83%90%e1%83%a8%e1%83%90%e1%83%95%e1%83%94%e1%83%97%e1%83%90-%e1%83%a1%e1%83%90%e1%83%ae%e1%83%94%e1%83%9a%e1%83%9b%e1%83%ac%e1%83%98%e1%83%a4%e1%83%9d/>

⁵⁴ Ibid.

“welcomed the death of God with applause”.⁵⁵ This opposition is achieved through religious motive that is likely to have significant effects on the ‘cognitions’ of the readers.

Hence, in the articles of *Georgia and the World* ‘good guy’ is Russia whereas ‘bad guy’ is Europe.

3.4.3 One-sided Argumentation

One-sided argumentation is among the tools frequently employed by the agency. This tool is depicted in terms of Brexit. The agency outlines the issue from the standpoint of EU weakness.⁵⁶ However, no mention is made about the effects Brexit can have/has on Great Britain. The related sources claim that Brexit affects Britain on ‘regional’, ‘sector’, ‘gender’, ‘education’, ‘poverty’ and ‘inequality’ levels.⁵⁷ This phenomenon is employed to stress that one of the powerful states left the EU and it created serious problems for the latter.

All in all, the media employs *one-sided argumentation* when the EU has firm arguments to explain its positions which would have completely changed the picture.

3.4.4 Indifference to Logical Reasoning

Deviation from the logical code is also detected in the articles of *Georgia and the World*. The first case is observed when stating that the former prime-minister Giorgi Gakharia could have met Vladimir Putin but “the West forced our prime-minister to make a speech and criticize Russia. The meeting failed...”⁵⁸ According to other sources, the meeting between the two officials was not under consideration.⁵⁹ The article that deals with this issue is about vaccination, however, it also incorporates the political events. Hence, the text is over-informative. It also manifests the feature of Kremlin propaganda outlined by Edward Lucas and Ben Nimmo as *distract from the main issue*.⁶⁰

The traces of this tool are detected through confusing the readers with the EU and Council of Europe. Namely, the legal decision on the Georgian condom company by the Strasbourg Court is attributed to the EU.⁶¹ The Strasbourg Court is the court of the *Council of Europe* which is a different organization. Even if the readers attempt to check the accuracy of the information they may be confused with the two bodies of the EU and the organization itself – European Council, Council of the European Union, and Council of Europe. Hence, the reader who is less literate can easily attribute this decision to the EU (*propaganda of agitation*).

⁵⁵ Zurab Tsutskiridze, „ბაძვით მორცხვიც გაურცხვდება“ [“Even a shy person can become shameless through imitation”], *Georgia and the World*, January 27, 2021, accessed March 9, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%91%e1%83%90%e1%83%ab%e1%83%95%e1%83%98%e1%83%97-%e1%83%9b%e1%83%9d%e1%83%a0%e1%83%aa%e1%83%ae%e1%83%95%e1%83%98%e1%83%aa-%e1%83%92%e1%83%90%e1%83%a3%e1%83%a0%e1%83%aa%e1%83%ae%e1%83%95%e1%83%93/>

⁵⁶ Beso Barbakadze, „საქართველო _ ნაცრის საჩხრეკი ჯობი დასავლეთის ხელში“ [“Georgia _ the fireplace poker in the hands of the West”], *Georgia and the World*, June 23, 2021, accessed March 14, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%a1%e1%83%90%e1%83%a5%e1%83%90%e1%83%a0%e1%83%97%e1%83%95%e1%83%94%e1%83%9a%e1%83%9d-%e1%83%9c%e1%83%90%e1%83%aa%e1%83%a0%e1%83%98%e1%83%a1-%e1%83%a1%e1%83%90%e1%83%a9%e1%83%ae%e1%83%a0/>

⁵⁷ Kitty Stewart, March 14, 2022, “Who will suffer most from Brexit? Effects be region, sector, skill level and income group,” LSE Blog, May 13, 2019, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/who-will-suffer-most-from-brexit/>

⁵⁸ Beso Barbakadze, „ხელისუფლებაც, გამოაქვეყნეთ ჩინური ვაქცინის ოფიციალური ფასი და ისიც, რამდენს ვიბდით ჩვენ!“ [“Government, publish the official price of the Chinese vaccine as well as how much we pay”], *Georgia and the World*, March 31, 2021, accessed March 11, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/xelisuflebav-gamoaveknet-chinuri-vaqcinis-fasi/>

⁵⁹ Shota Tkeshelashvili, „მაია ცქიტიშვილი: გახარია-პუტინის შეხვედრა არ მზადდება და არ განიხილება“ [“Maia Tskitishvili: The Gakharia-Putin meeting is not being prepared and discussed”], *Business Media Georgia*, October 22, 2019, accessed March 11, 2022, <https://bm.ge/ka/article/maia-cqitishvili-gaxaria-putinis-shexvedra-ar-mzaddeba-da-ar-ganixileba/42286/>

⁶⁰ Edward Lucas and Ben Nimmo, 2015, apud Irakli Sirbiladze, “Russia’s Disinformation Campaigns in Georgia: A Study of State and Civil Society Response”, 16.

⁶¹ Eka Naskidashvili, „ლევან ჩიჩუა: მიმიფურთხებია სტრასბურგის სასამართლოსთვისაც, იმ მოსამართლისთვისაც, რომელმაც ეს გადაწყვეტილება მიიღო, იმ ფულის მონებისთვისაც, რომლებიც სტრასბურგში “აიისას” იცავდნენ“ [“Levan Chichua: I spit on the Strasbourg Court, the judge who made this decision, the slaves of money who were defending “Aiisa” in Strasbourg”], *Georgia and the World*, July 27, 2021, accessed March 15, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%9a%e1%83%94%e1%83%95%e1%83%90%e1%83%9c-%e1%83%a9%e1%83%90%e1%83%a9%e1%83%a3%e1%83%90-%e1%83%9b%e1%83%98%e1%83%9b%e1%83%98%e1%83%a4%e1%83%a3%e1%83%a0%e1%83%97%e1%83%ae%e1%83%94%e1%83%91/>

In brief, *indifference to logical reasoning (lacking commitment to objective reality)* is employed by the media agency to confuse, and mislead the readers.

3.4.5 Dialogue Structure

The analysis also displayed the tool used for having closer ties with the readers. This goal is achieved through the expressions – “[d]o you [the readers] know what it means?”⁶² The aim of such constructions is to involve the reader in the process and increase the scope of influence by asking the leading and concluding questions.

The second set of this tool is exposed by deleting the formalities – “I will easily explain to you how money is made at our expense.”⁶³ This example puts emphasis on the service of the author as a provider of objective information. The author uses the possessive pronoun ‘our’ to equalize the author and readers. This tactic is used to gain the trust of the audience.

Thus, the main purpose of *dialogue structure* is to get readers engaged throughout the articles and stress the effort of the authors in providing accurate information to them.

3.4.6 Goal-directed Structure

The articles of the media agency in question accomplish certain purpose. Such cases aim at showing the internal problems of the EU. The author tries to show the cruelty of the EU mainly through the headline – “The EU will not be able to blackmail Hungary”,⁶⁴ whereas the headline of the original article sounds as follows: “The AP Interview: Hungary committed to contentious LGBT law”.⁶⁵ Hence, the agency tries to depict this event in a way to make the readers conclude that the EU acts negatively towards Hungary (its member state).

All in all, the main purpose of *goal-directed structure* is to vividly depict EU’s internal problems.

3.4.7 Orchestration

Within the observed period, *Georgia and the World* relied on 14 Russian media agencies. Such as: *Vzglyad*, *Izvestya*, *RT*, *Iarex*, *Strategic Culture Foundation*, *Politnavigator*, *Naspravdi*, *RIA-Novosti*, *Pravdo Rub*, *Regnum*, *Eurasia Daily*, *Dalma News*, *News Front*, and *Tsargrad*.

A brief description is necessary of the media agencies. *Vzglyad*,⁶⁶ *Izvestya*,⁶⁷ *RT*,⁶⁸ *Iarex*,⁶⁹ *Naspravdi*,⁷⁰

⁶² Jaba Zhvania, „ნანა კაკაბაძე: საქართველოს მიმართ დემოკრატიის სახელით უკვე ღიად ხორციელდება ორმაგი სტანდარტის პოლიტიკა, რომელიც რეალურად გაცხადებული კოლონიალიზმია“ [“Nana Kakabadze: A double-standard politics is already being implemented towards Georgia which is in reality a revealed colonialism”], *Georgia and the World*, February 24, 2021, accessed March 10, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%9c%e1%83%90%e1%83%9c%e1%83%90-%e1%83%99%e1%83%90%e1%83%99%e1%83%90%e1%83%91%e1%83%90%e1%83%ab%e1%83%94-%e1%83%a1%e1%83%90%e1%83%a5%e1%83%90%e1%83%a0%e1%83%97%e1%83%95%e1%83%94%e1%83%9a-3/>

⁶³ Beso Barbakadze, „ხელისუფლებაც, გამოაქვეყნეთ ჩინური ვაქცინის ოფიციალური ფასი და ისიც, რამდენს ვიბდით ჩვენ!“ [“Government, publish the official price of the Chinese vaccine as well as how much we pay”], *Georgia and the World*.

⁶⁴ Giorgi Gachechiladze, „ევროკავშირი უნგრეთს ვერ დააშანტაჟებს“ [“The EU will not be able to blackmail Hungary”], *Georgia and the World*, September 28, 2021, accessed March 16, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%94%e1%83%95%e1%83%a0%e1%83%9d%e1%83%99%e1%83%90%e1%83%95%e1%83%a8%e1%83%98%e1%83%a0%e1%83%98-%e1%83%a3%e1%83%9c%e1%83%92%e1%83%a0%e1%83%94%e1%83%97%e1%83%a1-%e1%83%95%e1%83%94%e1%83%a0/>

⁶⁵ Justin Spike, “The AP Interview: Hungary committed to contentious LGBT law,” Associated Press, September 24, 2021, accessed March 16, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/immigration-united-nations-general-assembly-coronavirus-pandemic-business-health-d19fb1eb2772478da1206fb5d982b6c7>

⁶⁶ Shaun Walker, “In Russia, nobody’s laughing at Iannucci’s The Death of Stalin,” *The Guardian*, October 14, 2017, accessed March 9, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/14/in-russia-nobodys-laughing-at-armando-iannucci-death-of-stalin?CMP=fb_gu

⁶⁷ “Iswestija,” Euro topics, accessed March 9, 2022, <https://www.eurotopics.net/en/179544/iswestija>

⁶⁸ Oliver Darcy, “I spent an entire day watching Russia’s propaganda network. Here’s the warped reality I saw presented to viewers,” CNN, March 3, 2022, accessed March 9, 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/03/02/media/rt-propaganda-network/index.html>

⁶⁹ Paul Goble, “Is Moscow Putting the Talysh in Play Against Azerbaijan? Eurasia Daily Monitor Volume: 12 Issue: 21,” European Country of Origin Information Network, February 3, 2015, accessed March 10, 2022, <https://www.ecoi.net/de/dokument/1352040.html>

⁷⁰ “Anti-US narratives in Ukraine,” EAP Fakes, accessed March 12, 2022, <https://crpe.ro/eapfakes/countries/ukraine/anti-us-narratives-in-ukraine/>

Politnavigator,⁷¹ Pravdo Rub,⁷² RIA-Novosti,⁷³ Regnum,⁷⁴ Strategic Culture Foundation,⁷⁵ Eurasia Daily,⁷⁶ Dalma News,⁷⁷ and Tsargrad⁷⁸ are regarded as the 'pro-Kremlin agencies'. Hence, *Georgia and the World* relies on Russian media agencies that are actively involved in promoting Russia's positions locally and internationally. As indicated above, this phenomenon manifests the features of *white propaganda*, and *jamming*.

All in all, the articles of *Georgia and the World* revealed the cases of *white propaganda*, *orchestration*, and *jamming* in combination that signals its coordinated action with other pro-Russian agencies.

3.4.8 Photograph/Caricature

The media agency employed photographs and caricatures as a complementary way to the intended messages. The first case is detected in the article about the EU disintegration that shows the torn EU flag⁷⁹ (see the **picture 3.2** in the appendix). The aim of the image is to vividly show the disintegration of the EU.

The second caricature aims to show how the West humiliates Georgia and the impossibility of the Euro-Atlantic integration (see the **picture 3.3** in the appendix).⁸⁰

All in all, the main aim of the incorporation of the photographs and caricatures is to reinforce the message visually.

3.4.9 Maskirovka

Georgia and the World revealed the feature of Kremlin propaganda – *Maskirovka* (deception). Such case is detected in the article that deals with the report of *Georgia's Reforms Associates (GRASS)* on anti-Western propaganda.⁸¹ No mention is made that *Georgia and the World* is referred as the main source of propaganda.⁸²

⁷¹ Sean Lyngaas and Zachary Cohen, "US accuses Moscow spies of working with Russian-language media outlets to spread Ukraine disinformation," CNN, February 15, 2022, accessed March 11, 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/02/15/politics/us-russia-ukraine-misinformation/index.html>

⁷² Daniel Laufer and Alexej Hock, "The network of fake foreign media," Netzpolitik, December 9, 2021, accessed March 15, 2022, <https://netzpolitik.org/2020/russian-disinformation-the-network-of-fake-foreign-media/>

⁷³ Alistair Coleman, "Ukraine crisis: Russian news agency deletes victory editorial," BBC, February 28, 2022, accessed March 14, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-60562240>

⁷⁴ "Belarus Blocks Pro-Kremlin Russian News Agency Regnum," Radio Liberty, October 31, 2021, accessed March 16, 2022, <https://www.rferl.org/a/belarus-blocks-regnum-website/31538008.html>

⁷⁵ "An Unfounded Foundation," EU vs DiSiNFO, February 8, 2019, accessed March 11, 2022, <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/an-unfounded-foundation/>

⁷⁶ "EADaily; a worker bee in the Kremlin's information war," Propastop, December 1, 2020, accessed February 9, 2022, <https://www.propastop.org/eng/2020/12/01/eadaily-a-worker-bee-in-the-kremlins-information-war/>

⁷⁷ „3 მედია, 1 სათაური ევროპასთან უვიზო მიმოსვლის შესახებ“ [“3 media agencies, 1 headline about the visa-free movement with Europe”], Myth Detector, July 6, 2017, accessed March 16, 2022, <https://mythdetector.ge/ka/3-media-1-sathauri-evropasthan-uvizo-mimosvli-sheesakheb/>

⁷⁸ Katerina Glyanko, "YouTube removes propaganda channel "Tsargrad TV," owned by the sponsor of "Russian Spring," Crimea Suspilne, July 28, accessed March 22, 2022, <https://crimea.suspilne.media/en/news/662>

⁷⁹ Luka Maisuradze, „ევროკავშირის დღეები დათვლილია“ [“The days of the EU are numbered”], *Georgia and the World*, October 27, 2021, accessed March 16, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%94%e1%83%95%e1%83%a0%e1%83%9d%e1%83%99%e1%83%90%e1%83%95%e1%83%a8%e1%83%98%e1%83%a0%e1%83%98%e1%83%a1-%e1%83%93%e1%83%a6%e1%83%94%e1%83%91%e1%83%98-%e1%83%93%e1%83%90%e1%83%97/>

⁸⁰ Beso Barbakadze, „რატომ თვლიან ამერიკა და ევროპა საქართველოს ვირად და რატომ ვერ უბედავს ვირი პატრონს წიხლს“ [“Why do America and Europe consider Georgia as a donkey and why cannot Georgia dare to kick the patron”], *Georgia and the World*, June 30, 2021, accessed March 14, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%a0%e1%83%90%e1%83%a2%e1%83%9d%e1%83%9b-%e1%83%97%e1%83%95%e1%83%9a%e1%83%98%e1%83%90%e1%83%9c-%e1%83%90%e1%83%9b%e1%83%94%e1%83%a0%e1%83%98%e1%83%99%e1%83%90-%e1%83%93%e1%83%90-%e1%83%94/>

⁸¹ „GRASS-მა ანგარიში წარადგინა, რომლის თანახმად ირკვევა, თუ რა სახის პრორუსული და ანტიდასავლური დებინფორმაცია გავრცელდა 2020 წელს საქართველოში“ [“GRASS presented a report which makes clear what kind of pro-Russian and anti-Western disinformation was spread in Georgia in 2020”], *Georgia and the World*, March 26, 2021, accessed March 11, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/grass-%e1%83%9b%e1%83%90-%e1%83%90%e1%83%9c%e1%83%92%e1%83%90%e1%83%a0%e1%83%98%e1%83%a8%e1%83%98-%e1%83%ac%e1%83%90%e1%83%a0%e1%83%90%e1%83%93%e1%83%92%e1%83%98%e1%83%9c%e1%83%90-%e1%83%a0%e1%83%9d/>

⁸² Iakob Lachashvili et al., „პრორუსული და ანტიდასავლური დებინფორმაციისა და პროპაგანდის წლიური ანგარიში“ [“The annual report of the pro-Russian and anti-Western disinformation and propaganda”], 53.

Georgia and the World relies on *interpressnews.ge*; however *Interpressnews* is not mentioned in the report. The context is different for *Georgia and the World* and the readers should be aware of it.

Hence, in the articles of *Georgia and the World* *Maskirovka* is employed to hide the information connected to reputation.

3.4.10 Manipulation with the Headline

This tool is applied by the media agency to create favorable impression. The example of it is seen in the article dealing with the disintegration of the EU – “The days of the EU are numbered”.⁸³

This tool has two motives – to show the weakness of the EU and stress the internal problems of it.

3.4.11 Involvement of Persuasion Dialogue

This feature is employed by the media outlet to persuade readers through various ways. For instance, having described the political situation in the region, and attributing superiority to Russia, Iran, and Turkey throughout the text, the discourse tries to convince the reader that the EU is not an important player.⁸⁴ This line is used to persuade the readers that Georgia should modify its political direction.

3.4.12 Justified by Results

In the articles of *Georgia and the World* this tool is used to accomplish the desired intent promptly. The analogous feature in Kremlin propaganda is described by Edward Lucas and Ben Nimmo as *dismay the audience*.⁸⁵

The examples of this tool encourage Georgian readers see the threat of European (Western) direction – the results of Western intervention will be that “we will not have the country even on formal basis. It will be something like a territorial entity...”⁸⁶

Thus, the main aim of such constructions is to stress the negative results of Western direction, and affect the readers’ ‘cognitions’ to save the country.

3.4.13. Persuasive Definition

The analysis also revealed the only case of the propagandistic feature – *persuasive definition*. Namely, Russophobia is defined as – “[t]he deliberate propaganda of Georgian’s disgust, hatred, enmity against Russia that flows from the USA-West like a torrent”,⁸⁷ whereas according to the *Merriam Webster Dictionary*, Russophobia is described as “fear or dislike of Russia or Russian policy”.⁸⁸

Such definition aims at emphasizing the role of the West in sowing the negative attitudes towards Russia in Georgia.

⁸³ Luka Maisuradze, „ევროკავშირის დღეები დათვლილია“[“The days of the EU are numbered”], *Georgia and the World*.

⁸⁴ Jaba Zhvania, „გურამ ნიკოლაიშვილი: ჩვენ სხვა რეალობაში ვართ“[“Guram Nikolaishvili: We are in a different reality”], *Georgia and the World*, January, 27, 2021, accessed March 9, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%92%e1%83%a3%e1%83%a0%e1%83%90%e1%83%9b-%e1%83%9c%e1%83%98%e1%83%99%e1%83%9d%e1%83%9a%e1%83%90%e1%83%98%e1%83%a8%e1%83%95%e1%83%98%e1%83%9a%e1%83%98-%e1%83%a9%e1%83%95%e1%83%94%e1%83%9c/>

⁸⁵ Edward Lucas and Ben Nimmo, 2015, apud Irakli Sirbiladze, “Russia’s Disinformation Campaigns in Georgia: A Study of State and Civil Society Response”, 16.

⁸⁶ Jaba Zhvania, „რა ვალდებულებების სანაცვლოდ აძლევს საფრანგეთის განვითარების სააგენტო მზარდი საგარეო ვალის მქონე საქართველოს 483 მილიონი ევროს „დახმარებას“?“[“In return for what obligations does the French Development Agency give Georgia, that has an increasing foreign debt, the “assistance” of 480 million Euros?”], *Georgia and the World*, June 30, 2021, accessed March 14, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%a0%e1%83%90-%e1%83%95%e1%83%90%e1%83%9a%e1%83%93%e1%83%94%e1%83%91%e1%83%a3%e1%83%9a%e1%83%94%e1%83%91%e1%83%98%e1%83%a1-%e1%83%a1%e1%83%90%e1%83%9c%e1%83%90%e1%83%aa%e1%83%95/>

⁸⁷ Givi Gureshidze, „ქართველთა რუსოფობია – საქართველოს ტრაგედია“[“Russophobia of Georgians – the tragedy of Georgia”], *Georgia and the World*, November 24, 2021, accessed March 18, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%a5%e1%83%90%e1%83%a0%e1%83%97%e1%83%95%e1%83%94%e1%83%9a%e1%83%97%e1%83%90-%e1%83%a0%e1%83%a3%e1%83%a1%e1%83%9d%e1%83%a4%e1%83%9d%e1%83%91%e1%83%98%e1%83%90-%e1%83%a1%e1%83%90%e1%83%a5/>

⁸⁸ “Russophobia,” *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, accessed March 18, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Russophobia>

3.4.14 Active Measures

This feature of Kremlin propaganda is revealed through the employment of ‘experts’. Such ‘expert’ is Dimitri de Kochko. He is described as a French journalist⁸⁹ however he is one of the founders of the Union of Russophones in France and a respondent for Sputnik.⁹⁰ Hence, the real identity of Dimitri de Kochko is a pro-Russian French journalist.

Such ‘expert’ is also found in Georgia – Dimitri Lortkipanidze. He is a founder of *Primakov Georgia-Russia Community Center* that actively promotes Russian culture in Georgia.⁹¹ These cases manifest the fact outlined by Irakli Sirbiladze that the ‘experts’ exist both at the ‘international’ and local levels.⁹²

The employment of ‘experts’ is purposeful. It makes the readers trust them as well as the agency. This goal is achieved through concealing their real identities.

3.4.15 Prestige Bias

The discussion in the previous sub-chapters led to outlining another tool of propaganda – *prestige bias*. The agency employs international media (*The Times*, *Daily Express*, etc.), international experts and local experts to make the readers believe in the information. Moreover, *Daily Express* is said to be a ‘Eurosceptic newspaper’.⁹³ This information is hidden which aims at stating that international unbiased media also speaks about the EU negatively. Furthermore, the articles emphasize the professions or the titles of ‘experts’ to make the readers trust and respect them. In addition, local experts included individuals who were not mentioned among the sources of anti-Western propaganda but revealed anti-Western messages within the frames of this research, for instance: Zura Otarashvili, Revaz Kilasonia, Givi Iukuridze, etc.

Overall, the use of *prestige bias* in the articles of *Georgia and the World* is directed to affect people through the reputation of the media and experts.

All in all, *Georgia and the World* used 15 tools of propaganda. It revealed 10 characteristics of general propaganda, 6 features of Kremlin propaganda, and 2 additional tools. Figure 3.6 summarizes the tools of propaganda alongside the frequencies.

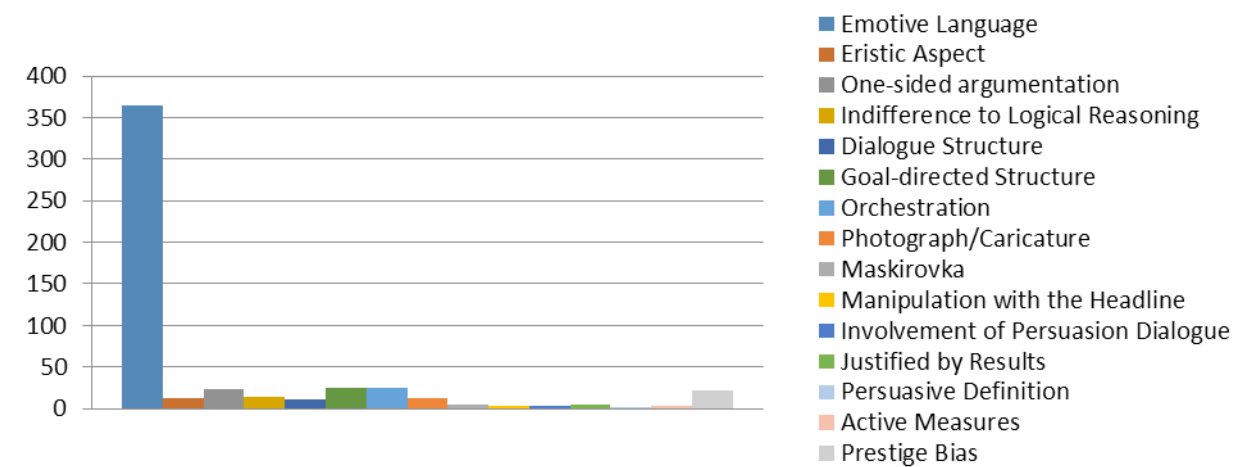
⁸⁹ Nika Korinteli, „ფრანგი ანალიტიკოსი: ევროკავშირი მილიარდებს ხარჯავს მავნე და უეფექტო ამერიკულ ვაქცინაზე“ [“French analyst: the EU spends billions on harmful and ineffective American vaccine”], *Georgia and the World*, March 31, 2021, accessed March 11, 2022, <http://geworld.ge/ge/frangi-analitikosi-evrokavshiri/>

⁹⁰ “Dimitri de Kochko,” European Platform for Democratic Elections, accessed February 10, 2022, <https://www.fakeobservers.org/biased-observation-database/details/de-kochko-dimitri.html>

⁹¹ „პრიმაკოვის სახელობის ქართულ-რუსული საზოგადოების ცენტრი“ [“Primakov Georgia-Russia Community Center”], *Myth Detector*, September 4, 2019, accessed April 8, 2022, <https://mythdetector.ge/ka/profiles/primakovis-sakhelobis-qarthul-rusuli-sazogadoebis-tsentr/>

⁹² Irakli Sirbiladze, “Russia’s Disinformation Campaigns in Georgia: A Study of State and Civil Society Response”, 14.

⁹³ Upf Webzine, “The British Press: Sensationally Eurosceptic,” *The Perspective*, December 16, 2013, accessed March 15, 2022, <https://www.theperspective.se/the-british-press-sensationally-eurosceptic/>

Figure 3.6: Propagandistic features and their frequency (Georgia and the World)

3.5. Comparison of the tendencies of *Saqinformi* and *Georgia and the World*

The first thing to be considered is that the media agencies revealed 10 thematic clusters in common. As indicated above, the depiction of similar themes does not only help to compare the two agencies but to see the traces of *orchestration* and *jamming*.

Both agencies touched the most sentimental and debated issues in Georgia such as the August War, and sexual minorities. As for the latter, according to the survey (2018), only 24% of Georgian population thinks that the rights of LGBT people should be defended.⁹⁴ Hence, the media selected the issue against the EU that has minor support and major disapproval in Georgia.

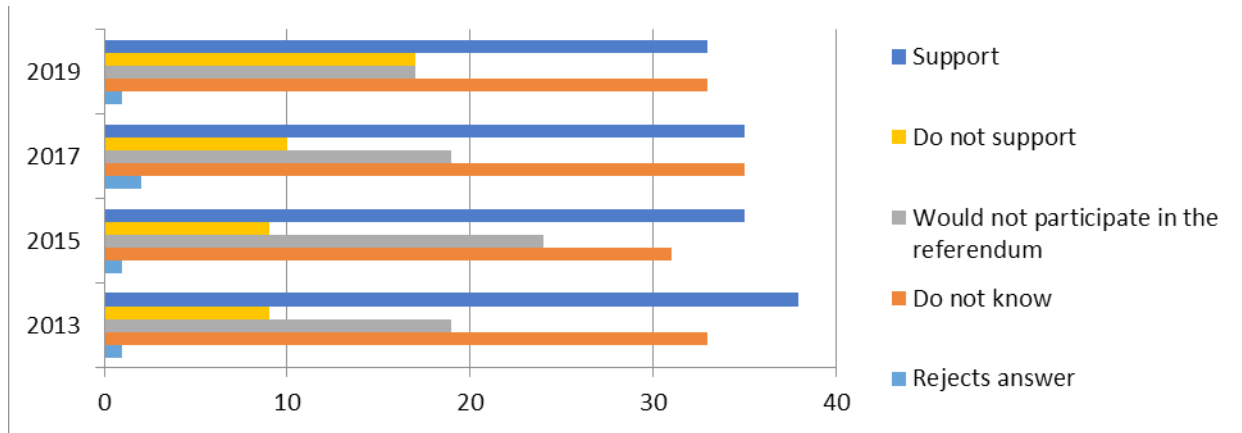
Both agencies rely on the tools of general propaganda, Kremlin propaganda and additional features.

It is also worth noting that the media publish the articles in the Russian language as well. This aspect makes ethnic minorities prone to be the victims of propaganda. They are said to receive information about Georgia from Russian media due to language barriers.⁹⁵ Furthermore, 'a significant part' of ethnic minorities do not 'support' the EU.⁹⁶ Figures 3.7, and 3.8 show the trend.

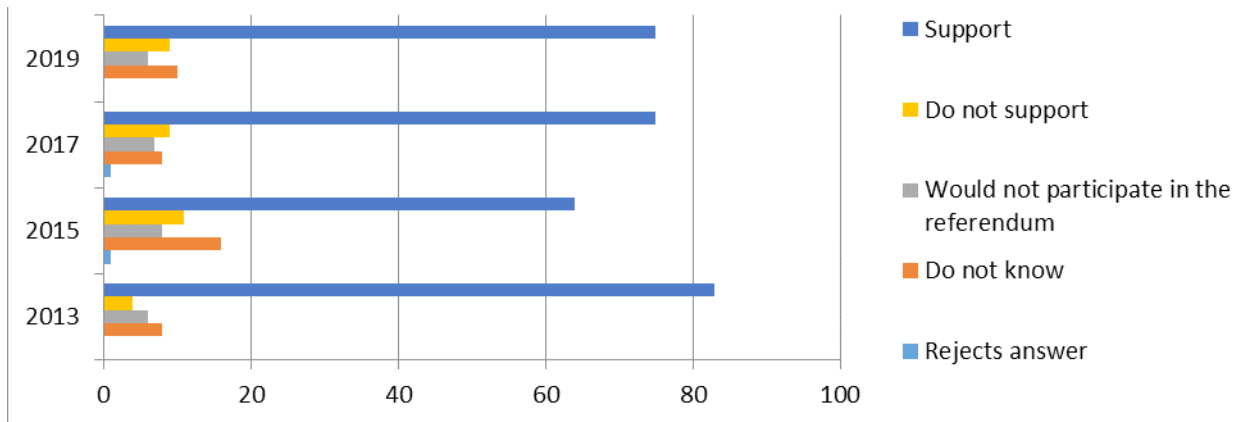
⁹⁴ „ღებტი ადამიანების უფლებებზე საზოგადოებრივი აზრის დინამიკა 2014-2019“ [“The dynamics of public opinion on the rights of LGBT community 2014-2019”], Women’s Initiatives Supporting Group, September 18, 2019, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://wisg.org/ka/news/detail/254/%E1%83%9A%E1%83%92%E1%83%91%E1%83%A2%E1%83%98-%E1%83%90%E1%83%93%E1%83%90%E1%83%9B%E1%83%98%E1%83%90%E1%83%9C%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1-%E1%83%A3%E1%83%A4%E1%83%9A%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%96%E1%83%94-%E1%83%A1%E1%83%90%E1%83%96%E1%83%9D%E1%83%92%E1%83%90%E1%83%93%E1%83%9D%E1%83%94%E1%83%91%E1%83%A0%E1%83%98%E1%83%95%E1%83%98-%E1%83%90%E1%83%96%E1%83%A0%E1%83%98%E1%83%A1-%E1%83%93%E1%83%98%E1%83%9C%E1%83%90%E1%83%9B%E1%83%98%E1%83%99%E1%83%90-2014-2019>

⁹⁵ Levan Avalishvili et al., “კრემლის საინფორმაციო ომი საქართველოს წინააღმდეგ: პროპაგანდასთან ბრძოლის სახელმწიფო პოლიტიკის აუცილებლობა” [“Kremlin Information War against Georgia: the necessity of state policy against propaganda”], Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (2016): 16-17.

⁹⁶ Nino Samkharadze, “Ethnic Minorities in the Context of Georgia’s European Integration: Is There a Room for Skepticism?”, Georgian Institute of Politics (2020): 3.

Figure 3.7. Ethnic minorities – support to the EU integration (%)

Source: Nino Samkharadze, "Ethnic Minorities in the Context of Georgia's European Integration: Is There a Room for Skepticism?"

Figure 3.8. Georgian Population – support to the EU integration (%)

Source: Nino Samkharadze, "Ethnic Minorities in the Context of Georgia's European Integration: Is There a Room for Skepticism?"

Additionally, particular excerpts from both agencies did not fall under the umbrella of one characteristic of propaganda; they satisfied the criteria of several features simultaneously.

In summary, a similar path followed by *Saqinformi* and *Georgia and the World* is clearly visible. They voiced analogous themes and employed identical tactics to depreciate the EU.

Conclusion and recommendations

The anti-EU propaganda takes the form of a complex network in Georgia. First, the complexity is seen by the fact that the two media agencies in question serve the common purpose – to affect the EU image. This finding signals the main feature of Kremlin propaganda – collective and coordinated attacks on the EU.

The anti-EU propaganda does not confine itself to solely anti-EU messages. It follows a two-stage system. First, anti-EU themes are created to show the readers its negative sides. Second, after achieving this goal Russia is introduced as a power that can substitute it. This is done because praising only Russia would not have accomplished the same goal efficiently.

The selection of themes against the EU is purposeful as they touch the most sentimental and least supported issues. In these cases the feature of propaganda – affecting a mass audience through appealing to emotions is employed. The latter is the most powerful way to affect the readers.

The EU is attacked from both the general tools of propaganda and Kremlin propaganda. Additional tools were identified by the author of the research. Hence, the EU is attacked with various tools which proves the complexity.

The lexical units employed against the EU stress the reliance on the most successful tool of propaganda – the power of words. The EU is the target of negatively charged words. Additionally, the use of visual materials gives them an advantage as the photographs summarize the main essence of the texts without reading the whole article.

The analysis of the articles revealed a concern (publishing articles in Russian) connected to ethnic minorities. They virtually do not support the European integration. This decreasing tendency suggests that the anti-EU propaganda has already passed two stages among an important part of ethnic minorities – *Response shaping* (the information about the EU was provided to them) and *Response changing* (the information was believed); now it is on the stage of *Response reinforcing* (to maintain the decreasing support to the EU among them).

To counter this scheme there should be some measures taken. It is desirable to choose the strategy that covers mass audience as the propaganda itself targets mass audience. Such measure should be accompanied by the awareness raising activities among different generations and in different regions so that propaganda does not find vulnerable groups.

Georgia should pay attention to the process of teaching the Georgian language among ethnic minorities as they are highly likely to be the victims of the anti-EU propaganda.

The anti-EU propaganda should also be analyzed separately. First, Georgia has already applied for the EU membership which signals that propaganda will be strengthened. Second, given the decrease of the support of Georgian population towards the EU (see the figure 3.8), an analysis of the information they receive about the EU is significant for understanding this tendency.

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Appendix:

Picture 3.1



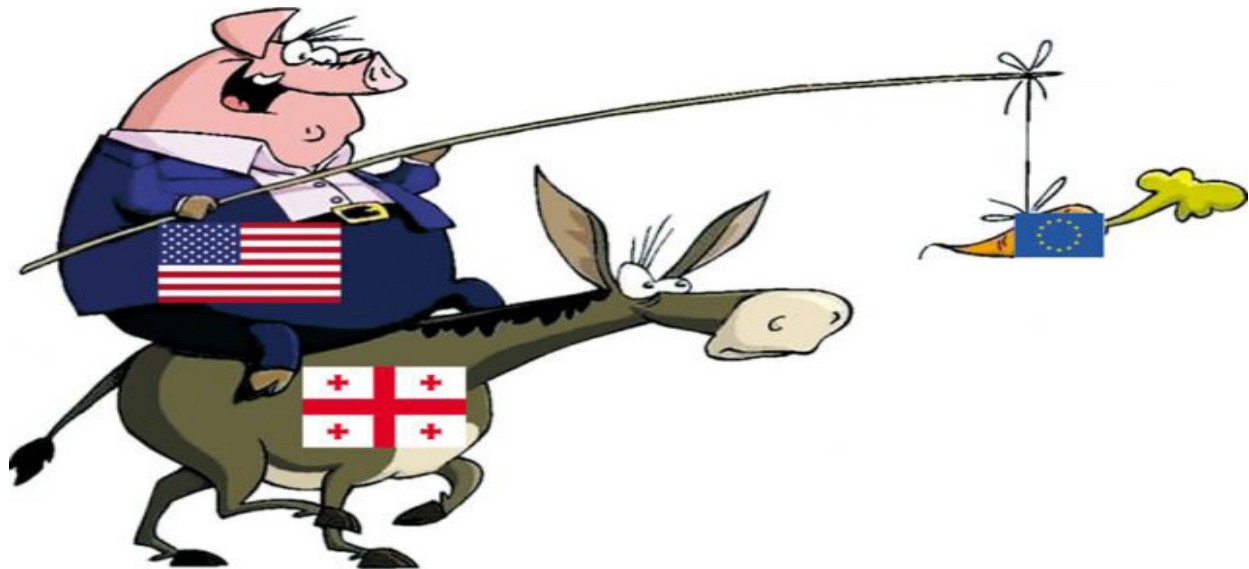
Source: Saqinformi, available at (<http://saqinform.ge/news/51566/saqarTvelo-evrokavshiri%3A+wariltva+siyvaruli%2C+dashTa+oden+evro%21+-+arno+xidirbegishvili.html>)

Picture 3.2



Source: Georgia and the World, available at (<http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%94%e1%83%95%e1%83%a0%e1%83%9d%e1%83%99%e1%83%90%e1%83%95%e1%83%a8%e1%83%98%e1%83%a0%e1%83%98%e1%83%a1-%e1%83%93%e1%83%a6%e1%83%94%e1%83%94%e1%83%91%e1%83%98-%e1%83%93%e1%83%90%e1%83%97/>)

Picture 3.3



Source: Georgia and the World, available at (<http://geworld.ge/ge/%e1%83%93%e1%83%90%e1%83%a1%e1%83%90%e1%83%95%e1%83%9a%e1%83%94%e1%83%97%e1%83%98%e1%83%a1-%e1%83%a3%e1%83%a1%e1%83%90%e1%83%92%e1%83%9c%e1%83%9d-%e1%83%93%e1%83%90%e1%83%9e%e1%83%98%e1%83%a0%e1%83%94/>)