

The Russian Media and Russia's Military Intervention in Georgia in 2008

Tamar AMASHUKELI*

Abstract

This study examines the role of the Russian media in affecting public opinion in Russia regarding the Russian intervention in 2008. The largest armed conflict in Europe since Kosovo in 1999, the August 2008 war was fought between Georgia and Russia over the proclaimed independence of the Georgian separate governments of Abkhazia and South Ossetia which were supported by Russia. Russia intervened militarily and recognized the independence of the two separatist regions, supported by an overwhelming majority of the Russian population. This study analyzes the role of the Russian media in affecting the Russian public opinion regarding its government's policies in relation to Georgia. The method used for study is discourse analysis, and the theoretical framework underlying the research is Barry Buzan's (et al., 1998) concept of securitization and Edward Herman's and Noam Chomsky's (1988) concept of manufacturing consent which was later elaborated by Anthony DiMaggio (2009). The trends identified in the mainstream Russian media coverage may at least partly account for the positive opinion of the Russian public towards the intervention. The study also revealed the contrasting trends characterizing the mainstream and alternative Russian media coverage, thus once again confirming the crucial role of the media in establishing the different opinions among the public, by "building" contrasting images of the world.

Keywords: Abkhazia, armed conflict, Buzan, Chomsky, coverage, DiMaggio, discourse analysis, Herman, independence, manufacturing consent, recognition, securitization, separatist regions, South Ossetia War

After collapse of Soviet Union separatist conflicts erupted in two territories of Georgia - Abkhazia and South Ossetia, accompanied by the civil war in the capital. "On August 14, 1992, a fratricidal war broke out on the resort beaches of Abkhazia, a small territory located on the Black Sea coast of the newly independent Republic of Georgia. A 16-month conflict ensued between Abkhaz forces and the central government of Georgia. The Abkhaz fought for expanded autonomy and ultimately full independence from Georgia; the Georgian government sought to maintain control over its territory. Intensive battles raged on land, air and sea. Several thousand were killed and many more wounded on both sides." (HRW, 1995, 5) At the end of the conflict, "The Abkhaz attacks triggered a mass flight of Georgian civilians that international relief organizations roughly estimated at 230,000 to 250,000 people." (HRW, 1995:43) They still live as Internally Displaced Persons within Georgia or as refugees in other countries. According to the Human Rights Watch, Georgians constituted 50% of the population in Abkhazia, as opposed to 17 % Abkhazian, so the expulsion of Georgians caused a drastic change in the demographic situation there (HRW, 1995:11). "The conflict in Abkhazia was heightened by the involvement of Russia, mostly on the Abkhaz side, especially during the war's initial stages. Whereas Russia has endorsed the territorial integrity of the Republic of Georgia, Russian arms found their way into Abkhaz hands, Russian planes bombed civilian targets in Georgian-controlled territory,

Russian military vessels, manned by supporters of the Abkhaz side, were made available to shell Georgian-held Sukhumi, and at least a handful of Russian-trained and Russian-paid fighters defended Abkhaz territory in Tkvarcheli." (HRW, 1995:7)

In South Ossetia it was a completely integrated and mixed Ossetian-Georgian population. There has been intermarriage and a sense of common understanding going back to distant history (Totten, 2008). Historical name of South Ossetia is Samachablo, which means "the land of Machabeli" – an old Georgian noble surname. The usage of the term South Ossetia dates back to the 19-th century and is a part of the colonial policy, usually referred to as "divide and rule". This strategy was reinforced by officially introducing the term "South Ossetia" by the government of the Soviet Union in 1922, to prepare the ground for the dispute (Kvirikashvili, 2010). In 1992-93 Military confrontation in South Ossetia between South Ossetian separatists and Georgian government forces resulted in thousands of displaced people, the majority of which were ethnic Georgians. The conflict in South Ossetia was characterized by "sporadic Russian involvement overwhelmingly in support of the separatists." (HRW, 2009:16-17)

Both separatist wars ended with the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces on the separatist territories. In 2006, Georgian parliament called for replacing the Russian peacekeepers with international police contingent, contending that Russia's "peacekeeping" troops formed

*Tamar Amashukeli is a part-time journalist of Tbilisi Online, Tbilisi, Georgia. She has a Master's in Peace and Development, Linnaeus University, Sweden. E-mail: tamomail@gmail.com

one of the main obstacles to peaceful resolution of the conflicts (Socor, 2006).

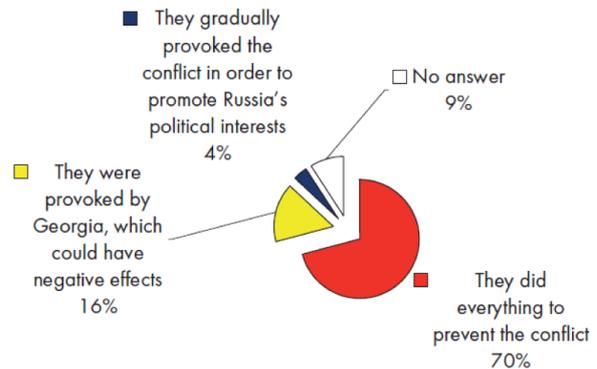
The Rose Revolution (2003) was a popular bloodless revolution that brought Georgia's current president Mikheil Saakashvili to power and replaced Eduard Shevardnadze. Saakashvili's pro-Western orientation, most notably his aspiration to join NATO, caused escalation of tensions in the relations of Georgia and Russia (Totten, 2008). Russian embargo on Georgian products and the massive expulsion of Georgians from Russia in 2006 followed (Jibladze, 2006).

In April 2008, in Bucharest, Romania, Georgia was promised eventual membership of NATO but was refused Membership Action Plan (MAP). After Bucharest, the relationship between Russia and Georgia significantly aggravated. Russia started adding weaponry to its peacekeeping bases in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and increased the distribution of Russian passports to the people living in the separatist regions (Totten, 2008). On April 16 2008 Putin signed a presidential decree recognizing the documents of Abkhazians and South Ossetians in Russia and vice versa, thus integrating these two territories into Russia's legal space. In July Russia launched the biggest military exercise in the North Caucasus since the Chechnya war (Totten, 2008). There have been allegations that Russia started to prepare for the invasion when Georgia was denied NATO Membership Action Plan (Whitmore, 2008).

In August 2008, after months of escalating tensions between Russia and Georgia and military clashes between South Ossetian and Georgian government forces, Russia intervened militarily in Georgia with the declared purpose of protecting Russian peacekeepers deployed in South Ossetia and those residents who had become Russian citizens in recent years. On August 10, Russian forces occupied undisputed Georgian territory in Southern and Western Georgia. On August 15 a ceasefire agreement was signed between Russia and Georgia brokered by the French European Union presidency. On August 26, Russia recognized Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states (Whitmore, 2008). The 2008 August war was the largest outbreak of fighting in Europe since the Kosovo war in 1999. Hundreds died in the shelling and fighting and close to two hundred thousand people were displaced from their homes (Toal, 2008:1).

The majority of Russian population supported the Russian government's intervention in Georgia in 2008. Russian Analytical Digest presented opinion polls conducted from August 10 to 18 in 2008, most of which were conducted by the Levada center. According to these polls, 70% of Russians thought that Russian leaders did everything to prevent the conflict between Georgia and South Ossetia, while only 4% thought they had provoked the conflict in order to promote Russia's political interests (See Graph 1).

Graph 1: How Would You Assess the Actions of the Russian Leaders in the Conflict Between Georgia and South Ossetia.

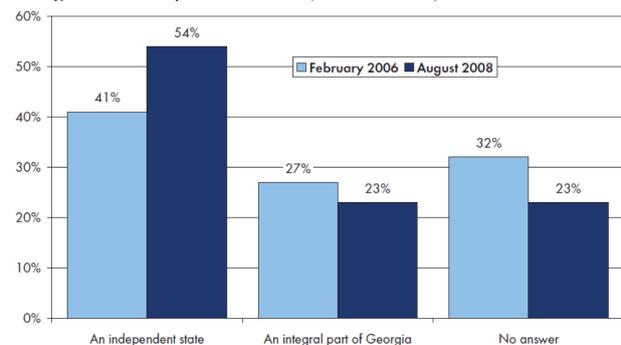


Source: Survey conducted by the Russian public opinion research institute Levada-center, August 15-18, 2008. (Petrova, Russian Analytical Digest, 2008:19).

In the opinion of 66% of Russians, the leaders of Western countries supported Georgia in order to weaken Russia and push it out of Caucasus. 78% approved of the decision of the Russian leadership to send troops to South Ossetia to conduct a military operation.

54 % of Russians in August 2008 thought that South Ossetia was an independent state, as opposed to 41 % in 2006; 23% in 2008 thought South Ossetia was an integral part of Georgia, as opposed to 27 % in 2006. The rest gave no answer (see Graph 2).

Graph 2: In Your Opinion, Is South Ossetia Today an Integral Part of Georgia or an Independent State? (2006 vs. 2008)



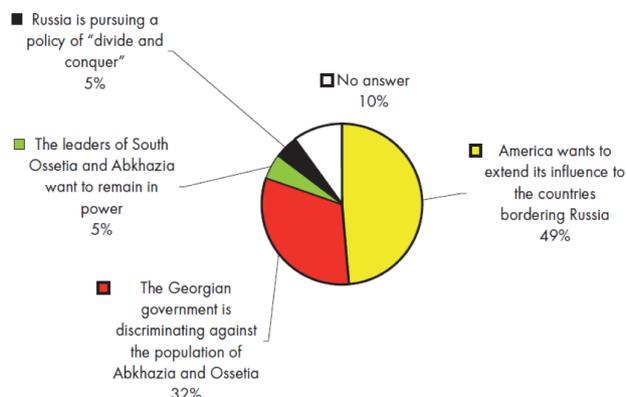
Source: Survey conducted by the public opinion Foundation, August 16-17, 2008. (Petrova, Russian Analytical Digest, 2008:21).

The number of those who thought Abkhazia was an independent state rose from 24 % in 2006 to 44 % in August 2008. The number of those who thought Abkhazia was an integral part of another state fell from 36 % in 2006 to 27 % in 2008. The rest gave no answer. Also, in August 2008, 66% of Russians thought if South Ossetia applied to join the Russian Federation, Russia should accept them. This indicator was slightly lower for Abkhazia - 63%.

To the question what was the main trigger for the conflict in South Ossetia, the survey revealed that the major-

ity, 49 % thought that America wanted to extend its influence to the countries bordering Russia, while 32% thought that the Georgian government was discriminating against the population of Abkhazia and South Ossetia; only 5 % thought that Russia pursued a policy of “divide and conquer”, and another 5 % thought that the leaders of South Ossetia and Abkhazia wanted to remain in power. 10% gave no answer (see Graph 3).

Graph 3: In Your Opinion, What Was The Main Trigger for the Conflict in South Ossetia?



Source: Survey Conducted by the Russian public opinion research institute Levada-center, August 15-18, 2008. (Petrova, Russian Analytical Digest, 2008:17).

The number of the Russian people approving of Medvedev's and Putin's policies also significantly increased in August 2008 (Petrova, Russian Analytical Digest, 2008:17-21).

In connection to the above-said, the question arises whether Russian media could be held at least partly responsible for influencing the Russian public opinion regarding Russia's intervention in Georgia in 2008.

The research questions derived from the research problem are the following:

- How did the Russian media portray Georgia before and during the intervention (from March till August 2008)?
- To what extent can the positive attitude of the Russian public towards Russia's intervention in Georgia be attributed to the Russian mainstream media coverage?
- Can the expressions of securitization and “manufacturing consent” be identified in the mainstream Russian media coverage of the issues related to Georgia?

The theoretical framework underlying the research is Barry Buzan's (et al., 1998) concept of securitization and Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky's (1988) concept of manufacturing consent which was later elaborated by Anthony DiMaggio (2009). Securitization, according to Buzan, means presenting an issue – a country, a person, a group of people, a section of society, etc. – as an exist-

tential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions beyond the normal rules (Buzan et al., 1998:24).

Manufacturing consent concerns the role of media in establishing public opinion about the policies of the government. It is usually carried out by choice of topics, filtering of information, giving priority to the coverage of the victims of the allies, reliance on one-sided sources, suppressing critical dissent, mainly by creating the impression of lively debate by pre-assuming the official line of thinking from which the debate develops (DiMaggio, 2009). For our study it is particularly interesting, whether the securitization theory and manufacturing consent are applicable to some of the Russian media in terms of their coverage of the Russian government policies in relation to Georgia.

Discourse analysis, the method of research which, according to James Paul Gee (2001) studies the nature of “language-in-use” is the most relevant method to study securitization, as Buzan (et al., 1998:177) also points out. The news items and articles from March till August were analyzed. It was decided to review some of the most popular media outlets in Russia, as revealed by a survey conducted by a Russian website (Superjob portal, 2007), that coincided with the list of prominent Russian newspapers presented by a BBC article about the popular Russian press (BBC, 2008). Lenta and Ria Novosti are among the most popular online media outlets. They are followed by Gazeta, Argumenti I Fakti, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Rossiiskaya Gazeta, Moskovskii Komsomolets and Novaya Gazeta respectively. These Russia newspapers and news agencies were reviewed, in particular, their coverage of the issues related to Georgia from March till August 2008.

The findings of the research show that reliance on the sources representing one side was characteristic of the mainstream Russian media coverage before and during the Russian intervention in Georgia in 2008. They also reveal the trend of choice of words such as Russian “peacekeepers” versus Georgian “troops/soldiers”, and allotting more space to anti-Georgian rhetoric. Status of the Russian peacekeepers is not questioned in the mainstream media.

Saakashvili and the government of Georgia are both presented as extremely aggressive, undemocratic, unreliable, and discriminating against the residents of its separatist regions, although regarding Saakashvili such portrayal is more explicit and toned up. The prospect of the accession of Georgia to NATO is presented as a major threat for the security of the Russian state. This trend is reinforced by focusing on Georgian opposition to the government and presenting them as the victims of the dictator and the undemocratic regime, which is intolerant of opposing views and attempts to silence them. Georgia is also described as a military state spending a big funding on weapons and army. The focus on the military side of Georgia naturally is accompanied by repeated allusions to terroristic acts affiliated with Georgia.

Many articles present Russia as a supporter of peace and helping the people of the “unrecognized republics”. The trend of comparing the Georgian separatist regions to Kosovo and referring to the recognition of their independence is also evident. The role of Russia in the separatist conflicts since the 1990-s is mentioned only in terms of the Russian “peacekeeping contingent”, whereas massive expulsion of Georgians from Abkhazia is ignored, neither are the self-proclaimed republics presented as historical regions of Georgia. The statuses of the separatist regions in majority of cases are designated as republics or unrecognized republics, and it is reiterated that they await recognition, rather than pointing out their internationally recognized statuses as parts of Georgia.

Another visible trend is presenting inflated numbers of casualties in South Ossetia, especially before and during the first days of the intervention, followed by the statements made by Russian officials and political scientists or journalists about the necessary measures to be undertaken in order to defend the Russian citizens and “peacekeepers” from “Georgian aggression”. The necessary measures are in most cases framed as using force to stop the bloodshed and punish Georgia for abusing of Russian citizens and “peacekeepers”, or even for genocide. The additional forces and weapons sent by Russian government to Georgia are designated as reinforcement to aid the peacekeepers.

Some journalists seem to actively criticize Russia for its policies in relation to Georgia, hence giving an impression of a lively debate. Russia is also criticized for “the late response”, using outdated weaponry, high economic costs of the war and its negative consequences in terms of international image of Russia. President Medvedev is criticized for his indecisiveness to intervene, and so on. However, the right of Russia to intervene in a sovereign country is hardly questioned.

By contrast, some articles in different media and mostly in *Novaya Gazeta* dare to give a balanced and even critical view on Georgia-related issues and the 2008 August war. Certain amount of diversity of sources and perspectives is noticeable in some articles, although to a limited extent except for *Novaya Gazeta* and partly *Gazeta*. *Novaya Gazeta* gives a drastically different perspective on the war and presents Georgia as a developing country with a reformer president, whereas Russia is presented as the aggressor, determined to damage the reputation of Georgia in the eyes of international community, and creating an image of an enemy out of NATO and Georgia in order to increase the number of voters. Statuses of the separatist regions are designated as self-proclaimed or separatist, and separatist leaders as corrupt and deceptive provokers of war as well as the pawns used by Russia to achieve its aims. Questioning the status of the peacekeepers is also noticeable in the alternative media. Their status is designated as “controversial” and it is pointed out that bombarding different parts of

Georgia cannot be considered a peacekeeping operation. It is said that the peacekeepers are not entitled to the weaponry provided to them and the forces sent from Russia do not represent the reinforcement to the peacekeepers. The roles of USA, EU and NATO as models for Georgia in terms of the norms and principles of democracy are highlighted. Russia is criticized for its attitude towards Georgia, designated as “the complex of big brother”, by exposing its failure to treat Georgia as a sovereign country.

The only newspaper out of the eight reviewed, *Novaya Gazeta*, which voices a totally different perspective and criticizes the government on the intervention and not on the superficial issues (as does the seemingly critical mainstream media), is the least popular according to the surveys which determined the choice of the sources for the study.

The different trends identified in the coverage of Georgia-related issues by the mainstream and alternative Russian media, are summarized and compared in Table 1.

Based on the findings presented above, we can contend that the significant rise in the public approval of Putin and Medvedev’s policies after August 2008 may be partly attributed to the trends identified in the mainstream Russian media. Portraying Georgia and its government as a threat, as well as the failure to challenge the right of Russia to invade the sovereign neighbor supposedly lead to the public view of 78 %, who approved of the decision of the Russian leadership to send troops to South Ossetia to conduct a military operation. This trend, accompanied by ignoring the full picture regarding the history of the separatist conflicts, most likely caused the result according to which the majority of Russians in 2008 thought South Ossetia and Abkhazia were independent states rather than integral parts of Georgia.

The trend of presenting Georgia’s Western orientation and aspiration towards NATO as a big threat for Russia’s role in the region, may account for the survey result according to which in August 2008 in the opinion of 66 % of Russians, the leaders of Western countries supported Georgia in order to weaken Russia and push it out of Caucasus, and the majority also thought the main trigger for the war was that USA wanted to extend its influence to the countries bordering Russia. Thus, it can be concluded that the Russian media may have had a significant impact on the positive attitude of the majority of Russians towards their government’s policies in relation to Georgia in 2008. This argument is reinforced by the fact that the media outlets showing the mainstream trends, are some of the most popular among the Russian people, whereas the newspaper identified as the most critical towards the official views (*Novaya Gazeta*), is the least popular out of those reviewed. It is interesting that the two most popular news agencies, *Lenta* and *Ria Novosti* are also the ones most actively disseminating the official perspective.

In order to answer the third research question, the re-

Table 1: The contrasting messages delivered to the Russian people by the mainstream and alternative Russian media.

Mainstream Russian Media Messages	Alternative Russian Media Messages
Reliance mainly on one sided sources, choice of words	Using different sources and presenting different perspectives
Saakashvili is presented as aggressive dictator inclined to solving the conflicts by force	Saakashvili is presented as a reformer president building a free democratic state
Georgia is presented as discriminating against the people of the separatist regions and the Russian "peacekeepers"	Georgia is presented as the victim of the provocations triggered by Russia in order to carry out its "long-planned" invasion
Georgia is portrayed as the pawn of the USA and "the West" against Russia	USA EU and NATO are presented as models of democracy for Georgia
Georgia spoils the reputation of Russia in the eyes of international community	Russia spoils the reputation of Georgia in the eyes of the international community
Accession of Georgia to NATO is presented as a big threat for Russia	Accession of Georgia to NATO is perceived by Russia as the loss of influence
Kosovo is presented as the precedent for the recognition of the Georgian separatist regions by Russia	Kosovo is presented as an excuse for Russia to recognize Georgian separatist regions in order to prevent Georgia from entering NATO
Georgia is presented as unwilling to hold negotiations	Proposals of negotiations from Saaakshvili are unaccepted by Russia
Georgian separatist regions are designated as "republics" or "unrecognized republics"	Georgian separatist regions are designated as "self proclaimed republics" or "separatists"
Georgian separatist regions are depicted as victims of the Georgian aggression	The separatist leaders are depicted as mercenaries making provocations against Georgia
Russia is presented as the peaceful and humanitarian supporter of the separatist regions	Russia is presented as the military supporter of the separatist regions using them as "levers" against Georgia
Georgia is presented as a threat for Russia and the whole region or the world	Georgia is presented as a "brotherly" neighbor of Russia, sharing the same faith and history

viewed trends identified in the mainstream Russian media have to be measured against the theoretical frames underlying the study, i.e. securitization and manufacturing consent.

In order to manufacture the consent of the Russian public, the Russian mainstream media seems to resort to selection of topics, framing of issues, emphasis and choice of particular words and phrases for each side, voicing concerns and disseminating information from particular sources, in order to silence or reduce the alternative perspectives.

One of the most visible examples of choice of topics and filtering the information is expressed by covering the history of the separatist conflicts, when the media tries to disregard the information about the historical roles of the regions and their internationally recognized statuses as parts of Georgia, while instead highlighting the prospects of recognition of their independence. Pointing to the independence of Kosovo as a legal precedent serves to prepare the public and manufactures their consent for the future recognition of the independence of the Georgian separatist regions. The preparation of the public to

accept the above-mentioned recognition seems even more important if we take into consideration Russia's problems with separatism (Chechnya). Same can be said regarding the mainstream Russian media reliance of the particular sources of the information, mainly Russian officials, Ossetian and Abkhazian separatist leaders and representatives of the de-facto governments of the separatists. Presenting interviews mainly with the Ossetian residents of the separatist regions, while ignoring the concerns of the Georgian residents, as well as presenting inflated numbers of casualties on the Ossetian side (worthy victims) designated as victims of ethnic cleansing, as opposed to the thousands of Georgian victims in Abkhazia in the 90s that are not mentioned despite the reiteration of the history of the conflicts of the 90s in the two separatist regions – meet the concept of worthy-unworthy victims, as an obvious expression of manufacturing consent. Presenting the prospect of Georgia's possible membership of NATO as a threat, can be viewed as the expression of anti-West and especially anti-American "religion" characteristic for the Russian reality, and the expression of manufacturing consent by the Russian media. Allegory to Kosovo's independence and

regarding it as the reason to recognize the independence of Georgian separatist regions may also be viewed as the expression of manufacturing consent and attributed to the anti-Western “religion”, since Kosovo’s independence was recognized by a number of “Western” countries.

Except for *Novaya Gazeta* and some articles in *Gazeta*, the majority of the Russian mainstream media does not challenge the official line of thinking, but rather, “presupposes it, thus helping to establish it even more deeply as the very precondition of discussion, while also providing the appearance of a lively debate” (DiMaggio 2009:17). A good example of such a trend is also visible in the article where the journalist, despite considering “deferring the status” as a better option than “defining” it, thus giving the impression of having a view different from the official one, contends that Russian “peacekeepers”, as the only source of maintaining peace in the region, should stay in Georgia. Furthermore, he thinks “pacifying the region” is the most beneficial option for Russia, and hence, it should be given a priority over the territorial integrity of Georgia. Even though the journalist gives the impression of challenging the official perspective, he implicitly assumes that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the neighboring country, as well as the norms and principles of international law, are unimportant compared to what is beneficial to Russia. This type of “criticism” helps to reinforce the official views among the public.

Choice of words, such as Russian “peacekeepers” versus Georgian “troops/soldiers”, together with the focus on the coverage of military side of Georgian state also serves to securitize Georgia by means of underlining its military nature and presenting it as a military or some other type of threat to Russia. Highlighting that the Georgian army is ten times bigger than that of South Ossetia, would supposedly terrify laymen (especially those unaware of how small Georgia is compared to Russia by territory as well as by population), and cause them to perceive Georgia as a significant military threat to Russia. Broad dissemination of the concerns regarding the all the above mentioned trends that express manufacturing consent, such as worthy and unworthy victims, allusion to Kosovo, presenting the separatist regions as victims of Georgia, ignoring the information about their historical place in the Georgian state and their internationally recognized statuses, or the role of Russia in fuelling the separatist conflicts, seem to logically lead to the securitizing speech acts about the necessity to undertake urgent forceful measures towards Georgia.

The securitizing speech acts presented the issue of dealing with Georgia as existential, so important that instead of exposing it to normal politics, that is, peaceful resolution of the conflict, it had to be dealt with decisively by top leaders - Putin, Medvedev and other high officials. The features of the speech acts included existential threat – mistreatment of Russian citizens and peacekeepers

by Georgia, point of no return - the necessity to “punish Georgia” and “stop the bloodshed”, and a possible way out - intervention of the Russian forces in Georgia. The recognition of the Georgian separatist regions by Russia can be regarded as the effect of the inter-unit relations, representing the last step of the process of securitization.

Thus, the answer to the third research question can be summarized and it can be concluded that the Russian mainstream media have served as a tool of the government to securitize Georgia and manufacture consent of the Russian public for the Russian intervention in Georgia in August 2008.

After the review and analysis of the findings of the study, it can be concluded that by serving as a tool for the Russian government to securitize Georgia, the mainstream Russian media attempted to manufacture consent of the Russian people to gather public support for the policies of the Russian government in relation to Georgia in 2008. Manufacturing consent of the Russian public was carried out by relying on particular sources of information, selection of topics, filtering of information and choice of words and phrases, favoring “worthy” victims over “unworthy” ones, and presenting seemingly critical perspective while at the same time pre-assuming the official perspective. The study confirms the assumption introduced by Herman and Chomsky (1988) and elaborated by DiMaggio (2009), that it is possible for some media to cover certain policies seemingly in a critical way, while at the same time presupposing the official view, leading the public to take it for granted without challenging it in terms of moral foundation or international law. In this way, superficially but not genuinely critical media in fact reinforces the official perspective in the minds of the people. The trends expressing manufacturing consent facilitated the portrayal of Georgia as a threat, and its securitization on the issues of international image and security, identity, military issues, and ideology of the state. It has also been concluded that the less popular alternative Russian media presented a drastically different image of Georgia by providing a contrasting coverage of the issues related to Georgia.

The recommendations of the study concern the importance of the role of the media especially in regard to guaranteeing the acceptance of certain government policies by the public. It suggests that more consideration be given to the media coverage of particular events, especially those regarding use of force and military intervention as urgent measures in order to avoid some designated threats. By giving deeper consideration to the seemingly critical discussions disseminated by the media, as well as the overall role of media in the process of securitization of a country, people or government, the public acceptance of unjust policies and even the implementation of such policies by the government may be avoided. When the unjust policy concerns a military intervention, the role of media

becomes even more crucial. It can be suggested that the public should take into consideration the alternative coverage of the events and delivery of different perspectives, as well as attempt to identify and compare different trends of covering the same issues. By paying more attention to the media coverage of the government policies, and the expressions of securitization and manufacturing consent in the coverage, it may be possible to avoid the public support for military intervention rather than peaceful resolution of a conflict. This recommendation may be especially useful if the media coverage during a relatively long period preceding the military intervention is given consideration, when there is sufficient time to challenge the trends of securitization and manufacturing consent identified in the mainstream media coverage

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3. Komsomolskaya Pravda, available online at: <http://kp.ru/>
4. Lenta, available online at: <http://lenta.ru/>
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