

## **OVERCOMING IDEOLOGICAL PRESSURE: PRIVATE VS. PROFESSIONAL LIFE OF VERA BARDAVELIDZE DURING THE SOVIET ERA**

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### **Abstract**

This article discusses the correlation between private and public life of scientists in the Soviet Union by focusing on the case of prominent Georgian ethnographer Vera Bardavelidze. This research seeks to clarify one of the aspects of social life of the Soviet Georgia: when Soviet ideology tightly controlled and implemented policies of high surveillance over peoples' lives. Exploring the relationship between one's private and public life during the Soviet period in the context of the theory of social/public spaces is a relatively new branch of study in Georgia. The subject of this research provides an opportunity to clearly follow the "bottom-up" perspective rather than the "top-down" approach, which is generally utilized in the context of the Soviet era's official policy. The aforementioned perspective enables scholars to fill existing gaps in this field. This research presents exterior loyalty as an opportunity of preserving internal freedom.

### **Introduction**

This paper aims to analyze the correlation between Vera Bardavelidze's personal and public activities in order to more effectively shed light on features of the Soviet past. The findings of this research are determined by several factors. First, Vera Bardavelidze is a renowned scientist who established a Georgian ethnographical school with Giorgi Chitaia. Her scientific works are interesting not only for Georgian

researchers but also for those studying similar subjects from the other post-Soviet countries. Although a substantial amount of time has passed since her death, Vera Bardavelidze's works reflect present-day reality and are popular nowadays; they are consistently utilized in academia. Currently, many articles are released about her life at present, including but not limited to "50 Women from Georgia," where Vera Bardavelidze's scientific activities are discussed. It was published in 2013 by the South Caucasus Regional office of the Heinrich Boell Foundation. Additionally, analyzing Bardavelidze's life is of academic interest not only for her scientific heritage but also for several subjects that reveal the inner workings of personal and public lifestyles of the Soviet past. Thus, this research seeks to clarify one of the aspects of the social life of Soviet Georgia.

Some scholars of the Soviet era specialize in the history of social and political groups. Particularly, these researchers are paying more attention to personal experiences within social and public life i.e. repressions, deportations, political activities, and so on. Exploring the relationship in one's private life in the context of social/public spaces during the Soviet Union is a relatively new branch of study in Georgia. Therefore, this article attempts to shed light on the correlation between personal experiences and public life during the Soviet Union in Georgia. The subject of our research provides an opportunity to clearly provide the "bottom-up" perspective, rather than the "top-down" approach that is generally utilized more than the former in the context of Soviet era official policy. The above-mentioned perspective provides the potential to fulfill existing gaps in this field. As a result, this research shows exterior loyalty as an opportunity of preserving internal freedom.

This study draws upon the theoretical framework set by Edward T. Hall in his book, "The Hidden Dimension." According to Hall, "space perception is not only a matter of what can be perceived but what can be screened out. People brought up in different cultures learn as children, without ever knowing that they have done so, to screen out one type of information while paying close attention to another" (Hall 1990: 44-45). Hall distinguishes four types of distance zones, which represent a part of

one's private space and are tightly interconnected with each other. They are as follows:

1) **Intimate distance:** In this zone, the presence of another person is important and may at times be overwhelming due to heightened sensory inputs (Ibid.: 117).

2) **Personal distance:** To clarify this phase, Hall uses Hediger's definition that uses this term to designate distance as consistently separating members of no n-contact species, stating that "it might be thought of as a small protective sphere or bubble that an organism maintains between itself and others" (Ibid.:119).

3) **Social distance:** "Social distance have boundary line between the far phase of personal distance and the close phase social distance marks. The intimate visual detail in the face is not perceived, and nobody touches or expects to touch another person unless there is some special effort" (Ibid.: 121). This is a distance of formal character. The far phase of this distance is more formal than the closer one. "Proxemic behavior of this sort is culturally conditioned and entirely arbitrary" (Ibid.:122).

4) **Public distance:** "Several important sensory shifts occur in the transition from the personal and social distances to public distance, which is well outside the circle of involvement" (Ibid.: 123). This is not a distance used by public figures but also for anyone on public occasions" (Ibid.:125).

Based on the spaces model previously discussed, this study attempts to introduce and analyze the correlation of private and social/public spaces among the people who lived during the Soviet regime via Vera Bardavelidze's example.

**Methodology:** This paper consists of mixed methods such as interviewing and content analysis, and secondary research. Tinatin Otchiauri, Julieta Rukhadze, Giorgi Chitaia, Mikheil Gegeshidze, Kristian Piggeti De Rivaxo, Tamar Dragadze, Manana Gugutishvili, Zhuzhuna Eriashvili and Manana Shilakadze's memoirs have helped portray Vera Bardavelidze's personality. Interviews with two ethnologists, Ketevan Alverdashvili and Nino (Nunu) Mindadze were of significant importance in conducting this study. Alaverdashvili is Bardvelidze's grandnephew, and

Mindadze was Giorgi Chitaia and Vera Bardavelidze's student. Additionally, Bardavelidze's archive at Iv.Javakhishvili Institute of History and Ethnology was consulted as there were letters from Vera Bardavelidze's private catalogue, mainly consisting of personal correspondence and some of her students' works that were edited by Vera Bardavelidze herself. From these materials, six personal letters were incorporated into this study.

### **The Soviet Reality of 1930s: A Short Overview**

After the establishment of Soviet rule in Georgia, one's private space gradually diminished as the government gained tighter control:

*“Everything had to be done for the collectivization. The parameters of the main act that was taken by the Soviet government and which was published in December of 1936, theoretically was equal to the constitutions of other civilized countries. It took into consideration nearly all democratic norms (like freedom of word and conscience, rights of public meetings, unions etc.), But the majority of these acts would not use in practice”* (Janelidze, Tabuashvili, Tavadze 2012: 343). The government did his best to keep the control over army, media, schools, and universities. Regime managed to make people become loyal to them by the help of permanent fear. Although personal rights were taken into consideration in the Constitution, no one was allowed to personally criticize the regime. It is difficult to discuss the guaranteed existence of the “Soviet human's” private space and arrangement of personal rights on his or her own accord. As Soviet citizens, scholars were forced to connect their work to the “bright present and better future of their motherland...Artists, musicians, and writers had to create products containing the happy life of the Soviet people” (Ibid.: 346). These citizens heard, remembered, and studied the content they were producing in this light, which is not exactly what they independently wanted to create but somehow they managed to create personal space as they desired.

The repressions made peoples livelihood feel unsafe: “Soviet system besides ideology was based on violence, terrors, and repressions. Mass repressions were motivated by several factors like economy, social,

political, ethnical purposes” (Ibid.:347). During this time period, ethnography was a science that began developing in Georgia. Giorgi Chitaia led this process. His students and colleagues supported him. Vera Bardavelidze was the most outstanding of them. Interestingly enough, she was a spouse and colleague of Giorgi Chitaia.

### **Vera Bardavelidze: Some Biographical Data**

Vera Bardavelidze was born on October 1, 1899, in Tbilisi, Georgia. In 1918, she graduated from the Women’s Gymnasium of Tbilisi. After her graduation, she married a Georgian scientist named Simon Lomia. The couple traveled to Persia on an expedition as per request by Niko Marr where Lomia died of typhus. Bardavelidze was stranded and had no money, causing it to take one year to return to Tbilisi. In 1925, she graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy at Tbilisi State University. She worked as a lab assistant at The Georgian National Museum since 1920. In 1928, she carried on her post-graduate education in Leningrad and married Giorgi Chitaia one year later. (Ochiauri & Rukhadze 1988: 5-6) In 1934, she started working as a principal of the Ethnographical department in the Caucasian Archeological-Ethnographical Institute of The Georgian Academy of Science. She was involved in Ethnographical fieldwork projects together with Chitaia. Bardavelidze was interested in studying spiritual culture. In 1937, she created a special questionnaire, which she used during her ethnographic fieldwork. She was awarded a candidacy degree of science *honoris causa*, and held the position of *docent* at Tbilisi State University. From 1941 to 1948, Bardavelidze worked at Tbilisi State University and continued to work at the Georgian Ethnographical department of the Ivane Javakhishvili Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography, before she passed away on November 23, 1970. She is buried in the pantheon of Didube with her husband Giorgi Chitaia who passed away in 1986. Giorgi Chitaia wrote about his wife: “I am a lucky man, because I had a wonderful wife - Vera Bardavelidze. A long time passed after her death but I still always have a heart-ache when I think about her. I cannot forget her last words, which she repeated many times: ‘Giorgi, what’s wrong with me, Giorgi I feel bad Giorgi help me to

breathe” (Chitaia 2001: V.5, 423). This is the latest memory that shows the deep feelings Bardavelidze and Chitaia felt towards each other.

### **Vera Bardavelidze as a Person and as a Scientist**

It is rather difficult to speak about Vera Bardavelidze’s private life because there is little information about her everyday life; only memoirs of Vera and Giorgi’s students provide some information about her personality:

*“As a rule, she did not speak about her personal life, maybe this happened too rarely. It was impossible to cross the line of her privacy. She seemed to be a cool and strict person who was so interested in her work that could notice nothing around her. Her style was plain but she charmed her audience with her appearance, intelligence, and her education. She used to be very demanding and strict teacher”* (Ochiauti & Rukhadze 1988: 36).

Vera Bardavelidze’s personal life seems to closely resemble Hall’s intimate and personal distances, where one’s speaking about her private experiences is minimized. The following memoir aligns with the methodology of placing Bardavelidze’s way of life in the framework of Hall’s private and close phases of social distance. From the memoirs of Bardavelidze’s students it turns out that she was quite strict and cool person, but considerate and attentive. Ketevan Alaverdashvili, the grandnephew of Vera Bardavelidze, recalls: *“They say that she was very strict but I do not think it is right. She was quite organized and demanding to herself. In fact, she was less demanding for the others but she demanded them to be more organized. Entering the house of Vera and Giorgi, you could guess that you were in scientists’ family. There were books everywhere. They discussed scientific issues even in their free time. Their informal space was full of conversations about ethnography”* (Alaverdashvili: 4.10.2016).

Vera Bardavelidze’s attitude towards children was very warm and deeply rooted. As observed by one of her students, “I often met neighbors’ children with drawing papers and crayons, and with their book in their hands at Vera’s desk. Hosts stopped their work and met the children with great pleasure” (Rukhadze 1993: 50-51). Vera actively participated in

raising Giorgi Chitaia's nephew Jora Chitaia and his children. She used to take care of her sister's children as well. Vera Bardavelidze had a special relationship with her grandnephew Ketevan Alaverdashvili and her parents: *"She wanted to adopt my father (Vera and Giorgi had no child and they worried about it very much) but my grandmother refused. She loved my father and she used to tell him that he was her son. She greatly contributed to our upbringing. She was a very good granny; her eyes twinkled when she was telling me tails. When I was a teen, I became ill with measles. Vera was shocked because her one sister had died by this disease. She made my grandmother hang up red curtains on the windows of my room. She entertained me. It was a period when I read Javakhishvili's first volume about paganism. Then I read Vera's book about diseases like mumps, measles, chickenpox etc. Her dissertation impressed to me. She told me much about ethnography. I decided to become an ethnographer. She asked me if I was strong in my decision - probably she considered it to be a hard profession for me. I insisted and she agreed with me at last. Giorgi Chitaia did not take part in this discussion"* (Alaverdashvili: 4.10.2016).

In the Institute of History and Ethnography archives, there is a letter sent to Vera Baravelidze written by a young girl named Nina Dalgani from the village of Davberi (Zemo Svaneti.) Perhaps they met each other when Vera was on an expedition there. In the letter, Dalgani asks Baravelidze to help her register for entrance exams at the faculty of medicine addresses Baravelidze as "dear and sweet mother Vera." She writes: *"Dear mom, you must know that all acquaintances are looking forward to meeting you. We always remember the time when we were together in Svaneti, especially my aunt and me. You wrote me about the photo, which was spoiled. It does not matter; it is just a photo, nothing more. Be healthy, have a life as long as possible and I will not care about anything more... When you were in Svaneti, I could not dare to ask you to become my mother, standing in front of the icon. Please write me a letter if you love me a bit"* (Dalgani 1967: №1260).

In the last part of the letter, Nina asked Vera to become her second mother, making it clear that Vera had a close relationship with Svanetians

when she spent time with them during her expedition. After living in Svaneti, people used to ask her to visit again.

Vera was a philanthropist by nature; the following examples confirm this statement:

*“In the 1950s, Giorgi Chitaia founded the ethnographic station in Barisakho (Khevsureti). People used to come and speak about their customs and traditions. There was an extremely poor boy, who used to work as a shepherd in somebody’s family. Vera took him under the protection of this station: he had dinner with the staff of the station. Vera gave me some money to buy new clothes for the boy. She was so happy seeing the boy in the new clothes. Her eyes were shining. Later she bought school textbooks for him”* (Ochiauri 2005: 265).

*“Two or three Abkhazian students studied ethnography, among them, was Shalva Inal-Ipha. In 1948, he defended his thesis. Vera and Giorgi paid for his celebration party”* (Rukhadze 1993: 57-58).

*“In 1965, an international conference [Congress] in ethnography was held in Moscow. A day before the Congress, Vera asked her student to assist her – she wanted to buy a suit. When they chose the suit, she said that it was a gift from Giorgi and her for this young man”* (Ochiauri & Rukhadze 1989: 37).

Several letters are preserved at the Institute of History and Ethnology, which provide a different perspective of Vera Bardavelidze. The letters by Giorgi Chitaia only contain positive sentiments. One was sent from Moscow in 1945 (№1219,) and the other from the Khevsureti expedition in 1950 (№1220.) Both letters begin as follows with “Hi dear Veriko, kiss you. Please take good care of yourself” (Chitaia, 1949 & 1950). Chitaia asks Bardavelidze to send some of his materials to Khevsureti. The letter from Moscow informs Bardavelidze about her husband’s arrival. The final words of both messages are “Keep yourself, forever yours, Giorgi”(Ibid.).

In one of the letters, Vera Bardavelidze asks Ilia Chkonია for assistance in composing two questions. The letter introduces Vera Bardavelidze as a loyal and caring wife, and inquires about an issue regarding their home phone: *“As you know, Giorgi has terrible buzzing in the ears. Doctor Pavle Nishnianidze visited and he advised us that the most*



*effective thing is to go to the sea resorts, like Sinopi (It is a hopeless thing to get a place here) or Bichvinta. If it is impossible to reserve a room, we will stay in Tbilisi...As I have already told you, our telephone is out of order. This fact influences on our situation. We are alone and in a case, if Giorgi gets bad again, it will be impossible to call the ambulance or ask for help somebody. Maybe Mr. Dvali or any other authorities, in the presidium could manage to write the minister of communications about our need, which has lasted for two months (there were many promises but no result). Please write the formal letter to minister together with Giorgi, take to his office and try to meet him together” (Bardavelidze 1969: №1243).*

Vera Bardavelidze’s scientific activities took place during difficult times in Georgia. Vera’s and Giorgi’s attitudes toward the government were quite controversial. Before the Soviet rule was established in Georgia “Bardavelidze was a member of the Social-Federalist Party. My grandfather who was a Social-Federalist himself used to say that she was a very good girl and one of the active members of the party” (Mindadze: 1.11.2016). When the Soviet Army occupied Georgia “Bardavelidze and Chitaia had two choices: to struggle under the Bolshevik government officially or give up their membership of the party. They compromised and chose the latter, but they expressed their disappointment by not joining the Communist Party”(Ibid.) The Bolsheviks viewed Bardavelidze as unreliable “Unlike her second husband, they banned Bardavelidze from traveling to Bulgaria and Romania. At the end of the 1960s, the International Ethnographical Conference was held in Japan. At first, the authorities promised to let her participate in the conference, but she ultimately was denied” (Ibid.). It is unclear to determine how censored her scientific works were, but “they usually began with Marxist quotations and then addressed the problem to be analyzed. She could not write about Christianity directly. However, she made some points to make the material understandable for readers” (Ibid.)

When Kakutsa Cholokashvili’s division was fighting against the Bolsheviks, Bardavelidze conducted fieldwork in the mountains and was arrested by the members of Kakutsa’s troupe. “She was released once they realized she was an ethnographer. Eventually, the Bolsheviks arrested

Bardavelidze. They were interested in why Cholokashvili's troop released her when the Bolsheviks intended to shoot her. She was brave enough to blame them in brutality, stating: *"You – the two strong men - dragging me somewhere"*. *Fortunately, the information about her profession came in time and Bolsheviks believed she had nothing to do with Kakutsa's division. Otherwise, they would shoot her"* (Alaverdashvili: 4.10.2016).

From the regime's perspective, Vera Bardavelidze was an unreliable person due to several factors. Two of them include her Federalist past and the time she spent in Iran with her first husband, Simon Lomia. It was during a period of time when the Soviet regime had not yet been established in Georgia. Under the Soviet system, however, special observation measures were implemented to monitor people who had been abroad at least once. Thus, people had to live under permanent surveillance.<sup>1</sup>

The dialogue at Gudani shrine between Khevisberi Gadua Chincharauli and Vera Bardavelidze was especially interesting: *"...Before going to Gudani shrine, Vera called Khevisberi Gadua and started speaking in a low voice (she did not pay attention to my presence there, I was standing nearby.) She told him: 'Khevsureti villages are being left by the native people. You have a great power to change their minds. Do not let them live these beautiful mountains and fields. Otherwise, foreigners would come and take these lands.'* *It was too dangerous to speak about these things, even in presence of colleagues. It was banned to say a word*

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<sup>1</sup> Giorgi Chitaia was involved in the political activities in the Georgian Democratic Republic. Since the Soviet rule, he and the members of his expeditions had to overcome many obstacles. Giorgi Chitaia recalled: *"Before the expedition of Meskheti, we went from Akhaltsikhe to Abastumani. Soon after our arrival, we were arrested. I was in Akhaltsikhe KGB for three days, then they took me to Borjomi and sent to Tbilisi by train. On my way to Tbilisi, Beria entered my train compartment and began speaking about government. Beria was interested why I was against Bolsheviks. I tried to persuade him that I had ended my political activities but he did not believe. I was sent to in Metekhi jail"* (Giorgi Chitaia 1991: 55). Shortly after he was realized, Giorgi was arrested again and convicted to death. He was rescued by one of his friends.

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*'foreigner' as we used to live in the 'country of brotherhood and friendship.'*” (Shilakadze 2005: 368-369).

This memory depicts Bardavelidze as a brave person who had a clear yet negative attitude toward the Soviet regime. Also, it portrays Bardavelidze's personal issues with the regime. Nevertheless, she was viewed with high regard by those who knew her personally, yet it could be argued that her caution with newcomers stemmed from potential problems to take place in the future: *“From my point of view, Vera was a great-natured person. A little bit reserved and jealous, devoted and generous, one with whom you seemed to be safe and hopeful. ... She would never make a friend whom she did not know well”* (Eriashvili 2005: 359).

Vera Bardavelidze was elected as a deputy member of the Kalinin Rayon Council in Tbilisi. In a letter from her private archive that outlines her activity in the Kalinin Rayon Council, Bardavelidze addresses Chugoshvili, the chairman of the Council. Bardavelidze makes a request for Anna Pirtskhelauri and her family: *“We can say for sure, me and deputy D. Khakhutashvili, it is absolutely necessary to take into consideration the family's hard conditions and give them a better flat. Especially you have to know that Anna's sister Pelagia Chopikashvili is a widow of soldier, who killed in the war. We should help them as members of a hero's family with a new flat, without any postpone”* (Bardavelidze 1970: №1246).

Nunu Mindadze explained Vera's activities in the Kalinin Rayon Council by discussing her experiences. For example: *“When I was a newcomer at the Institute of History and Ethnography, they offered me to become a deputy member of a council, like Vera. But I did not accept this offer. It was very important for them to have a couple of deputies who were not the Communist Party members, to show others their policy. By my mind, Vera was involved in the council for this purpose as well. After many years, I guessed that it was a mistake from my side; I would have an opportunity to help others. I think it was the only motif for Vera to agree, or, perhaps, she had no way out because the regime was much stronger in her period than mine”* (Mindadze:1.11.2016).

Memoirs of Vera Bardavelidze's students discuss her scientific activities and make clear that her private and public activities were deeply

interconnected. In this memoirs Bardavelidze is introduced as a model of scientist and as a model of personal modesty. Memoirs makes clear how Bardavelidze managed to arrange her private and public spaces on her own terms as much as one possibly could:

*“She had an extraordinary sense of dignity, and simplicity and modesty at the same time. She was a brilliant teacher. Vera had a sense of responsibility and at the same time, she was never satisfied with her activities”* (Rukhadze 1989: 7). *“When I come to Vera’s place and take a seat, she goes on her working. Time passes and she does not remember about my existence here. I am dumb as a fish!”* (Ochiauri & Rukhadze 1989: 39).

Another instance of this was outlined by Tamar Dragadze: *“I created an icon of Georgian woman in my childhood - simplicity, shyness, and softness would be mixed with beauty and refinement. Later on, when I was an adult, I made an idol of scientist-foresight, individual and elevated, and demanding. I recognized that it was very difficult to combine all these features. When I came to Georgia, I was so lucky to meet a person in whom I saw the fulfillment of my icons of person and scientist. Vera Bardavelidze was not just a tutor but also a second mother for me. She was interested not only in my scientific work but she took care of my health and my private life as well. She often asked me about my scientific items and about my everyday life - for example, what I had for breakfast and how I slept”* (Dragadze 1972: 374).

Vera had a special relationship with the youth. Her hospitality and drive to teach children about ethnography was truly remarkable: *“There was a club of ethnographers at the Palace of Pioneers where they used to meet the children and tried to familiarize them with ethnography. It was a voluntary work. They had close relationship with colleague’s children as well. They did their best to take the students and youngsters to ethnographical field-works and showed them everything. They considered it was their duty to do so”* (Alaverdashvili: 4.10.2016).

During Soviet times, it was ordinary and mandatory for students to visit their professors’ homes. To this end, Soviet ideology convoluted private, professional, and public spaces for scientists. The System did not

permit ordinary people to meet in private on their own accord and space. From the scientists' perspective, private and domestic activities had to be under close supervision, and subordinate their public activities. As a result, the important scientists turned their apartments and homes into mini research centers where they discussed scientific methods and theses productions. However, Giorgi Chitaia and Vera Bardavelidze's house was quite special compared to general practice. In addition to hosting scientific lectures for their students, Chitaia's and Bardavelidze's home was always open for fostering informal relationships and were consistently happy to host their students. Georgian ethnographer Mikheil Gegeshidze recalled: *"Dear Vera's family is very hospitable. Everyone welcome here. It is nearly impossible for Vera and Giorgi to let their guests leave their house without taking snacks. They would lay their table to bless you and you do it sincerely. In this toast, the main idea would be that these two persons live to serve the science"* (Gegeshidze 1972: 20).

Their students fondly remembered New Years celebrations Chitaia and Bardavelidze hosted:

*"When she had no opportunity to make celebration physically, she sent carefully chosen presents to the ethnographers' children"* (Rukhadze & Ochiauri 1989: 37).

*"Mrs. Vera and Mr. Giorgi's students used to congratulate them with New Year. During one of such party, when students wished them long life and health, Vera told them: 'I want to live as long as I would have the ability to work. Without this, my life has no reason.' She was a patriot of her job and country"* (Gugutishvili 2005: 356).

In these examples, the characteristics of Chitaia and Bardavelidze's hospitality can be interpreted within Hall's public and private distance zones, where publicity and personality are tightly interconnected.

In Giorgi Tsereteli's letter on Vera Bardavelidze's death, which was sent to Giorgi Chitaia, Bardavelidze is described as a teacher and a scientist: *"I always considered her as a model of a person and scientist. She was so soft, honest and sensitive. She sacrificed her life love of Georgia and ethnography. She will live in Georgian peoples' hearts with*

*her works on ethnography and history of Georgian culture.*” (Tsereteli 1970: №1354)

Logistically, it was difficult to conduct ethnographic fieldwork. Oftentimes, the only method of transportation for ethnographers was by horseback or on foot. Also, they typically did not have proper accommodations i.e. no bed and breakfast. In such conditions, they worked as hard as they possibly could (Ochiauri & Rukhadze 1989: 29) To this end, French scholar Kristian Piggeti De Rivaxo also wrote about Vera Bardavelidze as her students did: *“I want to express my excitement about the work that Vera Bardavelidze took on herself, that deserves real respect and delight. Her life is a brilliant sample of a person who looks for her personal identity, which is undivided part of the Georgian history, customs and traditions”* (Piggeti De Rivaxo 1972: 40).

Although Vera bardavelidze and Giorgi Chitaia’s expeditions were special. They were not only teachers for the students who used to take place in expeditions, but their parents as well. Nunu Mindadze calls: *“Mr. Giorgi and Mrs. Vera’s expeditions were fantastic, I remember some episodes: We went from Barisakho to Shatili, we intended to return back the same evening so we left our food in one of the villages. When we came to Shatili, Giorgi took us to Mutso. We could not manage to return on time and we had nothing to eat. We were very hungry. Youngsters from Shatili brought Giorgi and Vera tree trout. They gave it to us and told: ‘Divide as you wish!’ not touching it themselves. I do not know how she managed this, but Vera was always well -dressed during the expeditions. It seemed that she was quite strict, but in fact, she was very friendly. During the expedition, I saw the flower daisy and started extracting the leaves and repeating in Russian: ‘Любим, не любим...’ She came up to me from the backside. When I saw her, I threw the flower away. She picked up the other daisy and corrected me: ‘Любим, не любим, поцелует...’ When we were in Phshavi, I was the youngest among the members of our expedition. There was no room for me and I slept in a tent together with them. At night, when I turned over, she used to sit up and ask me ‘what’s up, do you want anything?’ She was very considerate and warm person”* (Mindadze: 1.11.2016).

Vera Bardavelidze's hard work during the expeditions and her dedication to her profession were proved by the memoirs of the participants of those fieldwork visits:

*"I remember an ethnographical expedition in Tusheti in 1965. We had to work in Kvemo and Zemo Alvani during a fortnight. Vera was working with a senior citizen. She was speaking with him and we were writing down his story. It seemed me that the hard work and high temperature caused her faint. When she recovered in two or three minutes, we began putting things into our bags and decided to leave the place. But, Vera continued interviewing, as if nothing had happened. So, we had to go on with our working"* (Gugutishvili 2005: 355).

*"Once we had a trip from Agbuga to Tsalka. We had three horses, and two Greeks accompanied us. We were warned that the guides were intended to rob us. To avoid the unpleasant situation, I told them that Vera was a brave woman. She used to kill some enemies and she carried her revolver as well. Indeed, Vera was good at riding. Probably the Greeks believed my story and we traveled with peace. By the way, she held an American hammer on the waist and its case looked like an American revolver's one"* (Chitaia 1991: 59).

In 1929, Khevsureti fieldwork was arranged. There was an interesting story with the members of the expedition that can be explained as follows:

*"It was prohibited for women to enter the shrines. Only an old woman could enter there, for baking bread. Vera Bardavelidze did not obey the law. As a rule, she described the shrines herself. One day we came to Gudani, the religious center of Khevsureti and began working. There was nobody in the village and we thought nobody notices us and we worked freely. As it turned out, inhabitants of the village gathered in the wheat-field of the shrine and watched us from there carefully. When we completed out our job, we returned from Gudani. On our way, we came across abandoned shrine. There we found some unique artifacts and did not want to leave an important treasure in such an unsafe conditions and Vera took one item with her"* (Chitaia 1991: 62-63).

*"One day three Khevsurs visited us. They announced that they had to check our luggage. As they said, people from different villages have proved*

*that Vera Bardvelidze had visited different shrines. In this situation, Vera became nervous. She worried that our guests could see the artifact, which we took from the deserted shrine. I opened the bag nervously and told them to check the luggage if they were able to do it. I managed to throw the artifacts under the sofa. Finally, they could not find anything and left us. Vera was so shocked, that she had a running temperature at night. She was dreaming: "Giorgi, hide it, hide it". 3 days lasted Vera's illness" (Ibid.: 67-68).*

### **Conclusion**

The Soviet Union tightly controlled and implemented policies of high surveillance over peoples' lives. In response to this aspect of Soviet ideology, which was condoning "confluences" of private, professional, and public spaces to Soviet scientists Vera Bardavelidze's private and scientific spaces were closely nevertheless interconnected. This is due to the conditions of her political past as part of her personal life: she had the same professions as her husband Giorgi Chitaia. They were founders of the Georgian ethnographic school, which required a significant amount of discipline, and drive and passion for their professions as Vera and Giorgi did. The couple had no children, which could be considered as one of the explanations as to how Vera Bardavelidze's scientific space turned into her private space. Despite the norms perpetuated by the Soviet system, Bardavelidze managed to arrange her private and public spaces on her own terms as much as one possibly could. This process mainly helped her and her husband's careers in Ethnography, granting them the opportunity to circumvent the Regime's tightly controlled spaces and regulations. Also, her life was full of political activity: Vera Bardavelidze and Giorgi Chitaia were not expelled or shot, and their scientific works had not been interrupted. In consideration of these situational obstacles, the couple had to live under permanent risk.

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**ՀԱՂԹԱՀԱՐԵԼՈՎ ԳԱՂԱՓԱՐԱԿԱՆ ՃՆՇՈՒՄԸ.  
ԽՈՐՀՐԴԱՅԻՆ ԺԱՄԱՆԱԿԱՇՐՁԱՆՈՒՄ ՎԵՐԱ  
ԲԱՐԴԱՎԵԼԻՁԵՒ ՄԱՍՆԱՎՈՐ ԵՎ ՄԱՍՆԱԳԻՏԱԿԱՆ ԿՅԱՆՔԻ  
ՀԱՐԱԲԵՐԱԿՑՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ**

**Ամփոփոգիր**

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***Բանալի բառեր:*** մասնավոր-հանրային կյանք, Խորհրդային  
Վրաստան, գաղափարախոսություն, հասարակական կյանք:

Հոդվածը քննարկում է Խորհրդային Միության գիտնականների մասնավոր ու հանրային կյանքի հարաբերակցությունը՝ նշանավոր վրացի ազգագրագետ Վերա Բարդավելիձեի օրինակով: Այս ուսումնասիրության նպատակն է հստակեցնել Խորհրդային Վրաստանի հասարակական կյանքի ասպեկտներից մեկը այն պայմաններում, երբ խորհրդային գաղափարախոսությունը խստորեն հսկում և մարդկանց կյանքերի հանդեպ վերահսկողության քաղաքականություն էր իրականացնում: Անձի մասնավոր և հանրային կյանքի միջև հարաբերակցության ուսումնասիրությունը խորհրդային շրջանում՝ սոցիալական-հանրային տարածքների տեսության համատեքստում, Վրաստանում ուսումնասիրության հարաբերականորեն նոր ճյուղ է: Հետազոտության առարկան հնարավորություն է տալիս հստակորեն հետևել «ներքևից վերև» հայեցակարգին՝ ի հակադրություն «վերևից ներքև» մոտեցման, ինչը լայնորեն օգտագործվում է խորհրդային շրջանի պաշտոնական քաղաքականությունների ուսումնասիրության համատեքստում: Այս ուսումնասիրությամբ ցույց է տրվում, թե ինչպես է հավատարմության արտաքին ցուցադրումը դառնում ներքին ազատության պահպանման հնարավորություն: