ԵՐԵՎԱՆԻ ՊԵՏԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱԼՍԱՐԱՆ
ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿՐԹԱԿԱՆ ԵՎ ՄՇԱԿՈՒԹԱՅԻՆ
ՀԵՏԱԶՈՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆԵՐԻ ԿԵՆՏՐՈՆ

Վերլուծական տեղեկագիր

ՀԱՅ-ՎՐԱՑԱԿԱՆ ԱԿԱԴԵՄԻԱԿԱՆ ԵՒ ՈՒՍԱՆՈՂԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱԳՈՐԾԱԿՑՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

№ 10

Երևան – 2017

YEREVAN STATE UNIVERSITY

CENTER FOR CIVILIZATION AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Analytical Bulletin

ARMENIAN-GEORGIAN COOPERATION THROUGH
ACADEMIA AND STUDENTS' INCLUSION

№ 10

Yerevan 2017

ԲՈՎԱՆԴԱԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

CONTENT

Foreward

SCIENTIFIC NETWORKS AND ARMENIAN-GEORGIAN COOPERATION ON UNIVERSITY LEVELS

The principle essence of Armenian-Georgian relations both in terms of the interests of two countries and in terms of more general interests of the region is unanimously underlined by all the observers, who represent the positions of the players both inside the region and out of it.

Nevertheless, in the everyday consciousness of the population in our countries, this estimate is not realized fully and without reservations. This is completely understandable if one takes into account all the problems that our societies have encountered in the last decades. On the other side, the narrow-minded stream of nationalism always accompanies these difficult times.

Armenian and Georgian peoples have thousands-of-years experience of neighborhood, partnership, and mutual assistance. Currently, these peoples once again find themselves in a situation where the national security concepts of the two countries are based on drastically different principles.

Georgia constructs its national security system based on two fundamental goals: reform state and societal structures in a way that the results of these reforms might lead to the accession of the country to the European Union and NATO. The logic deriving from this concept pushes Georgia, especially since 2008, to have extremely cautious relations with the Russian Federation, at the same time trying to have deeper cooperation with NATO states, including Turkey. Economic interests (and not only them) push Georgia to deepen partnership with hydrocarbon-rich Azerbaijan.

Deriving from its understanding of state security defense, Armenia became a member of the CSTO and the Eurasian Economic Union. Because of many understandable and not understandable reasons Armenia doesn't have diplomatic relations with Turkey, as that country brings in ever changing preconditions in order to normalize relations between the two states. Meanwhile, the ceasefire agreement signed with Azerbaijan in order to stop the war in Nagorno-Karabakh is often violated. This keeps those two states and societies in constant pre-war situation with all its consequences.

In this circumstances societies in Armenia and Georgia face a paramount issue, which can be formulated in the following manner: based on the accumulated experience of cooperation, mutual assistance, and cohabitation, the two societies should spare no effort to deepen cooperation in many areas, trying to put to the service of their states the opportunities that come from the fact that two countries belong to different systems. There are a lot of those opportunities.

In order to reach this goal, our societies should strive to understand each other better and show understanding of each other's differences, which has been briefly talked about. Our stable cooperation and in-depth relations are extremely important for both our two states and regional stability and security.

To this end, all the sides interested in regional security and stability especially need to fully support towards the various initiatives and programs of different societal and professional groups. In this regard, all the programs aimed at suggesting effective frameworks of cooperation between young intellectuals become even more important.

The collapse of the Soviet Union, alongside its enormous global consequences, also had a profound impact on another important area, which is very hard to estimate. This general area refers to the cultural and scientific cooperation of Armenian-Georgian relations and in more narrow terms the academic and university cooperation between our two nations. Since the independence of the two countries, this was especially true for the young generation, which had been practically deprived of all the opportunities that their senior colleagues enjoyed. Many scientific events organized during the Soviet times, such as conferences, combined research programs, various ways of exchanging knowledge and methodology, gave the opportunity to the universities and academic institutions to cooperate in a mutually beneficial way, even with all the Soviet ideological restraints.

These problems and issues that our two societies faced after the collapse of the Soviet system both in terms of security and economy also had their profound influence on cultural and scientific ties. The erosion of these ties brought to a situation that he of our two countries knows their European, Russian and American peers better than each other. There are very few scientific projects, unique platforms, where the young intellectuals of our two societies can meet not only in a working setting, but to know each other better, understand the interests, goals, concerns and also the visions that are formulated by the young people.

On the other side the globalization of science and education, increasing mobility create new challenges for our professionals and universities. In order to

face those challenges properly the cooperation with the academic and scientific circles of the neighboring country is extremely important.

With the assistance of Heinrich Boll Foundation, the representatives of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State, The Anthropological Association of Georgia, The Center for Civilizational and Cultural Studies of the YSU and "Hazarashen" Anthropological Research Center jointly conducted a program, which aims at creating a lasting scientific system through combined research projects. This system should unite the Masters and Ph.D students in a network operating on a stable value system. The combined research has been conducted with the leadership and oversight of senior colleagues of our universities based on the following principle "everybody reads everybody's texts and makes comments."

It should be mentioned that this is already the second program conducted based on this philosophy and with the same organizational principles.

A part of the results of this work is the articles the students could finalise at the end, which are provided in this bulletinn

David Hovhannisyan,
Professor, Ambassador Extraordinary
Plenipotentiary, Director of Center for Cultural
and Civilization Studies, YSU

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN ARMENIA AND GEORGIA

Archil Abashidze, Ilia State University,
archil_abashidze@iliauni.edu.ge
Anahit Gharibyan, Yerevan State University,
anahit-gharibyan@rambler.ru

Abstract

This article compares the majoritarian electoral systems in Armenia and Georgia. Since gaining independence, both countries experimented with different electoral systems, which has led to the ongoing debate over which is the best model. The majoritarian electoral model is oftentimes criticized in both countries. This paper discusses the major characteristics of this model and concludes that despite the existence of some obvious problems, political elites are often reluctant to change the system because it guarantees significant political gains in elections; changes can only take place in the context of a broad reform initiative, such as the constitutional reform in Armenia, or when elections are postponed for some unclear reasons, as seen in Georgia.

Introduction

Weak democratic institutions are an overwhelmingly evident problem in most post-Soviet countries. Hard to build and even more difficult to hold responsible, the pillars of democracy are essential components of successful state-building projects and indicators of political progress. Governments usually discuss successful reforms and steps forward, while public opinion serves as an objective indicator. Unfortunately, opinion polls often demonstrate that there is a serious gap between citizens and their representatives in high places.

In this article, two neighboring countries – Armenia and Georgia – will be explored. First, they share similarities in political culture and policy-making. Furthermore, Armenia and Georgia are both small, Christian, and young democracies surrounded by "difficult" neighbors and torn by economic hardships. Both are struggling to establish a political culture where governments will be obliged to report to the public and a strong civil society that will make the voices of ordinary citizens heard in the policy-making process. Parliaments play a crucial role in these processes.

For various reasons – one of which is the disappointment in the executive despite having strong presidents – both countries decided to become parliamentary republics. The legislative bodies will become a place where all political positions can be represented, and discussions will allow for the establishment of a more civilized political process. Furthermore, parliamentary systems will allow for street politics (in the worst sense of the notion) to diminish, as it has led to violence in both countries. Currently, citizens do not believe parliaments will be able to bear the weight of a highly dynamic process of a search for political consensus: change must occur.

Reforms, constitutional changes, and amendments to laws are frequent in developing countries. Armenian and Georgian citizens are also accustomed to it: new governments usually stipulate new rules of the game, often contradicting to those established by the previous government. Through the changes set forth by the few in power, the citizens understand their political interests and don't expect much improvement for the rest of the country. However, an electoral system and particularly, the way Parliaments are elected, might be an exception: most agree that this is the case where everybody can benefit if the system changes.

In the following chapters, this paper will first demonstrate what opinion polls show about current popular attitudes toward Parliaments in Armenia and Georgia; second, it will offer a historical overview of parliamentary elections and legislative changes in both countries; finally, based on conducted expert interviews and online resources, this paper will discuss the current reform processes and expected consequences.

Problem statement: Parliaments as Millionaires clubs?

In both countries, a significant number of citizens have a rather skeptical attitude toward the state's legislative body (see chart below, CRRC Cross-country barometer, 2015.) Parliaments are not trusted for various reasons: low qualification of most MPs, public appearances – or the lack thereof public appearances and absence from political life at all, – brawls, insults and other forms of unethical behavior which are commonplace in the Georgian parliament, unwillingness to work closely with citizens, and so on. As the chart below demonstrates, the trust of the Armenian citizens in the Parliament is low: 45 % of respondents fully distrust the legislative body. Citizens in Georgia are a slightly more positive with only 18% choosing to describe their attitude as "fully distrust" and 19 % with "somewhat distrust." However, considering that Georgia is a semi-parliamentary republic with 39% of respondents answering that they "neither trust nor distrust" the legislative body, it is observed that there is a low level of trust in Georgia as well. Noteworthy, only 2% in Armenia and 4% in Georgia say that they "fully trust the Parliaments;" 9% of Armenian citizens and 12% of Georgian citizens say they "somewhat trust the Parliament."

Chart 1: Trust in the Legislative body in Armenia and Georgia
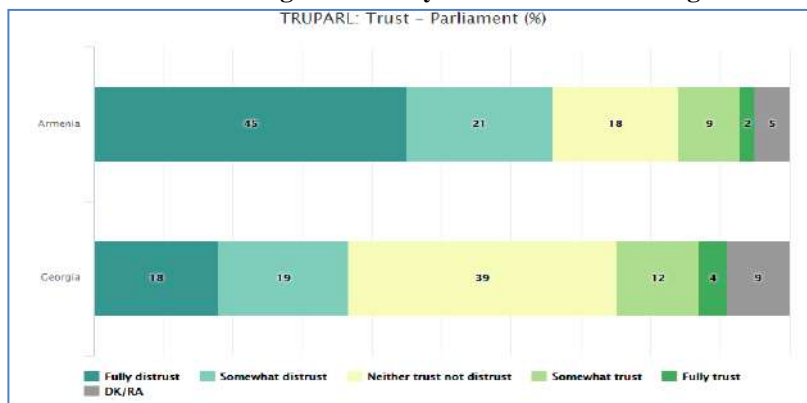
(Source: CRRC, 2015)

Low trust in the Parliament is just one of the indicators that the democratization process is in deep crisis in both countries. The state-building

process was hampered by wars and following economic hardships in both countries, and is still slow with fragile achievements. The basic requirement of a democracy – fair and transparent elections – is still a "goal to be achieved" rather than reality. Elections are often manipulated: voters are bribed and threatened, violence erupts on election days, and politicians disregard all ethical standards and legal rules in the most notorious Machiavellian way.[1] The chart below shows the extent of the problem: a significant number of respondents (especially in Armenia) doubt the fairness of the latest national elections. This means they know that at least, a certain number of the elected officials do not belong to the National Assemblies and managed to get seats due to corruption, unfairness in the election process, etc.

This problem has become blatantly obvious in the recent years; even ruling parties could not suppress discussions about the necessity to reform the electoral codes and to create a basis for a system that will guarantee a fair representation of political powers in the Parliaments. Ruling parties usually successfully manage to link reform agendas in their favor, and both countries end up with "new electoral codes" that still benefit those in power. However, the debates about a better electoral code are constantly happening. Currently, in Armenia and Georgia, the future of the majoritarian system of elections is in question.

Chart 2: Attitudes on the fairness of elections in Armenia and Georgia

ELCOND: Fairness of the most recent national elections (%)

Armenia: 52 | 23 | 6 | 18 | 2
Georgia: 9 | 30 | 37 | 22 | 2

Not at all fairly To some extent fairly Completely fairly DK RA
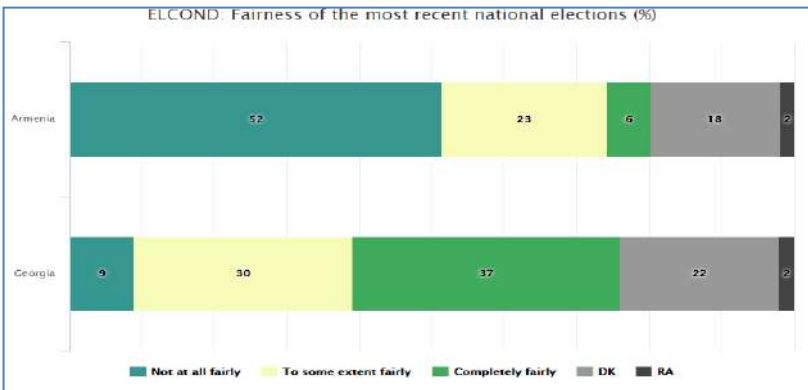
(Source: CRRC, 2015)

---

[1] See f.e. reports of the OSCE election observation missions: http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections (accessed 29.07.2017)

Why has the majoritarian system become an issue for discussion? Certain problems connected with the ineffectiveness of most of the majoritarian MPs have grown so obvious that it cannot be concealed by the smartest PR actions and propaganda tools. Here are some of the most striking problems often described in the press or in local and international NGO reports.

First, rich people/businessmen seek Parliamentary immunity in order to protect their businesses.[2] A seat in the legislative body is attractive not as a source of financial income in the form of a salary – of which usually amounts to ridiculous sums for these people – but as a means to protect and expand the business. That is why a lot of MPs who come from business into politics do not bother to attend plenary sessions.

Second, a seat in the Parliament can guarantee sources of income and personal wealth. What MPs are often linked to in both countries is called becoming "Krysha," which means protector (from the Russian word "Krysha" which means "roof", "shelter") for businesses. This is a widespread form of corruption in the post-Soviet republics and is linked to the low level of transparency. For example, in Georgia, all MPs are obliged to present a declaration of assets collected by the Civil Service Bureau early in their career. However, false data is often written in the declaration. Thus, MPs "forget" to declare some assets and "recall" only if journalists or NGOs make the information public.

Thirdly, majoritarian MPs that are independent of political parties become victims and become subject to political bargaining: as the parliamentary majority seeks additional votes for a legislature, or the parliamentary minority tries to gain votes to oppose the ruling party, they try to convince the majoritarian members to join them. Instead of addressing their constituents concerns, majoritarian MPs spend more time engaging in this bargaining process and add to the negative reputation of the legislative body – a blatantly obvious phenomenon in the Georgian case.

---

[2] A list of Georgian millionaire MPs can be found under: https://bpn.ge/finansebi/31634-37-deklarirebuli-milioneri-umravlesobashi.html?lang=ka-GE (accessed 29.07.2017)

The most convincing argument against the majoritarian system is most likely the fact that MPs fail to represent their voters. The legislation is typically in place in both countries and defines how the MP should stay in touch and be responsive to the electorate, but the implementation of the legislative principles in this regard is usually extremely weak. Most voters have never met their MP or do not even know who he/she is.[3]

Thus, it is logical that in both countries, citizens and civil society organizations have called for a reform of the system and abolishment of the majoritarian system as a potential solution to address the problem of weak political representation.

However, in the past, both countries experienced "seat-selling" in the party lists: parties put rich people on their lists – sometimes even among the top 10 members – in exchange for financial contributions. For some critics, this is not much better than the traditional voter bribing by majoritarian candidates prior to the elections. At the very least, party membership puts the MPs under some party discipline.

Some theoretical observations about the electoral systems

Elections are expected to ensure fair representation of the population in the state legislature. This is especially important in parliamentary republics where governments are formed by the parties or coalitions with the most votes. Therefore, the question of developing the best electoral system for a particular society is widely discussed in transitional countries. Both the proportional system and the majoritarian system have their positives and negatives. A mixed system is often preferred since it allows for the application of positive features to both systems, but it also proves to be far from being perfect; Armenia and Georgia are fitting examples of this.

Probing all possible systems is a logical way to find the ultimate model. However, this process takes time and seriously undermines citizens' trust in democracy. Disappointment with the election process and results leads people to believe that democracy is just another myth that elites use to

---

[3] See NDI report, 13 April, 2016 on trust in the Parliament in Georgia, https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/NDI%20Georgia_March%202016%20poll_press%20release_POLITICAL_GEO_vf.pdf

control the masses, and that power always remains in the hands of the rich "fat cats."

The majoritarian or "plurality" system is also possible and takes different forms such as "first past the vote" or "two round system;" it allows citizens to cast their votes for individual politicians, given party-affiliated persons or independent candidates. Typically, this type of a decision requires a higher level of political literacy among citizens. On the other hand, it strengthens connections and ties between citizens and parties or in the case of independent candidates, between citizens and the representatives' bodies. Therefore, the choice of a mixed model election system is rational in the case of countries that have weak party systems and a mostly confrontational political environment (Georgia is probably an extreme case with more than two hundred registered political parties.)

Election fairness and efforts taken to implement necessary measures to ensure transparency and responsiveness of MPs' activities determine if a particular electoral system "works" or not. Skepticism about the majoritarian electoral system in both countries is connected with two aspects: a) elections are often accompanied with different forms of wrongdoings, such as "buying votes." Majoritarian candidates are frequently involved in this because they engage in personal meetings with constituents. They also often manage to gain leverage, allowing them to influence local political elites and ensure success on elections; there are cases when governments change but certain majoritarian candidates are reelected in certain regions several times. b) When elected, majoritarian MPs don't bother to keep in contact with their voters and sometimes, completely ignore them. c) Unfair representation of votes is commonplace: in Georgia, where the system allows one to win a district by a majority of votes, the argument for changing the system is also this "classical" disadvantage of the majoritarian system where an unfairly big number of votes gets lost.[4] Armenia has already changed the election law:[5] the parliament was elected in 2017 only by a proportional vote. A

---

[4] http://www.isfed.ge/main/783/geo/ (accessed 29.07.2017)
[5] https://massispost.com/2016/05/armenian-parliament-adopts-new-election-law/ (accessed 29.07.2017)

constitutional referendum was held to change this and other features of the overall political system, resulting in Armenia becoming a parliamentary republic. The abolishment of the majoritarian system was just one aspect of the greater reform agenda and thus became the new reality despite much differences in opinion. In Georgia, the planned changes in the electoral system became a hot topic for political speculations: despite the promise to change the majoritarian system as soon as they came into power after winning the elections, "The Georgian Dream" coalition started discussing the necessity to postpone this decision until the next elections in 2020. As the results of the 2016 parliamentary elections demonstrated, the government had fair reasons to postpone the abolishment of the majoritarian districts: their candidates won an absolute majority.

Historical overview of the electoral processes in Armenia and Georgia since 1991

Since independence, **Armenia** has held six Presidential (1991, 1996, 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013) and six Parliamentary elections (1995, 1999, 2003, 2007, 2012, 2017.) The president is elected for a five-year term. After the **constitutional referendum** held on December 6, 2015, the proposed amendments to the constitution from a semi-presidential system was replaced by a parliamentary republic; these changes planned to be enforced during the 2017–18 electoral cycle.

The **National Assembly** (*Azgayin Zhoghov*) had 131 members who were elected for a four-year term: 41 members in single-seat constituencies and 90 members by proportional representation. The seats envisaged for the National Assembly by proportional representation are distributed among those party lists, which have received at least 5% of the total of the number of votes. Armenia has a multi-party system with numerous parties in which often none of them have a chance of gaining power alone, so parties must collaborate in order to form coalition governments.[6]

Georgia has held 6 Presidential (1991, 1995, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2013) and 7 Parliamentary (1992, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2004, 2008, 2012) and 3 referendums (1991, 2003, 2008) since the country's declaration of

---

[6] http://www.elections.am/ (accessed 29.07.2017)

independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. The President is elected for a five-year term and the Parliament of Georgia for a four-year term.

Since 2012, the country has changed from having a presidential system to being a semi-presidential system with a strong executive government and prime minister. The latest parliamentary elections took place on October 8, 2016.[7]

The 150 members of the unicameral parliament are elected through a mixed system: 73 by a two-round system in single-member constituencies with majority rule, and 77 by proportional representation in a single nationwide constituency with an electoral threshold of 5 %.

Historical background of elections in Armenia

In 1990 right before Armenia gained independence, the Supreme Council of Armenia of the first convocation was formed only by the majoritarian electoral system (260 MPs). Later, 40 out of the 190 seats of the first convocation of NA were elected by the Proportional Voting system for the first time. Parliamentary elections[8] to the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia of the **first** convocation were held on July 5, 1995, with the second round on July 29, 1995. Thus, the Republican Bloc (an alliance of the Pan-Armenian National Movement, Democratic Liberal Party, Christian Democratic Union, and the Republican Party) won 20 seats (27.82%), Shamiram – 8 seats (11%), Communist Party of Armenia – 6 seats (7.89%), Armenian Democratic Union – 3 seats (4.9%), National Self-Determination Union - 3 seats (3.63%)[9]. The voter turnout was 55.6 %. The second round of voting was held on July 29, 1995, in 23 constituencies. Overall, the Republican Bloc won the election with 119 seats.

---

[7] See also: http://cesko.ge/eng (accessed 29.07.2017)

[8] http://www.parliament.am/parliament.php?id=parliament&lang=eng (accessed 29.07.2017)

[9] Elections today: News from the International Foundation for Election System. VOL 5. NO. 3, page 29

Political Group	Total	Proportional	Majority
Republican Bloc	119	20	99
Shamiram Women's Party	8	8	0
Communist Party	7	6	1
National Democratic Union	5	3	2
National Self-Determination Union	3	3	0
Armenian Liberal - Democratic Party (Ramkavar)	1	0	1
Scientific-Industrial and Civil Union	1	0	1
Armenian Revolutionary Party (Dashnaktsutyun)	1	0	1
Independents	45	0	45

On May 30, 1999, the elections (131 Parliament Members: 75 majoritarian and 56 proportional electoral system) of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia of the **second** convocation were held. The result was a victory for the Unity Bloc, which won 62 of the 131 seats. Overall voter turnout was 51.7%.

The Unity Bloc was an alliance of the People's Party and the Republican Party of Armenia. According to the results of the elections, six parties and an alliance overcame the barrier of the 5 % minimum vote requirement rule, as defined by the law. From the 129 Parliament Members, 76 were partisan and 53 were nonpartisan (not belonging to any party).

After the crime of October 27, 1999,[10] by the decree of the President of the Republic of Armenia at the extraordinary sitting of the National Assembly convened on November 2, 1999, a new governing body of the National Assembly was elected. Mr. Armen Khachatryan was elected as the President of the National Assembly, and Mr. Tigran Torosyan and Mr. Gagik Aslanyan were elected as Vice Presidents of the National Assembly.

---

[10] On October 27, 1999 a group of seven terrorists rushed into the sitting hall of Armenian national Assembly and opened fire with Kalashnikov machine guns killing Prime Minister Vazgen Sarkisyan, Speaker Karen Demirchyan, Vice-Speakers Ruben Miroyan and Yuri Bakhshyan, Minister of Operational Matters Leonard Petrosyan, and three MPs: Mikael Kotanyan, Armenak Armenakyan and Genrikh Abramyan.

In the elections of the **third** convocation of the National Assembly held on May 30, 2003, there were 56 constituency seats and 75 elected seats on a national basis using proportional representation. (131 Parliament Members: 75 proportional and 56 majoritarian electoral system.) However, the elections were strongly criticized by international election monitors, who cited widespread fraud and noted that they fell short of democratic standards.

Elections of the **fourth** convocation held in Armenia on May 12, 2007, contained 131 Parliament Members: 90 proportional and 41 majoritarian electoral system. 1,364 candidates ran for the 131 seats, 41 of which were constituency seats with the remaining 90 to be filled by a proportional party-list system. Five parliamentary factions were established in the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia of the fourth convocation: "Republican Party of Armenia" (64), "Prosperous Armenia" (25), "Armenian Revolutionary Federation" (16), "Rule of Law" (8), and "Heritage" (7). These factions were established on June 7, 2007. Eleven Parliament Members were not included in those factions. On August 26, 2007, and on August 24, 2008, additional elections were held by the majoritarian electoral system.

The last parliamentary elections of the **fifth** convocation were held on May 6, 2012 (131 Parliament Members: 90 proportional and 41 majoritarian electoral system). President Serzh Sargsyan's ruling Republican Party gained even more of a majority of the parliament seats. Six parliamentary factions were established in the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia of the fifth convocation: "Republican Party of Armenia" faction (69), "Prosperous Armenia" faction (37), "Armenian National Congress" faction (7), "Rule of Law" faction (6), "Armenian Revolutionary Federation" faction (5), and "Heritage" faction (5). Two deputies were not included in those factions. By the decree of the President of the Republic of Armenia, on April 13, 2014, Mr. Hovik Abrahamyan was appointed as the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. Mr. Galust Sahakyan was appointed as the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia on April 29, 2014.

| Year | Number of Seats | | |
	Proportional	Majoritarian	Total
2012	90	41	131
2007	90	41	131
2003	75	56	131
1999	75	56	131
1995	150	40	190

A **constitutional referendum** was held in Armenia on December 6, 2015. The proposed amendments to the constitution would change the country from having a semi-presidential system to being a parliamentary republic, with the changes intended to take effect during the 2017–18 electoral cycle. The referendum passed with 66.2% of voters supporting it. Voter turnout was 50.8%, passing the 33% threshold to validate the results.[11]

The constitution of RA was adopted in July 1995 and revised in November 2005 and 2015. Constitutional reforms to change the system of government from a semi-presidential to a parliamentary system were approved in a referendum in December 2015 and are set to be enforced at the end of the President's term in 2018.[12]

Under the amendments, The Armenian National Assembly is going to consist of at least 101 deputies[13] instead of 131 deputies, of whom 41 were formerly elected from single-member districts, and 90 were elected by party lists. The next legislative election took place on April 2, 2017.[14] The president is the head of state, embodying national unity and ensuring the observance of the Constitution. S/he cannot be a member of a political party. Under the proposed changes, the president is to appoint a candidate

---

[11] See also: http://www.lragir.am/index/eng/0/politics/view/35046 (accessed 29.07.2017)

[12] http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF(2015)034-e (accessed 29.07.2017)

[13] Article 89. National Assembly Composition and Election Procedure: DRAFT AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION OF ARMENIA; http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF(2015)034-e

[14] http://www.elections.am/announcement/id-167/ (accessed 29.07.2017)

for prime minister from the winning (of the parliamentary elections) party's bloc. If parliamentary forces are unable to agree on a candidate to be the head of government, the parliament is to be dissolved. A vote of no-confidence in the prime minister can be passed no sooner than a year following the appointment. Moreover, according to the electoral law, seats for ethnic minorities will be allocated.

The NA shall be elected for a five-year term only in proportional elections, and the President will be elected by the National Assembly for a single seven-year term. The Electoral Code shall guarantee the formation of a stable parliamentary majority. If during the first round, a clear majority for a political party and a stable parliamentary majority is not formed as a result of the election or by building a political coalition, then a second round of the election may be held. In the event a second round is held, it shall be allowed to form new alliances. Only two parties, which would receive the most votes in the first round, would then take part in the runoff. The parties which participate in the second round of the voting are obliged to propose a candidate for Prime Minister and fundamentals for government programs. Furthermore, under the amendments, the NA may adopt a law on amnesty by a majority vote of the total number of parliamentarians.[15]

The constitutional reform stipulates a fundamental change of the government system based on a transition to a parliamentary model with strong majoritarian institutions and weak power-sharing arrangements. The suggested system will effectively promote government stability and may give stronger impetus for the consolidation of political parties, but at the same time, will evidently weaken the promise of consensual governance, and will result in further concentration of power and erosion of intern-institutional (horizontal) accountability and will weaken checks and balances between the government agencies. The majority of experts feared the emergence of unrestrained majoritarian candidacy as an outcome, while a considerable number of domestic experts believed that legitimization of a

---

[15] Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, page 18
http://www.ombuds.am/resources/ombudsman/uploads/files/legislation/0f30a8196c4c214a6
e22b03e753d8cde.pdf (accessed 29.07.2017)

revived Soviet-style "partocratic" governance would be among the most expected macro-political effects of these reforms.

Ultimately, the proposed change in government form will have intentional and unintended effects on the consolidation of democratic institutions. The majoritarian democratic institutions may undermine the prospect for political dialogue between different parties and social groups while strengthening the prospects for consolidation of a one-party dominated majoritarian rule. The extension of the legislation list – which is now to be adopted in the National Assembly by 3/5 of the votes including the so-called "organic laws" – is a significant improvement giving the parliamentary minority groups a chance to veto a limited number of decisions that are now passed by simple majorities, but it does not compensate for the principally ceremonial role granted to the political opposition under the proposed government model.[16]

The next **parliamentary elections** will be held in Armenia on April 2, 2017.[17] They will be the first elections after the constitutional referendum that approved reforms for Armenia to become a parliamentary republic.

Historical overview of elections in Georgia

The **first** Georgian **parliamentary elections**[18] took place on October 11, 1992, at the same time as the presidential elections. There were a lot of political, social, and economic circumstances which had a negative effect on the elections. Instability in the Abkhazian region was the main reason for postponing the elections in other voting districts. The society was chaotic as there were a lot of refugees from the Abkhazian war zone without accommodation for organizing the voting process for those who had been temporarily relocated from their cities, which made the situation even worse. The head of state and the legitimate president of Georgia was in exile after being expelled in a coup in January. Independent Eduard

---

[16] http://www.civilnet.am/news/2015/12/01/apella-institute-new-constitution-armenia-further-societal-polarization/282505 (accessed 29.07.2017)
[17] https://news.am/eng/news/315206.html (accessed 29.07.2017)
[18] http://www.parliament.ge/en/search/index/?s=elections (accessed 29.07.2017)

Shevardnadze was the only presidential candidate, and at the same time, the Peace Bloc won the most seats in Parliament with a voter turnout 74.2 %.

These elections took place within a mixed electoral system. 75 delegates were elected on the basis of the majoritarian system (from single mandate districts) and 150 delegates were elected based on the proportional system (multi-mandate districts.)

The **next** elections took place on November 5, 1995, with the second round on November 19, 1995. The "Union of Citizens of Georgia" won the elections and obtained 108 of the 235 seats. Meanwhile, the elections weren't held in Abkhazia, resulting in the 12 MPs elected in 1992 holding their seats. 150 delegates were elected by the proportional system and 85 by the majoritarian. In general, 53 parties participated in the Elections. 2,127,946 voters participated in the elections out of 3,121,075 total eligible voters. The voter turnout was 66.6 %.

The results of the **third** parliamentary elections were quite predictable and took place on October 31, 1999, with second voting rounds in some districts on November 7th and 14th, 1999. 45 parties participated in these elections. The result was another victory for the "Union of Citizens of Georgia," which won 131 of the 235 seats with a 67.9 % voter turnout. Still, due to its breakaway status, the election did not take place in Abkhazia and 12 MPs elected in 1992 held their seats again. 150 delegates were elected by the proportional system and 85 by the majoritarian from the Union of Georgian Citizens Party. 22 MPs were elected through the majoritarian system as a result of the second round held on November 7th and 14th, 1999. 2,133,878 voters participated in the elections out of 3,143,851 total eligible voters.

The **fourth** parliamentary election was the most intriguing one. It was held on November 2, 2003, with a constitutional referendum. The Georgian Election Commission presented the statistics, in which a combination of parties supporting President Eduard Shevardnadze won the elections. Nevertheless, the results of the elections were canceled by the Georgian Supreme Court after the Rose Revolution on November 25th. In addition, a lot of cases of election fraud were detected and claimed, which aggravated the situation leading to increasingly violent public protests and to the

resignation of Shevardnadze. New elections (the **fifth** one) took place on March 28, 2004, after the elections of President Mikhail Saakashvili in January 2004. The result of these elections was a victory by the National Movement-Democrats (NMD) party supporting President Mikhail Saakashvili. The party won 67 % of the vote. The other parties did not win more than 7.6 %. The NMD obtained most of the 130 seats by a proportional system. 17 parties participated in these elections, but the 7% threshold was passed only by two of them: NMD 66.24 % (135 mandates,) and the Right Opposition bloc 7.56 % (15 mandates.) These elections are considered to be the most democratic ones since Georgian independence from the Soviet Union.

The **sixth** parliamentary elections took place earlier than planned. After the 2007 Georgian demonstrations, President Mikhail Saakashvili pushed them from October to April by holding a referendum. Voters were mostly in favor of having the upcoming elections in the spring. The elections were held on May 21, 2008. After new amendments, 75 MPs could be elected through the proportional system and 75 MPs through the majoritarian system from 75 single mandate districts. The election threshold decreased from 7% to 5% for the proportional system. Meanwhile, the candidate must obtain at least 30% of the votes in order to win the majoritarian elections. According to the final results: The United National Movement (UNM) obtained 59.9% (48 mandates,) United Opposition 17.7% (15 mandates,) Labour Party of Georgia 7.4% (6 mandates,) and Christian Democrats 8.66 % (6 mandates.) Accordingly, three parties won the elections through the majoritarian system: UNM (71 mandates,) United Opposition (2 mandates,) Republican Party (2 mandates.)

The **seventh** parliamentary elections in Georgia were held on October 1, 2012. 16 parties participated in these elections. The opposition Georgian Dream coalition led by businessman Bidzina Ivanishvili gained the majority of seats and won the elections with a 54.9% of votes (44 mandates.) The United National Movement was supported by 40.3 % of votes. The party led by President Mikhail Saakashvili lost the elections. The parliament had 150 members and was elected for a four-year term,

from which 77 members were elected via the proportional system and 73 members in single-mandate districts by the majoritarian system (independent candidates also competed in this system.)

The latest parliamentary elections took place in 2016. The first round was held on October 8, 2016, and the second one was held on October 30, 2016. During the first round, three parties formed the parliament: the ruling Georgian Dream Party (44 seats,) the United National Movement (7 seats,) and the Alliance of Patriots (6 seats.)

The second round of voting took place in 50 out of 73 single-mandate electoral districts, where the candidates did not manage to get 50% of the votes after the first round. The ruling Georgian Dream Party expected to win a constitutional majority: over three-quarters of the seats in the new parliament. The opposition party United National Movement (UNM) gained only 27 seats against the ruling Party's 115 seats.

Currently, the Georgian unicameral Parliament consists of 150 members, of which are elected by two methods. 77 members are elected by proportional representation with a 5% threshold, and 73 members by a two-round system in a single-member constituency with majority rule. Additionally, according to the CEC, voter turnout was low with just over 51% of eligible casting ballots.

Measuring the effectiveness of majoritarian MPs: Absenteeism

While it is difficult to measure the output of particular MPs work, it is possible to analyze certain indicators that reflect their motivation and involvement in the legislative process. Attendance at plenary sessions is weak in both countries' parliaments: empty seats are hard to hide, and MPs are frequently caught red-handed while using colleagues voting equipment.

Armenia

The first person on the majoritarian party list with the highest number of absences is Gagik Tsarukyan, who was elected by the majoritarian electoral system. In second place is another majoritarian MP: Ashot Aghababyan from the Republican Party of Armenia (259 absences for the last year.) The following ones are Vardan Oskanyan (Prosperous Armenia)

with 255 absences, Hayk Khachatryan (184 absences,) and Abraham Manukyan (171 absences) from Prosperous Armenia: all of these MPs were elected via the Proportional electoral system.

Most Frequent Absent Majoritarian MPs in 2016

First name/ Last name	Party	Times of absences From 2012-2016	2016
Tsarukyan K. Gagik	"Prosperous Armenia"	798	259
Aghababyan Ashot	"Republican Party of Armenia"	487	259
Gevorgyan Arthur	"Republican Party of Armenia"	248	170
Petoyan Mushegh	"Prosperous Armenia"	266	128
Guloyan A. Murad	"Prosperous Armenia"	258	85

See also Appendix Table 2

Unfortunately, there are no formal mechanisms to prevent and determine the absences in the Parliament. The head of parliament decides whether the absences are reasonable or not. According to the declared data, the wealthiest parliamentarians are elected by the majoritarian system. The first one is Gagik Tsarukyan from Prosperous Armenia; he was elected by the majoritarian system whose estimated wealth is ~$34 million dollars. The next richest MP is an Armenian businessman Samvel Alexanyan with an estimated wealth of ~$8.8 million dollars, followed by Grigori Margaryan ($5.1 million dollars.) The next two richest MPs are Hakob R. Hakobyan (Republican party of Armenia, $5 million,) and non-party candidate Arayik Grigoryan ($4.9 million), both of whom were elected by the majoritarian system.

Parliamentary factions of the fifth convocation	MPs	Majoritarians	Times of Absences	
"Republican Party of Armenia"	69	30	816	7.95%
"Prosperous Armenia"	36	8	1175	21.97%
"Armenian National Congress"	7	0	275	26.54%
"Rule of Law"	5	1	136	18.53%
"Armenian Revolutionary Federation"	5	0	234	31.66%
"Heritage"	4		157	26.70%
non-Party	4	2	149	25.08%

In addition, some MPs' assets have increased since 2012. Majoritarian candidates hold leading positions. For example, Ashot Arsenyan had a significant increase according to his declared assets ($2.7 million dollars.) Another majoritarian from the ruling party, Mher Sedrakyan, increased his assets by more than $800 thousand dollars.

Georgia
In the 2013, 2014, and 2015 MPs lists, the following members did make speeches at plenary sessions, and are mostly elected through the Majoritarian electoral system: Valeri Gelashvili, Zaza Kedelashvili, Gogi Liparteliani, Enzel Mkoyan, Koba Nakopia, Ramaz Nikolaishvili, Giorgi Peikrishvili, Levan Kardava, Nikoloz Kipshidze, Revaz Shavlokhashvili, Teimuraz Chkaidze, Tengiz Khubuluri, Ali Mamedov, and Tamaz Kacheishvili.[19]

In the 2015 plenary session, the Georgian parliament experienced 2199 cases of absence with reasonable excuses. Though it was 272 more than in 2014, there no salary deduction cases where the MP's salary would

---

[19] Assessment of Performance of the Georgian Parliament 2015; Transparency International Georgia, Tbilisi 2016, p. 50 (http://www.transparency.ge/sites/default/files/post _attachments/parliamentary-work-report-2015-eng.pdf) (accessed 19.02.2017)

decrease by 10% for missing more than one session with unreasonable excuses. As stated in the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament, the MPs salary is not deducted when missing a special session.

2012 - 2016 (The 8th Parliament)	
MPs	Times Absent
Nikolaishvili Ramaz	1479
Lezhava Paata	1478
Akhalaia Roland	1477
Kipshidze Nikolozi	1477
Qardava Levan	1465
Japaridze Zurab	1465
Bobokhidze Akaki	1462
Tsiskarishvili Petre	1459
Vashadze Giorgi	1456
Meladze Giorgi	1455

See also Appendix Table 1

In 2015, Zurab Japaridze (10 absences), Nikolozi Kipshidze (10 absences), and Koba Davitashvili (9 absences) had the most absences from plenary sessions with unreasonable excuses.

In 2015, the number of missed (2199) sessions according to the different reasonable excuses is as follows:

Excuses	Times Absent	
Illness	118	reduced by 64 cases comparing 2014
Family circumstances	1442	increased by 65 cases comparing to 2014
Official business trip	337	reduced by 31 cases comparing to 2014
Political opinions	302	-

Furthermore, the parliament did not manage to amend the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament, by which family circumstances would no longer be a reasonable excuse.[20]

Discussion and expert opinions

The 2017 parliamentary elections in Armenia were important for handling the challenges of a new electoral system. It was the first elections in a new political reality. It provides an opportunity for the Armenian government to resolve the country's internal conflicts. There is widespread concern about pending improvements of the electoral institutions. For Armenia, it is crucial to address this concern in order to see the new face of the Armenian political reality. The disadvantages of it entail the potential to remain under the same leadership. The oligarchs can pass through these elections, which actually limit the effectiveness of a new parliament.

"Although the authorities were eager to make changes in the electoral code and replaced the majoritarian system to proportional, but it has still hidden majoritarian construction. In other countries, this system might be ideal, but given into consideration the traditions and behavioral models of our country, we cannot insist on the fact that it's a proportional system. On the other hand, the majoritarian system that is functional for another country cannot be applied successfully to us. The reasons are obvious: *we have an oligarchic system leading us to the depth*. The name of this electoral system, call them majoritarian, proportional or ranked voting system, won't change the reality of the electoral fraud. The main concern of the people is that the majoritarian system allows authorities to expand electoral fraud through bribe, networks, and patronage. But this electoral system allows the community authorities form the parliament as easily, as it was before. The second problem is the construction of constituency parties, which will bring about new clans in separate districts. The following issue is that the small parties can't conquer in the elections, because they don't have as many resources, as ruling parties. It's a fact that the constitutional

---

[20] Assessment of Performance of the Georgian Parliament 2015; Transparency International Georgia, Tbilisi 2016, p. 58 (http://www.transparency.ge/sites/default/files/post_attachments/parliamentary-work-report-2015-eng.pdf) (accessed 19.02.2017)

reforms in Armenia passed basically due to administrative resources and electoral fraud."

Prior to the election, expert opinions were still rather pessimistic and skeptical. Election fraud and use of administrative recourses is still common: buying votes is a widespread problem and gives business people who want to buy seats in the parliament free space to invest money into their future political careers.

"Seemingly, the ruling party, "Hanrapetakan," will take part in the elections under another name taking into consideration the negative attitudes toward the party. The main problem still remains the starting point. The second problem is that the lists included a lot of **artificial people**. But these patterns are not unique only for Armenia. Indeed, Armenia is much smaller, that's why the standards are much higher. The second mechanism is that the voters vote in other's names. There is also pressure on the civil services workers, hospitals, schools etc. For example, they might be forced to vote for a certain party. Here, we can also emphasize administrative recourses. I'd say that there are a lot of advantages for whoever is sitting on the top using networks and patronage over the acceptable stage. Unfortunately, the vote buying and bribes are common in Armenia as well. The main reason and misguided perception is that 'One vote can't change anything.' The second is peer pressure, what we observe in the villages and regions. Occasionally, it becomes more dangerous when the voters can't refuse it, because it's given by the village head. No one in the villages can contradict in such situations."

As a result, due to low trust in the Parliament and elections, citizens prefer to stay at home and let the rich and active share the power without bothering to let the public participate or intervene.

"…Therefore, in order to figure out the features of elections in Armenia, we should also examine them in the historical background. If we look at Armenian political history, we can observe a sudden and spontaneous behavior of voters in certain key areas. Unfortunately, our parliamentary elections are based on the personalities, and in terms of power-sharing, it is a very difficult concept in Armenia. In this situation, there are some challenges because whoever is elected, in terms of

problems, expectations, and promises, this would be a very difficult task for a new parliament to face all these problems and figure out the ways of solving them. People are tired of the ruling party "Hanrapetakan" and I think their 16-year political experience approved their position. That's the main reason we have a great amount of absenteeism during the elections."

A compelling summary of expert opinions shows that even though there are a lot of disadvantages, there are some improvements to be observed and there is hope for new positive changes. The reason might also be due to the trust in the new prime-minister:

"…The current political situation in Armenia is somehow complicated as there is no **show-up political process** toward the elections. The main concern in these elections still remains as the *absence of real political alternatives*. There is no conflict among political parties and actually, the oppositional parties don't have opportunities to win the elections at all according to the new electoral code. This is because the oppositional parties in Armenia couldn't pass the defined barrier. There is also a lack of public trust in the electoral processes. Consequently, the new electoral code of Armenia should solve the problem of the trust crisis among the people."

What is interesting is that the parliamentary elections that took place in Georgia in 2016 might be typical for the elections in Armenia. Some experts argue that after parliamentary elections, Georgia seemingly might change the political direction and tend to have closer relations with Russia.

Both countries decided to change their electoral code taking into account the disadvantages of their current political systems. An average voter in Armenia and Georgia has similar historical memories from the communist party of the Soviet Union. In both countries, there is a weak party cadre, there is a dominant party, while politics, in general, is strongly individualized.

Party politics – especially in Armenia – need a balance; there is a competition of forces as in every democratic country, but the ruling party has governed Armenia for over 16 years. Individual parties in Armenia and Georgia have mostly failed to create a tradition of professional, regular, and diverse party politics.

Despite the fact that elections in Georgia are seemingly more democratic than in Armenia, the ruling party was accused of fraud after its victory in the latest Georgian elections. The opposition party members announced that the votes had been stolen from them.[21] For the 2017 elections in Armenia, most of the experts expected to see a similar situation. As predicted, the authorities should assert their positions in the parliament following the elections, with an exception that there will not be a second round of the election, since in Armenia it usually brings to a pre-revolutionary situation and the government will do its best to obstruct it. In comparison to Georgian elections, more electoral fraud was expected, but the state would ensure that Armenian elections are quiet and peaceful.

"… The need of changes in the electoral code was a must even a decade ago. But this format of changes can't create fresh political environment and fair relations. Moreover, it helps the political parties to assert their positions. *The parliamentary elections in Armenia usually had less importance, than the presidential elections*. After each presidential election, we saw mass violence. In this point of view, the authorities of our country decided to avoid this post-electoral mess with a hope that in this case, they can not only keep the power, but also can avoid internal conflicts."

For a long time, the overhaul of the electoral system is a serious topic in **Georgia**. As previously stated, this was one of the promises of the "Georgian Dream" in 2012. However, before the 2016 elections, the ruling party announced that it was too early to make such drastic changes: "Drastic changes are not desirable when elections are already at the doorstep," said David Usupashvili, Chairman of the Parliament.[22] Some even argued that it was not guaranteed to abolish the majoritarian system. The President had to remind them that it was a pre-election promise.[23] The President opposes the mixed system and doubted that the postponement

---

[21] http://vnews.mv/71428 (accessed 29.07.2017)

[22] http://georgiatoday.ge/news/227/Georgia%E2%80%99s-Electoral-System-to-Face-Overhaul (accessed 29.07.2017)

[23] http://factcheck.ge/en/article/it-was-a-pre-election-promise-of-the-georgian-dream-coalition-to-change-the-majoritarian-electoral-system/ (accessed 29.07.2017)

was necessary for 2015.[24] This was just one (but not the only issue of) disagreement between President Margvelashvili and the ruling party. The local NGOs also expressed their doubt about the impossibility to make changes due to the lack of time and issued a joint statement on this matter.[25] Furthermore, the Constitutional Court of Georgia ordered the overhaul of the majoritarian system since it undermined the equality of vote.[26] Nevertheless, the government announced that the mixed system will be changed before the 2020 elections.

The local NGOs have dedicated a tremendous amount of time and effort in highlighting the weaknesses of the mixed system and the majoritarian system in particular: the risk of losing votes, voting inequality, lack of communication of voters and majoritarian MPs, and the unfair influence of the MPs on local authorities.[27] An analysis of the proposed changes and ongoing discussion was also an important contribution by the non-governmental organizations, since it allows the general public to gain a deeper understanding of the electoral process, *and* become aware of the fact that the current mixed system doesn't manage to guarantee a fair distribution of interests in the legislation.[28]

The question "to change the system, or not to change it?" is still a matter of discussion in Georgia. The constitutional commission working on the constitutional amendment is far from reaching an agreement. The representatives of the ruling party are cautious and fear a potential crisis if there is faulty decision-making; the opposition parties discuss the necessity to create a fair electoral system.[29] In addition, the current commission has several other issues to debate. One of the odd questions to be answered is an initiative of the ruling country: whether or not to prohibit the formation

---

[2424] http://dfwatch.net/georgias-ruling-coalition-postpones-removal-of-majoritarian-system-36319 (accessed 29.07.2017)

[25] https://gyla.ge/en/post/ngos-statement-about-position-of-the-ruling-coalition-on-reforming-election-system-497859 (accessed 29.07.2017)

[26] http://humanrights.ge/blue/index.php?a=text&pid=18300&lang=eng (accessed 29.07.2017)

[27] http://www.isfed.ge/main/783/eng/ (accessed 29.07.2017)

[28] http://www.transparency.ge/en/node/1189. See also, https://jam-news.net/?p=3990, or http://www.geowel.org/index.php?article_id=79&clang=0. (accessed 29.07.2017)

[29] http://www.tabula.ge/ge/node/116825 (accessed 29.07.2017)

of electoral alliances. This strange initiative, coming from the political power that won elections as a coalition of several parties, seems like an effort to eliminate potential rivals in future elections.[30] Similar initiatives make the public fearful that even if the majoritarian system is abolished, the government will make other changes that will allow the ruling party to distribute seats in the parliament according to their preferences.

The experts were selected according to their field of expertise. The selected experts were scientific representatives, political candidates actively involved in the electoral processes, NGO representatives, and members of civil society. A total of six experts were interviewed, which allowed for the collection of sufficient first-hand data. For the expert-interviews, a questionnaire with non-structured questions related to the current political situation with descriptive distinctions and considerations about the electoral processes of Armenia and Georgia was distributed.

Conclusions

The majoritarian model crisis has become obvious in Armenia and Georgia in the last few years. Majoritarian MPs fail to represent their constituents and spend their terms protecting and expanding their own businesses. Thus, both countries decided to change the electoral system by abolishing the majoritarian system in order to ensure a rise in popular representation in the legislature. Armenia held its 2017 elections only using the proportional system. Georgian political elites could not keep their 2012 promise and postponed the majoritarian abolishment for the 2020 elections. Citizens of both countries are optimistic about gaining responsive and responsible Parliaments. However, trust in the legislative body is still low. Skeptics argue that it is not the rule by which the MPs are elected, but effective mechanisms of checks and balances and strong civil society that must hold the Parliaments transparent.

Since independence, both countries have changed their electoral systems several times. Democratization is present in both cases, but challenges are still obvious. Elections are often accompanied by violence with the popular attitude that MPs do not represent their people but their

_____

[30] More on this: http://www.eurasianet.org/node/83171 (accessed 29.07.2017)

own interests. The current reforms can become significant steps toward more democratic legislative processes but can serve as a tool for future electoral fraud in the hands of cunning politicians.

Interviews

Styopa Safaryan – political scientist, the parliamentary candidate of the "Free Democrats" party

Armen Vardanyan – AIISA expert (The Armenian Institute of International and Security Affairs)

Hrant Mikaelian – researcher at <<Caucasus Institute>>

Alen Poghosyan - Alen Simonyan, lawyer, editor-in-chief of Ararat Media Group LTD; ; the parliamentary candidate of the Yelq bloc

Gevorg Petrosyan - Candidate of Law, Associate Professor of the Faculty of Law, Chair of Civic Procedure, Yerevan State University; the parliamentary candidate of the Tsarukyan Alliance

Artur Sakunts - Chairman of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor

Bibliography

1. Apella Institute: New Constitution Could Create Further Societal Polarization. (Last visited 19.02.2017). Retrieved from http://www.civilnet.am/news/2015/12/01/apella-institute-new-constitution-armenia-further-societal-polarization/282505

2. Assessment of Performance of the Georgian Parliament 2015 (Last visited 19.02.2017).Transparency International Georgia, Tbilisi 2016. Retrieved from (http://www.transparency.ge/sites/default/files/post_attachments/parliamentary-work-report-2015-eng.pdf)

3. Central Electoral Commission. RA official web site (Last visited 19.02.2017). http://www.elections.am/

4. CEC Election Administration of Georgia. (Last visited 19.02.2017). http://cesko.ge/eng

5. Constitution of the Republic of Armenia. (Last visited 19.02.2017). Retrieved from http://www.ombuds.am/

resources/ombudsman/uploads/files/legislation/0f30a8196c4c214a6e22b03e753d8cde.pdf

6. Draft Amendments To The Constitution Of Armenia. (Last visited 19.02.2017). EUROPEAN COMMISSION FOR DEMOCRACY THROUGH LAW (VENICE COMMISSION) Retrieved from http://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-REF(2015)034-e

7. Guadalupe Rojo, Subhash Jha, Erik Wibbels (last visited 19.02.2017). Political Networks, Clientelism and Public Goods. Retrieved from https://sites.duke.edu/wibbels/files/2014/10/Rojo_Jha_Wibbels.pdf

8. James A. Robinson (Last visited 19.02.2017). The Political Economy of Clientelism. Retrieved from http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/jrobinson/files/clientelism.pdf

9. James H. Fowler, Michael T. Heaney, David W. Nickerson, John F. Padgett and Betsy Sinclair (last visited 19.02.2017) Causality in Political Networks. Retrieved from http://fowler.ucsd.edu/causality_in_political_networks.pdf

10. Local EU statement on the constitutional referendum in Armenia on 6 December (Last visited 19.02.2017). Retrieved from http://www.lragir.am/index/eng/0/politics/view/35046

11. National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia. Official web site (Last visited 19.02.2017). http://www.parliament.am/parliament.php?id=parliament&lang=eng

12. My Parliament (Last visited 19.02.2017). Retrieved from http://myparliament.ge/en

13. Parliament of Georgia. Official web site (Last visited 19.02.2017). Retrieved from http://www.parliament.ge/en/search/index/?s=elections

14. Parliament Monitoring (Last visited 19.02.2017). Retrieved from http://www.parliamentmonitoring.am/

15. Susan C. Stokes (Last visited 19.02.2017). Is Vote Buying Undemocratic? Retrieved from http://campuspress.yale.edu/susanstokes/files/2013/10/Is_Vote_Buying_Undemocratic.pdf

Annex 1
Table 1: Georgia

Statistics of attendance of Majoritarian MPs on the 8th convocation [31]				
Election District Name	**First Name and Last Name**	**Nominator**	**Times Absent**	**Percentage of absence**
Vani	Paata Lezhava	"United National Movement-More Benefit to People" [32]	1354	99,4%
Zugdidi	Roland Akhalaia	UNM-MBP	1353	99,3%
Tskaltubo	Akaki Bobokhidze	UNM-MBP	1340	98,4%
Dedoplistskaro	Zaza Kedelashvili	UNM-MBP	1308	96,6%
Chkhorotsku	Vakhtang Lemonjava	UNM-MBP	1303	95,7%
Marneuli	Azer Suleimanov	UNM-MBP	1300	95,4%
Adigeni	Zurab Chilingarashvili	UNM-MBP	1294	95,7%
Aspindza	Tariel Londaridze	UNM-MBP	1139	84,9%
Shuakhevi	Omar Megrelidze	UNM-MBP	1082	80,5%
Lentekhi	Gogi Liparteliani	UNM-MBP	1063	79,2%
Akhaltsikhe	Vazha Chitashvili	UNM-MBP	1031	77,2%
Khobi	Goderdzi Bukia	UNM-MBP	839	63,1%
Kvareli	Marika Verulashvili	UNM-MBP	660	50%

---

[31] http://myparliament.ge/en (accessed 29.07.2017)
[32] Hereinafter referred as UNM-MBP

Samgori	Zurab Abashidze	"Bidzina Ivanishvili-Georgian Dream"[33]	637	48,1%
Batumi	Murman Dumbadze	BI-GD	611	46,2%
Vake	Shalva Shavgulidze	BI-GD	549	41,7%
Khashuri	Valeri Gelashvili	BI-GD	374	28,7%
Gldani	Ioseb Jachvliani	BI-GD	340	26%
Telavi	Gela Samkharauli	BI-GD	321	24,6%
Kutaisi	Gubaz Sanikidze	BI-GD	274	21,1%
Tsageri	Sergo Khabuliani	UNM-MBP	236	18,2%
Ozurgeti	Zviad Kvachantiradze	BI-GD	221	17%
Tkibuli	Eliso Chapidze	BI-GD	218	16,9%
Chokhatauri	Teimuraz Chkuaseli	BI-GD	215	16,6%
Kareli	Leri Khabelov	BI-GD	212	16,4%
Senaki	Guram Misabishvili	UNM-MBP	182	14%
Tsalka	Revaz Shavlokhashvili	UNM-MBP	168	12,9%
Keda	Iasha Shervashidze	UNM-MBP	162	12,5%
Oni	Tamaz Japaridze	BI-GD	155	11,9%
Chiatura	Malkhaz Tsereteli	BI-GD	153	11,8%
Khelvachauri	Rostom Khalvashi	BI-GD	150	11,5%

---

[33] Hereinafter referred as BI-GD

Poti	Eka Beselia	BI-GD	145	11,2%
Sachkhere	Manana Kobakhidze	BI-GD	143	11%
Mtatsmida	Zaza Papuashvili	BI-GD	136	10,5%
Krtsanisi	Shota Khabareli	BI-GD	126	9,7%
Lagodekhi	Giorgi Gozalishvili	UNM-MBP	114	8,8%
Gori	Malkhaz Vakhtangashvili	BI-GD	110	8,5%
Dusheti	Erekle Tripolski	BI-GD	104	8%
Mtskheta	Dimitri Khundadze	BI-GD	91	7%
Lanchkhuti	Teimuraz Chkhaidze	BI-GD	77	6%
Signagi	Gela Gelashvili	BI-GD	65	5%
Khazbegi	Mirian Tsiklauri	BI-GD	65	5%
Didube	Vakhtang Khmaladze	BI-GD	57	4,4%
Kharagauli	Nodar Ebanoidze	BI-GD	56	4,3%
Kobuleti	Pati Khalvashi	BI-GD	47	3,6%
Isani	Alexandre Kantaria	BI-GD		
Khulo	Anzor Bolkvadze	UNM-MBP		
Baghdati	Archil Kbilashvili	BI-GD		
Tetritskaro	David Bezhuashvili	UNM-MBP		
Khoni	David Chavchanidze	UNM-MBP		
Abasha	David	UNM-MBP		

	Dartsmelidze			
Kaspi	David Onoprishvili	BI-GD		
Saburtalo	David Usupashvili	BI-GD		
Ninotsminda	Enzel Mkoyan	UNM-MBP		
Borjomi	Gedevan Popkhadze	BI-GD		
Gurjaani	Giorgi Gviniashvili	UNM-MBP		
Zestaphoni	Giorgi Kavtaradze	BI-GD		
Gardabani	Girogi Peikrishvili	UNM-MBP		
Ambrolauri	Gocha Enukidze	UNM-MBP		
Terjola	Kakha Butskhridze	UNM-MBP		
Samtredia	Kakha Kaladze	BI-GD		
Dmanisi	Kakhaber Okriashvili	UNM-MBP		
Bolnisi	Koba Nakophia	UNM-MBP		
Tsalenjikha	Levan Kardava	UNM-MBP		
Martvili	Nauli Janashia	UNM-MBP		
Akhalkalaki	Samvel Petrosyan	UNM-MBP		
Nadzaladevi	Tea Tsulukiani	BI-GD		
Sagarejo	Tinatin Khidasheli	BI-GD		
Chughureti	Viktor Dolidze	BI-GD		
Mestia	Viktor Japaridze	BI-GD		
Tianeti	Zakaria Kutsnashvili	BI-GD		
Akhmeta	Zurab	BI-GD		

	Zviadauri			
Rustavi	Zviad Dzidziguri	BI-GD		

Annex 2
Table 2: Armenia

Statistics of attendance of Majoritarian MPs on the 5th convocation (2012-2017)[34]		
First Name and Last Name	**Nominator**	**Times Absent**
Ruben Hayrapetyan	Republican Party of Armenia[35]	-
Tsarukyan Gagik	"Prosperous Armenia" Party[36]	798
Aghababyan Ashot	RPA	487
Petoyan Mushegh	RPA	266
Guloyan Murad	RPA	258
Gevorgyan Arthur	RPA	248
Marabyan Marine	non-Party	243
Karapetyan Karen	RPA	241
Aleksanyan Samvel	RPA	212
Grigoryan Martun	RPA	195
Sadoyan Ruben	RPA	181
Grigoryan Arayik	non-Party	173
Maruqyan Edmon	non-Party	155
Farmanyan Samvel	RPA	154
Qocharyan David	RPA	116
Hambartsumyan S. Arkadi	non-Party	114

---

[34] Parliament Monitoring (Last visited 19.02.2017). Retrieved from http://www.parliamentmonitoring.am
[35] Hereinafter referred as RPA.
[36] Hereinafter referred as PAP.

44

Nahapetyan Koryun	RPA	111
Manukyan Melik	RPA	98
Badeyan Manvel	RPA	91
Botoyan Karen	non-Party	72
Saroyan Sedrak	non-Party	65
Margaryan Grigori	non-Party	55
Hakobyan G. Hakob	RPA	50
Khachatryan Lyova	RPA	49
Sedrakyan Mher	RPA	49
Saribekyan B. Karen	RPA	45
Markosyan Vrej	RPA	36
Poghosyan Karine	RPA	35
Grigoryan Hayk	RPA	35
Hakobyan R. Hakob	RPA	35
Nushikyan Garegin	non-Party	33
Sargsyan Artak	RPA	30
Arsenyan Ashot	RPA	25
Mnatsakanyan Mnatsakan	RPA	22
Stepanyan Artur	RPA	11
Muradyan Murad	RPA	8
Hovsepyan Ruben	RPA	7
Grigoryan Hrant	RPA	2
Petrosyan Aleqsan	RPA	1
Balasanyan Samvel	RPA	-
Hakobyan Vahe	RPA	-

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԵՎ ՎՐԱՍՏԱՆԻ ԸՆՏՐԱԿԱՆ ԳՈՐԾԸՆԹԱՑՆԵՐԻ ՀԱՄԵՄԱՏԱԿԱՆ ՎԵՐԼՈՒԾՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
Ամփոփագիր

Արչիլ Աբաշիձե
archil_abashidze@iliauni.edu.ge
Անահիտ Ղարիբյան
anahit-gharibyan@rambler.ru

Բանալի բառեր. *Ընտրական համակարգեր, խորհրդարան, մեծամասնական ընտրական համակարգ, Հայաստան, Վրաստան*

Հոդվածում հեղինակները համեմատում են Հայաստանում և Վրաստանում մեծամասնական ընտրական համակարգերը: Անկախության ձեռքբերումից հետո երկու երկրներն էլ փորձարկել են տարբեր ընտրական համակարգեր, ինչն էլ տարել է շարունակական բանավեճի, այն հարցի շուրջ, թե որն է ամենալավ մոդելը: Մեծամասնական ընտրական մոդելը հաճախ քննադատվում է երկու երկրներում էլ: Այս ուսումնասիրությունում քննարկվում են այս մոդելի հիմնական բնորոշիչները և եզրակացություն է արվում, որ, չնայած որոշ ակնհայտ խնդիրների գոյության, քաղաքական էլիտաները հաճախ դժմակորեն են մոտենում համակարգը փոխելուն, քանի որ այն ապահովում է նրանց համար նշանակալի քաղաքական ձեռքբերումներ ընտրությունների ժամանակ: Փոփոխությունները կարող են տեղի ունենալ առավել լայն բարեփոխումների նախաձեռնության համատեքստում, ինչպիսիք են սահմանադրական փոփոխությունները Հայաստանում, կամ երբ ընտրությունները հետաձգվում են որոշակի անհստակ պատճառներով, ինչպես Վրաստանում:

OVERCOMING OR FORGETTING? PUBLIC DEBATE ABOUT SOVIET SYMBOLS AND MONUMENTS IN TBILISI

Sophio Bilanishvili,
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University
sofobilanishvili@ymail.com

Key words: *collective memory, identity, monument, forgetting, Soviet symbols.*

Abstract

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the fate of the totalitarian communist heritage was widely discussed in independent Georgia. This paper seeks to answer the following questions through a Georgian lens: Does visualization of the past promote the formation of a new collective memory? Does this process imply remembering or forgetting the past, deconstructing or preserving it? How was the Soviet past reconsidered in Georgia? This study presents the complex and controversial processes of overcoming the Soviet past and constructing a new narrative of the "shared past" as a basis for the formation of a new Georgian identity. This study is based on the analysis of monuments, symbols, and buildings, which are located in the central part of Tbilisi from Rustaveli Avenue to Liberty square.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the fate of the totalitarian communist heritage was widely discussed in independent Georgia. As in other Central and Eastern European countries, analyzing and evaluating the socialist past begun when the independent state was formed. Should the Soviet Union remain in monuments and in the facades of buildings, should they be moved to museums, or should they disappear altogether? Does visualization of the past promote the formation process of a new collective memory? Does this process imply remembering or forgetting the past, or

deconstructing and preserving it? Certainly, different countries have differing answers to this phenomenon.

This paper discusses the Georgian answer. Particularly, it considers how the Soviet past was reviewed in Georgia via analysing the complex and controversial process of overcoming the Soviet past: promoting a new memory and constructing a new narrative of the "shared past" as a basis for the formation of new Georgian identity. This study observes monuments and buildings, which are located in central Tbilisi, from Rustaveli Avenue to Liberty square. It can be explained as follows: Architecture and monumental sculpture are perceived to have a significant advantage compared to other fields as they represent a declaration of the people's mentality, while in a narrow sense, it is a political statement.

"Whatever this statement could be, architectural and sculptural objects intervene in our lives; they change the huge decoration in which we live, change our micro world and, therefore, our worldview and even our subconscious"[1]

This explains why the debates regarding monuments were so prominent not only in Georgia but in other countries as well.

Therefore, the research question could be formulated as follows: how was the Soviet past reconsidered in Georgia?

After gaining independence, Georgia faced a plethora of problems including (but not limited to) civil war, ethnic conflicts and economic collapse, and an over all identity crisis. Representation of the past and history is one of the most important issues of identity construction process.

As the modern French historian Pierre Nora argues, knowledge of the past defines our present identity:

"Over the last twenty or twenty-five years anywhere in the world, the attitude of all social and ethnic groups toward the past has changed substantially: criticism of official versions of history, bringing to the forefront previously forgotten or hidden sides of historical process, "returning back" the stolen history, "cult of roots", growing attention to

---

[1]"New Georgian Monumentality and blank Transcriptions," December 5, 2010, <http://www.24hours.ge/weekend/story/11875-akhali-qartuli-monumentalizmi-da-tsarieli-transkriftsiebi> [accessed 12.10.2016]

memorisation, "revenge on the past"… The world was flooded with memories; devotion towards the real or imagined past became closely linked to the collective consciousness, memory, and identity."[2]

According to Zaza Shatirishvili, there are two distinguishable phases in the process of formation of the "new memory": 1) construction of new memory through the "revenge on the past,"and 2) construction of new places of memory aimed at the formation of civil identity. Both approaches have been used by the different governments in the independent Georgia.[3]

Historical Overview

As early as 1964, the magazine "Dzeglis Megobari" was issued in Georgia, in which historical and cultural monuments in different parts of the country were presented. The magazine mainly focused on architectural monuments, not sculptures.[4] In the 1970s, the issue of protection of monuments garnered mass attention in Georgia. Vladimir Vardosanidze, a prominent specialist in urban studies in Georgia, suggest that Eduard Shevardnadze's leadership directed the youth population's energy to monument protection. The slogan "No monument without a chef!" was put into practice. "Society for the Protection of Monuments" became more active; as the number of its members increased, lottery tickets were printed, and monument defenders enjoyed different benefits and privileges.[5]

By the 1980s, the "Soviet Identity" was seemingly firmly established. Therefore, the scale of constructing new monuments to the Soviet public figures decreased. As a result of "Perestroika," the opportunity appeared as

---

[2]Нора, П. "Всемирноеторжествопамяти". *Память о войне 60 лет спустя. Россия, Германия, Европа*. М., 2005, с. 391.

[3]Shatirishvili, Z. Places of memory and place of the philosopher, http://www.nplg.gov.ge/gsdl/cgi-bin/library.exe?e=d-00000-00---off-0civil2--00-1-
---0-10-0---0---0direct-10---4-------0-1l--10-ka-50---20-about---00-3-1-00-0-0-01-
1-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL1.10&d=HASH0   1f2afaba8ab215fa4f09f5c.5.3 (accessed 11.11.2016)

[4]Kordzakhia, I. "Our society is a brief overview of past years*",DzeglisMegobar*i, Tbilisi, 1964, N2, p.36.

[5]Vardosanidze, Vl. "Understanding the Soviet past. Discussions 2011."Tbilisi, 2012, p.86.

a way to revise the past and discuss previously forbidden issues.[6] "Historical truth" became a subject of reconsideration where the past became one of the main spheres of interest for the national liberation movement: "cult of roots" gained significant meaning. As early as 1987, a completely unexpected anti-Soviet action took place in Tbilisi: the grave of Philippe Makharadze – a prominent figure of early Soviet times – was blown up at the Mtatsminda pantheon, which has existed in Tbilisi since 1929 in the Mama Davit (father David) Church yard. Georgian public figures, writers, scalars, national heroes are buried there.[7]

Monuments dedicated to Lenin gradually left the public space. This process began in 1990 when statue of Lenin was removed from Tbilisi's central square. In the same year, the sculptural composition "Shroma, Metsniereba, Teknika" ("Labor, Science, Technic") – which was erected in 1958 on Rustaveli Avenue, in front of the Government Palace– was deconstructed, as well as monuments of Soviet leaders over time such as Sergei Kirov (1990,) Boris Dzneladze (1990,) Rosa Luxemburg (1991,)and LadoKetskhoveli (1998.) It was a protest against the Soviet regime.[8]

The Parliament Building

The Parliament building at Rustaveli Avenue changed its function several times. Until the 1860s, it hosted the Caucasian army military base. In the 1859 commemoration of the Shamir'scapture, the square was named after Gunib. Later on, the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral was built there and was known as the military Soboro for commemorating the Russian Empire's victory in the Caucasian Wars. In 1921, a nurse and a Tbilisi University student named Maro Makashvili, and the nine Cadets who died in the battle against the Red Army near Tbilisi, were buried in the Soboro

---

[6]Gvakharia, G."Perestroika"-20, 17.04.2016,
http://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/1546483.html (accessed 30.03.2017)
[7]Nozadze, N."what can you see on Mtatsminda?"
http://mtawminda.blogspot.com/2008/12/blog-post_3716.html 16.12.2008
(acceded 24.03.2017)
[8]Kurtsikashvili M. Culture: Rejimes and Sculptures. "I am Georgian, I am Sculptor*'"*, 2010. <http://7days.ge/index2.php?newsid=318> (accessed 08.11.2016)

yard. In 1934, according to Lavrenti Beria's order, Soboro was deconstructed, and the construction of the Government building took place. The project was owned, designed, and executed by architects Kokorin and Lezhava.The top half of the building was completed in 1938, while the lower portion was finished in 1953. The Parliament building became the epicentre of Georgian political processes. The April 9, 1989, tragedy took place in front of the building. Two years later, in this same historical building where the Supreme Council of the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic worked, the independence restoration of Georgia was declared on April 9, 1991. During the Tbilisi Civil War, insurgent Prime Minister Tengiz Sigua introduced an ultimatum to President Zviad Gamsakhurdia with the demand to leave the Parliament building; otherwise, they would attack the building. In Sigua's words, this cursed building should have been destructed and a Church should have been built there.[9] The building was significantly damaged. In 2003, the Parliament building underwent significant developments due to the Rose revolution. After the restoration, the building regained its function: until 2012, the Parliament of Georgia worked there.[10] After the Rose Revolution, Parliament was moved to Kutaisi. The external facade of the building at the Rustaveli Avenue location was brought into the limelight because of the Soviet symbols; discussion of the attitude toward them is analyzed below.

The Building of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism (IML)

The façade of the building of the former Institute of Marxism-Leninism (IML) now serves as the front door of the "Millennium Biltmore" hotel. The building of the former Institute of Marxism-Leninism (IML) could be considered as a classic example of howpolitical interests could influence the fate of a particular building, not with standing its historical and aesthetic importance.

---

[9]Tengiz Sigua's ultimatum to President Gamsakhurdia, "Tbilisi Civil war". Georgian TV. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OdxkJ8HzM8Youtobe, 21.11.2015

[10]Elisashvili, A.. *How Tbilisi has been changed*? BakurSulakauri Publishing House, 2013, p. 112-114.

The history of the IML building began in 1934; three years before, in 1931, the Institute for Study the Scientific Heritage of Marx and Engels, and the Institute of Vladimir Lenin were united, and the Institute of Marx, Engels, and Lenin was founded.

In 1933, Lavrenti Beria initiated the establishment of the Institute of Stalin, aimed at studying Bolshevik Party history in the Caucasus and Stalin's contribution in these developments. In 1934, the building's construction began at the corner of Rustaveli Avenue and Kursants' street. Eventually, the Institute was renamed as the Marx-Engels-Stalin Institute. In 1938, the construction was completed. The afore mentioned Institute, the Tbilisi branch of Lenin's Museum, and the Party archive were housed there.[11]

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, in 1992-1995, the Parliament of Georgia occupied the building. On August 25, 1995, the Constitution of Independent Georgia was adopted there. Later, the Constitutional Court operated in the building. In 2007, the building was transferred to private investors due to damage-related reasons. In 2016, it became the hotel "Millennium Biltmore," which belongs to the Sheikh Mubarak Al Nahyan of The United Arab Emirates.[12]

As an architect, Vladimer Vardosanidze considers, the IML building is a classical example of how architecture and ideology are intertwined. From his perspective, the building is one of the most interesting cases for two main reasons: (1) it was a victim of the Bolshevik regime itself, and (2) it became a victim of the "monument-fighters"[13] in the Soviet period. It fell under the Soviet repressions in terms of the merging architectural styles, which entails Stalin's empire-style front façade of the building built on the rear facade of the constructivist style. Bas-reliefs on the facades of the building, which were decorated by famous Georgian sculptors Jacob

---

[11]Elisashvili, A.. *How Tbilisi has been changed*? BakurSulakauri Publishing House, 2013, p.141-143.
[12]"The hotel "Millennium Biltmore" will be opened in the nearest future in Tbilisi", www.bpi.ge. July 13, 2016. http://bpi.ge/index.php/tbilisshi-sastumro-milenium-biltmori-uakhloes-periodshi-gaikhsneba (accessed 08.11.2016)

Nikoladze and Tamar Abakelia, did not fit in the constructivist style either. Sculptures named "From the History of the Transcaucasian Bolshevik Organizations,"and "Peaceful Construction in the Soviet Union" werecreated by Nikoladze in 1934-1936, where as the figures on the frieze ("The Demonstration in Batumi," "The Industry of Georgia," "Agriculture in Georgia", "October in Georgia," and "Happy Life" (1936-1937) belonged to Tamar Abakelia. These sculptural compositions were damaged in 1990 during the national movement period. At present, there are several compositions preserved, although they are not maintained in their initial shape.

The Freedom Square

From the beginning of the 19th Century, the square in the center of Tbilisi, currently named Freedom Square, played an essential role in the memory formation process in Georgia. Its name changed several times.

Until 1801, Freedom Square was called "Garetubani" ("outside district,") which reveals that it was a suburb. In different times, it was also informally known as "Sheshisubani" ("Firewood District,") and "Shtabis moedani" ("Headquarters square.") In 1828, the Russian army under the command of Colonel Paskevich, released Yerevan from Persian garrison. To celebrate this fact, the square was named after Paskevich-Erevanski. In 1917, immediately after the overthrow of Nicholas II, the Revolutionary Party leaders decided to name it Freedom Square.[14]

In 1922, the Bolshevik government renamed the square as "Zakfederation Square" to celebrate the creation of the Transcaucasian Federation. In 1934, it was decided to erect the monument of Lenin there. In 1940, the Square was named after Lavrenti Beria. In 1953, after the execution of Beria, the Square was renamed again as Lenin's Square.

It could be assumed that the Square is perceived as an "Imagined" center, from where political messages have been delivered to society.

Monument to Vladimir Lenin

---

[14]Elisashvili, A.. *How Tbilisi has been changed*? BakurSulakauri Publishing House, 2013, p. 68-71.

In 1934, the newspaper "Komunisti" announced the following:

"This is how the monumental statue of Lenin, which will be erected at the Zakfederation Square in Tiflis will look like. The foundation of the monument will form a great platform for [a] few dozen of people. The monument will be built from hewn marble."[15]

In 1934, a platform where Lenin's monument would have been erected was constructed, but the statue was not erected until 1956. Earlier, in 1950, the platform was deconstructed. Symbolically, a seven meter-high statue of the Great Leader was unveiled the day before Vladimir Lenin's 86th anniversary (April 21st.)

As early on as the period of "Perestroika" policy, when the Soviet restrictions were considerably softened, "the struggle against monuments" increased. In 1990, the aforementioned monument to Lenin was demolished. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, during the Zviad Gamsakhurdia presidency, the title of the Freedom Square was restored. This could be assessed as an attempt of stressing the Square's symbolic meaning and "bridging the present and past." A concept of "discursive continuity" offered by Eviatar Zerubavel could be applied as well, which implies that reconstruction of the old name could refer to connecting with the past. In this case, it was aimed at "overcoming" the Soviet memory and forming a new one. Political forces often use history in order to legitimize their power.

During Eduard Shevardnadze's presidency, symbols as ideological messages for transferring information garnered less public attention. "Speaking with the public through Symbols" started after the Rose Revolution of 2003 when the new government tried to distance itself from the old one in efforts to build the new Georgian state. Uncoincidentally, on November 23, 2006, the St. George Statue known as the Liberty Monument was erected at Liberty Square. At the place of Vladimir Lenin's monument, the statue was considered as a symbol of freedom and victory over the enemy. After the 2012 elections, the discussion regarding the afore

---

[15]Elisashvili, A. Liberty square, February 12, 2011,< http://sovlab.ge/ka/blog/freedom-square-history-by-aleksandre-elisashvili-from-the-soviet-tbilisi-project-sovlab>(accessed 24.05.2017)

mentioned monument was initiated in the social network at-large. The poll was conducted on "forum.ge," and the question was formulated as follows: "Should the monument be maintained at the Liberty Square?" 414 people participated in the survey, and the votes distributed as follows: a) The monument should be taken away from Liberty Square – 23.43%; b) It should be moved toanother place - 11.35%; and c) The monument should be maintained at the same place - 65.22%.[16] Respondents considered that monument as having no aesthetic value – as one of the users mentioned, "This monument looks like bijouterie." This topic was also discussed from the Orthodox Christian Church perspective. Some people mentioned that the Orthodox Church does not accept the erection of monuments of Saints. Supporters of maintaining the monument stressed that the main point was replacing Lenin's monument should be completed with the one that highlights the idea of freedom; that is why it should stay at Liberty Square. It can be assumed that the political meaning of the statue was more important than the aesthetic one.

Museum of Occupation

The Museum of Occupation is located on Rustaveli Avenue, in the Simon Janashia Tbilisi State Museum building. The Museum hosts approximately 3,000 exhibits, which depict the periods occupied by the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921,) and occupation by Bolshevik Russia, anti-Soviet struggle, and the National Liberation Movement (1921-1990.) Photo, audio, and video materials, as well as, manuscripts are on display.[17]According to Mikheil Saakashvili's (the President of Georgia at the time) statement at the opening ceremony, "This museum is devoted to the great patriot Kakutsa Cholokashvili and his brothers-in-arms. This is dedicated to the many underground organizations,

---

[16] Tbilisi Public Forum.
27.10.2012https://forum.ge/?f=29&showtopic=34454510&st=60 (accessed 31.03.2017)
Museum of Occupation websitewww.archive.security.gov.ge.
<http://archive.security.gov.ge/OLD_SITE_TEMP/okupaciis.php> (accessed 12.11.2016)

which had been created during the Soviet years. This is dedicated to the priesthood, the best part of which was annihilated. This museum is dedicated to my great-grandfather Nikusha Tsereteli, who was deported to one of the camps in Siberia for many years."[18]

With regards to the memory construction process, the importance of the Museum lies in its educational function. February 25, 2010 was officially declared as a Day of Remembrance of the Soviet occupation.

Soviet symbols

The problem of Soviet symbols sparks heated debates. Attitudes toward these places of memory frequently cause protest in Georgian society, caused by the fear of memory loss.[19]

In 2009, the minority party Parliament members under Gia Tortladze initiated a law that consists of several parts: Law of Lustration (place working limits for former authorities of the Communist Party in the public space,) and the Prohibition of totalitarian symbols, which was controversial. Scientific and political elites were the most active participants of the discussion. Before the adoption of the law, it was discussed at the HBS Center, Caucasian House, and at the Club of Historians.[20] The Association of Young Lawyers also expressed their perspective. Criticism was caused by the vague, unspecified content of the law: it was unclear whether or not the Soviet symbols prohibited from the public space or the private sector would become part of the norm. Eventually, the law was limited to public space. It is important to mention

---

[18]The day of Soviet occupation and Museum of occupation. February 25, 2011 <http://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/2320441.html>(accessed 12.11.2016)

[19]Shatirishvili, Z. Places of memory and place of the philosopher, <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/gsdl/cgi-bin/library.exe?e=d-00000-00---off-0civil2--00-1----0-10-0---0---0direct-10---4-------0-1l--10-ka-50---20-about---00-3-1-00-0-0-01-1-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL1.10&d=HASH01f2afaba8ab215fa4f09f5c.5.3(accessed 11.11.2016)

[20]History club(ზემოთ გიწერია Club of Historians).Should we fithg against Soviet symbols? November 10, 2010. <http://geohistoryclub.blogspot.com/2010/11/blog-post.html>(accesed 16.02.2017)

that the wider society did not participate in the discussion about Soviet symbols. In an interview with "Radio Tavisupleba," Historian Lasha Bakradze mentions that the media was inactive in this discussion; it did not pose questions and did not promote expression of alternative view points. Mark Mullen, the chairman of "Transparency International -Georgia" considers that in this case, the discussion is more important than the law itself; there should have been a public debate on the issue, but the Georgian community is not accustomed to discussing decisions, which are made by microgroups.[21]

Finally, on May 31, 2011, the Georgian Parliament adopted "The Charter on Liberty," which came into force on January 1, 2012. "The purpose of this law is to take preventive measures against communist and fascist ideologies, to eliminate totalitarian symbols, buildings, monuments, names of streets, avenues, villages, and cities. Apart from it, prohibition of totalitarian and communist propaganda is a matter of significance."[22] The law also aims at promoting the efficient functioning of Georgian legislation and legal norms, and at strengthening national security. Taking preventive measures against communist and fascist ideologies is vital.

Mark Mullen and Lasha Bakradze use opposing terms while discussing Soviet symbols: "forgetting history" (Mark Mullen) versus "overcoming history"(Lahsa Bakradze.) As Lasha Bakradze implies, for overcoming history, it is important to recognize the fact of the collaboration of the Georgian society with the Soviet power. This makes possible to avoid the attempts of certain political parties to use history for legitimization of their purposes. Mark Mullen points out that the commission was created at the Ministry of Internal Affairs for decision-making on totalitarian symbols. From his perspective, this could be

---

[21]Chaganava, D. Communism in the Humans heads, June 2, 2011,
<http://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/24213165.html>(accesed17.02.2017)
[22]The Charter of Freedom, website matsne.gov.ge May 31, 2011.
<https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1381526>(accessed 09.11.2016)

assessed as an attempt not to rewrite or analyze the history, but to hide the visual exposures; this claims the Soviet way of thinking is still alive.[23]

A group of experts supported the bill. Irakli Shengelaia notes that symbols represent forms of expression, which is characteristic of the concrete political system, but at the same time, it clarifies the government's will. "Government sometimes should go against public opinion, if his actions are motivated by the interests of the future. Removing "Great Soviet" symbols from public spaces and placing them in the history museum is important for the freedom of thinking of next generations. If the statues still exist indifferent cities and no one is going to touch them, how can we explain to young boys and girls that the founding fathers of the Soviet system were misanthropic people?"[24] Similar opinions were expressed by some members of the parliament, both from the majority and minority.

A member of the Parliamentary minority, Davit Darchiashvili claimed before passing the law: "When you establish a symbol, you should think a lot and decide, does it undoubtedly deserve to be a symbol? What should be prohibited and what should be accepted? Hopefully, this bill will become a law for everyone; it will be applicable to all symbols, including the statues to the creator of a totalitarian system- Joseph Stalin."[25]

Parliament majority member Levan Berdzenishvili explained the main purpose of prohibiting Soviet symbols: "We often use the international terms –'communist, totalitarian', and this applies not only to the symbols but also the Soviet totalitarian heritage as a whole. In the public sphere, this kind of symbols must definitely be prohibited precisely as the fascist ones."[26]

---

[23]Chaganava, D. Communism in the Humans heads, June 2, 2011,
<http://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/24213165.html>(accesed17.02.2017)
[24]Shengelaia, I. Symbols.. Emblems…etc..January 16, 2011.
<http://www.tabula.ge/ge/tablog/65209-simbolika-emblematika-mentaloba-da-sxva-amgvari>(accesed 18.02.2017)
[25]Maestro Television. Communist Symbols(2013) //Youtebe 01.11.2013
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xy-9k3wRcug>(accesed07.11.2016)
[26]Maestro Television. Communist Symbols(2013) //Youtebe 01.11.2013
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xy-9k3wRcug>(accesed07.11.2016)

Another Parliament majority member SosoJachvliani did not share this idea. In his opinion, Soviet symbolsshouldbe maintained as a part of history. He did not see any threat of potentialnostalgia. He believed that Communism and Fascism are in comparable to each other because Nazism is the biggest cruelty the world has ever seen. [27]

From historian David Jishkariani's perspective, if symbols are considered to be eliminated, the issue should be widely discussed before coming to a decision: "First of all, we should efface the Soviet ideology and Soviet way of thinking in our consciousness."[28]

Neither before nor after adopting the Law could Georgian society come to a clear consensus on the attitude toward Soviet symbols. After passing the afore mentioned Law, the star was removed from the building of the Academy of Sciences. However, the sickle and hammer on the Galaktioni bridge as well as some other symbols remain intact. Generally, historians and art critics do not assume that overcoming the Soviet mentality is possible by eliminating Soviet symbols. As Tamar Amashukeli argues:

"The struggle with Soviet mentality does not really begin or end with the destruction of Soviet symbols from the buildings. We only destroy the architecture with these measures. What has been actually changed? Have we come closer to the European democratic valuesjust by removing the star from the building of the Academy of Sciences?"[29]

In a personal Facebook discussion on Soviet symbols the following questions were posed to friends: 1) In your opinion, is it right to prohibit Soviet symbols in Georgia? 2) Do some restrictions and regulations help us history? 3) Why do you think it is significant to analyse the Soviet past? These questions were answered by 15 students and one teacher.

---

[27]Jachvliani, S. Netgazeti.ge, Soso Jadchvliani on the Soviet symbols (2013) [Interview with SoSoJadjvliani about the fate of totalitarian symbols in Georgia]https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4RfYdWUOns//youtobe 25.12.2013.)

[28]Akhlobeli Media. Symbos VS Ideology (2011) //Youtobe 04.03.2011 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IckUvsYTIVc>(accesed 07.11.2016)

[29]Maestro Television. Communist Symbols(2013) //Youtebe 01.11.2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xy-9k3wRcug>(accesed07.11.2016)

The answers were predominately similar. One of the responses mentioned that analysing Soviet history is important in order to understand state interests and historical mistakes. Soviet symbols should be clearly presented in order to clarify the characteristic points of the Soviet regime. Respondents are against the destruction of IML and other Soviet buildings. They think that Soviet aesthetics disappear following demolition. They are against Soviet symbols disappearing from public space. As for analysing the Soviet past, in their opinion, it can be critically reviewed. Prohibiting symbols by law is a populist measure, because history cannot be hidden by censorship. From a personal perspective, drawing the distinction between friends and enemies is crucial and can be achieved by analyzing the past, of which discussions should be more public and intensive.

In the article "Destroy Lenin" published in the newspaper "24 saati," author Oleg Panfilov argues that it is vital for post-Soviet states to heal from the disease called the Soviet Union. Destruction of the statues of Lenin is a matter of considerable importance:

"After any single destruction of statues of Lenin soft-hearted members of 'Intelligentsia' (Elite) appeared who pretended that history should be treated reasonably and tidily. So should we acknowledge that Soviet oppressions and Holodomor are absolutely reasonable and ordinary processes? And neither Lenin nor his followers participated in these processes? This is very much like a doctor's idea proving that ectomy of cancer is not necessary because it is a normal and natural process for the sick person. But who really wants not to ectomy the cancer from the body? This is exactly the case of Lenin. He must be destroyed and disappeared like cancer cells, like a very dangerous epidemic, like tuberculosis bacillus that hinders the society from briefing quietly and freely."[30]

Summary

Different attitudes toward monuments and symbols could be observed during the post-Soviet period in Georgia. This is true with regards to governmental bodies and in Georgian society.

---

[30]Destroy Lenin, www.24saati.ge June 6, 2010 <http://www.24saati.ge/weekend/story/7154-gavanadgurot-lenini> (accessed22.10.2016)

In fact, the destruction of Communist totalitarian symbols failed to fulfil the essential role in the following: the critical re-consideration of the Soviet memory, naming facts and processes, and the formation of a new memory which is directly related to the national identity. There must be (1) a careful approach to the principle visualizing the past, and (2) an explanation of the need to rethink how Soviet history could garner better results than deconstruction and hiding the past.

How was the Soviet past reconsidered in Georgia? From this study's analysis, this process is still in progress. There were attempts, discussions, different opinions and perspectives. Due to these discussions, there is a law but there is noconcise public consensus.

Alternative views could be promoted through different means. However, restrictions and deconstruction typically cause protests and misunderstandings. Further discussions on the problems presented in this paper could be viewed as vital steps toward finding efficient solutions.

Bibliography

Elisashvili, A.. *How Tbilisi has been changed*?, BakurSulakauri publishing house, 2013.

Vardosanidze, V. Understanding the Soviet past, Discussions 2011.Tbilisi, 2012.

Kordzakhia, I. "Our society is a brief overview of past years, *DzeglisMegobar*i, Tbilisi, 1964, N2.Нора, П. "Всемирноеторжествопамяти". *Памятьовойне 60 летспустя. Россия, Германия, Европа*. М., 2005, с. 391.

Interviews

Expert interview with Georgian architect Vladimer Vardosanidze.

Electronic resources

Akhlobeli Media. Symbos VS Ideology (2011) Youtobe 04.03.2011<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IckUvsYTIVc> [accessed 07.11.2016]

Bakradze, L. Interview with LashaBakradze, November 6, 2010. <http://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/25677749.html> [accessed 09.02.2017]Chaganava, D. Communism in the Humans heads, June 2, 2011, <http://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/24213165.html> [accessed17.02.2017]

 Destroy Lenin, www.24saati.ge June 6, 2010 <http://www.24saati.ge/weekend/story/7154-gavanadgurot-lenini> [accessed22.10.2016]

ElisaSvili, A. Liberty square, February 12, 2011,< http://sovlab.ge/ka/blog/freedom-square-history-by-aleksandre-elisashvili-from-the-soviet-tbilisi-project-sovlab>[accessed 24.05.2017]

Georgian Broadcaster. Fine for placement soviet symbols (2013) YouTube 01.11.2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-QRnDkQvzD8> [accessed 07.11.2016]

Gstudiastudia. Tbilisi in 1990sRustaveliavenue (2014) YouTube 07.11.2014. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUeTvdIaznE>[accesed 17.02.2017]

Gvakharia G. The day of Soviet occupation and Museum of Occupation. February 25, 2011. <http://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/a/2320441.html>[accessed 08.11.2016]

History club, should we fithg against Soviet symbols? November 10, 2010. <http://geohistoryclub.blogspot.com/2010/11/blog-post.html> [accessed 16.02.2017]

Jadjvliani, S. Netgazet.ge, SosoJaddjvliani on the Soviet symbols (2013) [Interview with SoSoJadjvliani about the fate of totalitarian symbols in Georgia] youtobe 25.12.2013.)

Kurtsikashvili M. Culture: Regimes and Sculptures. ”I am Georgian, I am Sculptor*”*7 days.ge 2010. <http://7days.ge/index2.php?newsid=318> [accessed 08.11.2016]

Maestro Television. Communist Symbols (2013) YouTube 01.11.2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xy-9k3wRcug> [accesed07.11.2016]

New Georgian Monumentality and blank Transcriptions, December 5, 2010,<http://www.24hours.ge/weekend/story/11875-akhali-qartuli-monumentalizmi-da-tsarieli-transkriftsiebi> [accessed 12.10.2016]

Nozadze, N."what can you see on Mtatsminda?"http://mtawminda.blogspot.com/2008/12/blog-post_3716.html 16.12.2008 [acceded 24.03.2017]Shatirishvili, Z. Places of memory and place of the philosopher, <http://www.nplg.gov.ge/gsdl/cgi-bin/library.exe?e=d-00000-00---off-0civil2--00-1----0-10-0---0---0direct-10---4-------0-1l--10-ka-50---20-about---00-3-1-00-0-0-01-1-0utfZz-8-00&a=d&cl=CL1.10&d=HASH01f2afaba8ab215fa4f09f5c.5.3>[accessed 11.11.2016]

Shengelaia, I. Symbols.. Emblems…etc.January 16, 2011. <http://www.tabula.ge/ge/tablog/65209-simbolika-emblematika-mentaloba-da-sxva-amgvari> [accessed 18.02.2017]

Sigua, T. Georgian TV. Tbilisi war (2015) [TengizSigua's ultimatum] YouTube 21.11.2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6OdxkJ8HzM8>[accesed16.02.2017]

The Charter of Freedom, May 31, 2011. <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/1381526>[accessed 09.11.2016]

The hotel "Millennium biltmore" will be opened in the nearest future in Tbilisi,July 13,2016. <http://bpi.ge/index.php/tbilisshi-sastumro-milenium-biltmori-uakhloes-periodshi-gaikhsneba> [accessed 08.11.2016]

ՀԱՂԹԱՀԱՐԵԼ, ԹԵ ՄՈՌԱՆԱԼ. ԹԲԻԼԻՍԻԻ ԽՈՐՀՐԴԱՅԻՆ ԽՈՐՀՐԴԱՆՇԱՆՆԵՐԻ ԵՎ ԿԱՌՈՒՅՑՆԵՐԻ ՎԵՐԱԲԵՐՅԱԼ ՀԱՆՐԱՅԻՆ ՔՆՆԱՐԿՈՒՄԸ
Ամփոփագիր

Սոֆիո Բիլանիշվիլի
Իվանե Ջավախիշվիլի Թբիլիսիի Պետական Համալսարան
sofobilanishvili@ymail.com

Բանալի բառեր. *Կոլեկտիվ հիշողություն, ինքնություն, կառույց, մոռանալ, խորհրդային խորհրդանշաններ, Թբիլիսի*

Խորհրդային միության փլուզումից հետո կոմունիստական տոտալիտար ժառանգության ճակատագիրը լայնորեն քննարկվում էր անկախ Վրաստանում: Այս հոդվածը վրաստանյան խոսույթի ուսումնասիրության հիման վրա փորձում է պատասխանել հետնյալ հարցերին, թե արդյոք անցյալի վիզուալիզացիան խթանում է նոր կոլեկտիվ հիշողության ձևավորումը, արդյոք այս գործընթացը նշանակում է հիշել, թե մոռանալ անցյալը, քանդել այն, թե պահպանել, և թե ինչպես խորհրդային անցյալը վերանայվեց Վրաստանում:

Այս ուսումնասիրությունում ներկայացվում են խորհրդային անցյալի հաղթահարման ու որպես վրացական նոր ինքնության ձևավորման հիմք «համատեղ անցյալի» նոր պատումի ձևավորման բարդ ու հակասական գործընթացները: Այս ուսումնասիրությունը հիմնվում է կառույցների, նշանների ու շենքերի վերլուծության վրա, որոնք տեղակայված են Թբիլիսիի կենտրոնական հատվածում` Ռուսթավելիի պողոտայից մինչև Ազատության հրապարակ:

ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING THE INTENTIONS TO MIGRATE FROM RURAL AREAS OF ARMENIA AND GEORGIA USING CAUCASUS BAROMETER 2015

Anna Dalaryan,
ATC-Agribusiness teaching center
anna.dalaryan@gmail.com

Abstract

Migration flows from South Caucasian countries have increased over the past century. These patterns contain positive and negative impacts on the home countries. Prior to analyzing such effects, the causes of migration should be considered and studied in-depth in order to understand the main reasons behind migratory intentions. For this study, Armenia and Georgia will be reviewed because, for many years, these countries shared similar migration traits. Given that a large number of emigrants are from rural areas in Armenia and Georgia, this study was conducted in order to understand the factors that motivate and create intentions to migrate from rural areas. This study's analysis utilizes the Caucasus Barometer Household Survey (2015) implemented by the Caucasus Research Resource Center's regional offices in Armenia and Georgia (CRRC,) and a logit model is used to evaluate the factors that create the intention to migrate from rural areas in Armenia and Georgia. The main factors to be analyzed are as follows: household income and employment status as control factors, and gender, age, education level, the presence of relatives abroad, trust towards the Government and the Parliament, and whether people are treated fairly by the Government or not as independent variables. The estimation results show that characteristics such as income, age, education years, trust toward the Government, and Government fairness are statistically significant factors that affect the migration from

rural areas of Armenia. Meanwhile, gender, age, education years, and presence of relatives living abroad are factors that significantly impact migration patterns from rural areas of Georgia.

Introduction

Migration is a well-known increasing phenomenon in developing countries, which is described as a process of movement of people from one area of the world to another in order to find improved living and working conditions. Migration has a tremendous impact on countries, especially when they are in the developing stage. It has both positive and negative impacts on the country that experiences it. First, migrants are sending remittances to their home countries, which have a tremendously positive impact on the country's economy. The huge contribution provided by remittances to the country's GDP creates a multiplier effect through consumption and investments, which positively contributes to the country's economy. On the other hand, a large level of remittances creates dependence from the country where the migrants are currently located, creating a potentially negative impact on exchange rates. Second, another harmful consequence set forth by migration is a concept known as "brain gain through brain drain." This happens when highly skilled workers leave their home countries because their skills and qualifications are in high demand abroad. It stipulates that highly valued human capital flows to countries where they are valued more. Since almost half of the population in both Armenia and Georgia is from rural areas, the direct impact of migration becomes increasingly visible.

As a part of the developing world, Armenia and Georgia currently face the issue of migration, and the biggest problem to address is how to understand its causes. Considering the fact that almost half of the population in these countries are from rural areas, and that high migration flows are occurring specifically from these areas, the understanding of the causes of its flows become highly important. In order to understand the basis of these flows from rural areas, this study will consider some possible causes and will highlight the main causes of migration from rural areas in Armenia and Georgia. The result of this study is the theoretical contribution

(Push and Pull factors) on the migratory factors, as well as their practical implications.

Historical overview
Migration phases in Armenia

Migration flows to be reviewed in this study began in the early 1980s when the Armenian and Georgian economies started to deteriorate following the collapse of the Soviet Union, which created a new and sizable migration flow. Due to increased migration, these countries are highly dependent on remittances at present (ETF 2013).

The social, political, and economic situation in Armenia became the main reasons for migration. To understand the significance of the problem, it is important to consider that between 1990 and 2005, 700,000-1,300,000 people emigrated from Armenia, which equals to ~22-40% of Armenia's population in 2008 (UNDP 2009).

Migration in Armenia could be separated by three phases:

Phase 1: Mass migration, 1988-1995

Phase 2: Decline and stabilization, 1995-2000

Phase 3: Less migration outflows, 2000-2010 (Manasyan & Poghosyan, 2012).

In Armenia, the first phase of migration started from 1988 and became mass migration after Armenia gained independence in 1991; the rates significantly increased from 1992 to 1994. This timeframe is known as the massive migration period; since the workplaces were reduced substantially, Armenia suffered from serious economic contraction and the living conditions worsened. During the same period, the labor emigrants tended to travel to the former Soviet Republic. However, some small flows (2.9-3.9%,) arrived in European countries throughout the nineties until to the early 2000s (Makaryan and Galstyan 2012).

The second phase of migration was observed between 1995 and 2000, which was characterized by the decline and stabilization of migration. The net migration rate during this period was 250,000 people, which comprised 7.8% of Armenia's population in 2000. The decline in migration was connected with the stabilization of the socio-economic situation in

Armenia, which was linked to the armed conflict with Azerbaijan due to the ceasefire in 1994 (Manasyan and Poghosyan 2012).

The third phase of migration (2000 to 2010) was characterized by decreased migration flows. During this period, the migration outflow rate was about 265,236, which is 9% of Armenia's population in 2011. Furthermore, return migration also increased in this timeframe. Until the 2000s, labor migrants were working mostly in construction, but starting from 2000, they became engaged in trade, services, production, and agricultural sectors (Manasyan and Poghosyan 2012).

Migration phases in Georgia

Migration in Georgia is considered as irregular. As in the case of Armenia, the history of Georgian migration can be separated into three phases:

Phase 1: Collapse of Soviet Union and the Conflict, 1990-1995
Phase 2: Economic Struggle, 1996-2004
Phase 3: Hope and economic rebuilding, post-2004 (ETF, 2013).

The first phase lasted 1990 to 1995. The highest flow of migrants started to be visible in Georgia from the early 1990s, which is characterized by ethnic factors. The main reasons for the mass flow of migrants were connected to the Georgian Civil War as well as the ethnic clashes in South Ossetia and Abkhazia in the beginning of the 1990s. The main directions of migration flows were mainly to EU countries, the U.S., and to the Russian Federation (MPC 2013).

The second phase of migration lasted from 1995 to 2003. In 1995, Georgia's economy started to recover, yet lower productivity levels continued to make it difficult for people to find jobs. As a result, people were forced to look for new working opportunities abroad. Another influential migratory factory was the state of the Russian economy, which started to grow after 1998 and provided new opportunities for Georgians to find work there (Labadze and Tukhashvili 2013). At the beginning of this phase, the return migrants were mostly Russians who have previously lived in Georgia or born there moved back to their country, but some Georgians also started to migrate to Russia. In 2000, a new visa regime was

introduced for Georgians in Russia, meanwhile, for citizens of most of the CIS countries, there is a free visa regime (IOM 2008).

During this period, Georgia's economy declined and state-owned enterprises became disoriented mainly due to the change to a free-market economy, reduced wages, and an increased unemployment rate. Since the amount of temporary migrates rose, the economic dependency on remittances also increased, and it became one of the main determinants of the economy. The economic situation became the first problem for migration in Georgia; people emigrate in order to have enough money to send to their families in the form of remittances (Badurashvili 2004).

During the third phase of migration, which started from 2003 and lasted until 2011, the Georgian economy developed and improved, which started to be visible from its gross national disposable income and GDP per capita which tripled (Labadze and Tukhashvili 2013).

This phase started after the "Rose Revolution,"[1] when, by using new opportunities for economic development as a result of slight development of business environment in Georgia, the reduction of corruption and criminal violence took place; this motivated migrants to return to their home countries (Labadze and Tukhashvili 2013).

Literature review

The impact of migration on a country's development status is both positive and negative. From one side, economic development decreases the migration, since when the economy is developed there are fewer push factors to migrate, whereas on the other hand, the migration influences the development by sending remittances, using new skills, knowledge, and experience (UN 2012).

As many researchers proved, the main causes of migration to be considered are the social, economic, and political issues. Simultaneously, migration is the main cause of different social, economic, and political changes in the world. Starting from the early years of mass migration, it is

---

[1] More Information about "Rose" Revolution is available here:
http://www18.georgetown.edu/data/people/cdw33/publication-32608.pdf

viewed as a consequence of the unequal distribution of wealth and power. Along with inequality, migrant workers were always considered as socially, economically, and politically vulnerable (Ballard 1987).

There are some macro models, offered by the migration theory: the Gravity models of migration, Pull-Push (Cost-benefit analysis) migration model, and the Markov chain migration model (Aleshkovski and Iontsev 2004), that help explain why people choose to migrate. In this study, the Push-pull migration model is the most useful (Mayda 2008), especially when the issue of the international labor migration is largely experienced in the Armenian and Georgian cases. Table 1 summarizes the push-and-pull factors which affect the decision to migrate according to the World Bank (WorldBank 2006).

Table 1: Push and Pull factors: Motivations for Migration

	PUSH Factors	PULL Factors
Economic and demographic	Poverty, unemployment, low wages, high fertility rates, lack of basic health and education	Prospects of higher wages, potential for improved standard of living, personal or professional development
Political	Conflict, insecurity, violence, poor governance, corruption, human rights abuses	Safety and security, political freedom
Social	Discrimination based on: ethnicity, gender, religion etc.	Family reunification, ethnic (diaspora migration) homeland, freedom from discrimination

Source: The World Bank; Migration and Remittances: Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union

Among all Push Factors, some economic, political, and social were chosen to analyze in this study. The range of economic and demographic factors included in this study are unemployment, income, education, age. The political factors include the trust towards Government, and the fairness of the Government. The social factor is composed by the household income level.

Based on previously conducted studies and results that indicate that income and employment status are two of the most significant Push migratory factors, they were considered as the main independent variables in the model and analysis.

Income and Migration

In order to assess the impact of income level on the intention to migrate, empirical studies were conducted in Armenia and Georgia. Certain studies proved that in many cases, Armenian households experience high levels of financial problems, meaning that income is not enough to cover additional expenses; current income levels can only cover living expenses (ILO 2009). For many households in Armenia, migration becomes the main source of income (World Bank 2002). Migration as a source of income is considered as a form of remittances as they help raise the income level (Grigoryan 2013).

The impact of income on migration is studied in Georgia as well, which shows the same results. The presence of migrants in the household changes the income level; households that have migrants have higher income level in comparison to those without migrants (CRRC/ISET 2010). According to the "Population Migration from Georgia to EU Countries" study, the main factor that causes migration is the expectations of higher income (Esadze 2010).

Unemployment and Migration

The other Push Factor of migration to be reviewed in this study is unemployment. The main migration flows from the South Caucasus regions can be explained by the sense of hope of attaining better employment abroad. Both Armenia and Georgia have experienced labor migration, and this is undoubtedly considered as the main cause of migration from these countries. After conducting several studies on this region, it is proven that higher income and better employment opportunities are the main reasons for migration (ISET 2017). For example, a study called "Migration of Rural Population in Post-Soviet Period" conducted in 2011 shows that the main reason of migration from rural areas to other countries is due to the absence

of jobs, thereafter the lower salaries and the lack of jobs according to their specialization (Galstyan 2011).

Other social-economic factors and Migration

Empirical studies revealed striking evidence on social-economic factors, which influence migration and create motivation (push factors) to migrate. There is an increasing migratory tendency in post-Soviet countries where the main issue continues to be weak economies, which do not contain migration policies. The main issue continues to be the lower standards of living of migrant households, which positively impacts the labor migration from these countries (Korobkov 2014).

The main determinants of migration in the South Caucasus countries were analyzed and discussed in Armen Asatryan's study. The analysis found that economic factors are the main causes for migration; specifically, these factors are the external policies and regulations, as well as the relations between countries. The research shows that if the economic situation in these countries remains the same, the rates of migration would increase. Migration becomes easier especially when there is a network of relatives and friends (Asatryan 2007).

Based on another study, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan have similar aspects, since they share a common legacy of socio-economic culture from the Soviet era. The research found a positive relationship between migration and remittances. Furthermore, the analysis revealed that the excess level of remittances correlates with an increase in new migration flows. Also, as was found in the Armenian case, there was no impact on education due to migration (Grigoryan 2013).

Based on the literature reviewed on the relationship between income and migration, as well as the connection between employment status and migration, this study asks if the low income level and employment status can predict the willingness to migrate from rural areas of Armenia and Georgia.

Hypothesis: Low income level and unemployment are factors that stimulate migration from rural areas of Armenia and Georgia.

Data description

This study was conducted by analyzing data from the Caucasus Barometer household survey, 2015. The survey was conducted by the CRRC's regional office in Armenia and Georgia (CRRC 2015).

The sample for the survey includes a total of 1,863 households from Armenia and 2,251 households from Georgia. Table 2 summarizes the settlement type of surveyed households both in Armenia and Georgia, as it shows 31.6% (589 households) and 38.8% (874 households) of surveyed households are from rural areas in Armenia and Georgia respectively.

Table 2: The settlement type of surveyed households in Armenia and Georgia

	Rural		**Urban**		**Capital**	
Armenia	589	31.6%	656	33.2%	618	33.2%
Georgia	874	38.8%	744	33.1%	633	28.1%

Migration issues are highly visible in rural areas in Armenia as shown in the survey results, which indicates that 45.3% of rural households in Armenia expressed intentions to migrate in the future (temporary migration,) whereas in the Georgian case the same indicator finds reveals this rate is only 28.4%.

Migration issues are highly visible in rural areas in Armenia, which also is also proved by the survey result indicating that 45.3% of rural households in Armenia are ready to migrate in the future (temporary migration,) in the case when the same indicator for Georgia is only 28.4%. The issue of future migration becomes more important when also considering the households who are willing to migrate in the future from national capitals and urban areas. The result of the survey shows that 65.1% in Armenia and 57.9% of households in Georgia are willing to migrate in future from urban and capital areas.

The cross-tabulation analysis show that people who are willing to migrate are 25-36 years old. These people mainly have secondary technical education (63.6% in Armenia and 51.4% in Georgia) and mainly unemployed (65% in Armenia and 66% in Georgia.) Another

characteristics of these households that are willing to migrate in future is the monthly income level, which covers food and clothes. With regards to trusting the Government, 45% of Armenian households that are willing to migrate fully distrust their Government, and 42% in Georgia neither trust nor distrust it.

Methodology

In order to assess the likelihood of people who are willing to migrate from rural areas within the following set of independent variables – social-demographic, economic and political variables – the logit model, which we used in this study is specified as follows:

Pr $|Y=1|$ X= $\frac{\exp(a'x)}{1-\exp(a'x)'}$, where:

Pr is the probability of the people who want to migrate from rural areas.

Y=1 represents the rural people who wants to migrate in future.

X is a vector, which includes the social-demographic, economic, and political variables.

In order to estimate and interpret the parameters, the maximum likelihood approach is used to estimate the percent change in odds ratio.

Empirical specification

The research methodology of this study is quantitative. The main instrument, which is used in order to conduct the analysis, is the secondary data collected by Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC Armenia and CRRC Georgia) collected in 2015. The Caucasus Barometer (CB) dataset is used in order to analyze the factors that affect the willingness of temporary migration from rural areas, both for Armenia and Georgia. The main objective of this study is to understand the factors that affect the decision to migrate; this reason not only economic but also social demographic and political factors were included in this model in order to gain a final understanding of what type of factors can be classified as the main causes that impact the decision to migrate from rural areas.

The empirical specification of the Logistic Regression model for this study is done through modeling the binary dependent variable as a function of the social-demographic, economic, and political variables.

$$Pr \quad (MGR=1)=F(\alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Gend + \alpha_2 Age + \alpha_3 Edu + \alpha_4 Emp + \alpha_5 Rel + \alpha_6 Trust + \alpha_7 Fairness + \alpha_8 Money)$$

For Armenia and Georgia separately, two logistic regression models were developed that include the aforementioned dependent, independent, and control variables.

Secondary data analysis was conducted in order to test the hypothesis via logistic regression analysis. During the analysis, 90%, 95%, and 99% confidence levels were used.

The estimated model consists of the following dependent, independent, and control variables:

Dependent Variable

Intention to migrate (MGR): The main objective of this study is to understand the factors that impact the decision to migrate from rural areas. As a dependent variable of this model, the following question is posed: "If you had a chance, would you leave the country for a certain period of time to live somewhere else?" the outcome of this variable is coded as "1" if the answer is "Yes" and, "0" if the answer is "No." Since the outcome of the dependent variable is binary, logistic regression is used for modeling purposes.

Independent Variables

Household monthly income, per member (Inc): Considering the findings from different studies that show that income level leaves a higher impact on dictating the intention to migrate, the Household monthly income – adjusted per member – is chosen as one of the main independent variables for this model. Accordingly, the Income variable is a continuous variable in this model.

Employment (Emp): As previously discussed in the literature review, the other important factor that describes the intention to migrate is employment. This is a binary variable that is derived from the following

question: "Are you currently employed?" This variable takes a value of 0 if the respondent is unemployed and 1 if he/she is employed.

Control Variables

The range of control variables include other important push factors that impact one's intention to migrate, these variables are:

Age: Age is a continuous variable in this dataset.

Education (Edu): Education years is a continuous variable in this dataset since it shows the years of education obtained by the respondents.

Relatives living abroad (Rel): This variable shows whether the respondent has relatives that currently live abroad or not. It is a binary variable, which takes the value of 0 if they do not have relatives living abroad, and 1 if the respondent has relatives that are currently living abroad. In this model, this variable was derived from the following question, "Do you have a close relative currently living abroad, outside the borders of country?"

Trust towards Parliament and Executive Government (Trust): This variable shows trust towards Parliament and Executive Government, where the outcomes are derived from responses from the following question, "Please, asses your level of trust towards…" Trust is a binary variable that takes the value of 0 if there is distrust and 1 if there is trust.

Fairness of Government (Fairness): This political variable shows the fairness of the Government, which we get through the answers to the following question: "Under the present government in the country, do you completely agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or completely disagree that people like yourself are treated fairly by the government?" This is a binary variable that takes the value of 1 if the responded agrees and 0 if he disagrees.

In the model developed for this study, all the variables (except the age variable) were included as binary variables with corresponding base categories. Particularly, the base category for *Employment, it* is the unemployment, for *Gender,* it is female, for *Relatives currently living abroad,* it is if the respondent does not have relatives living abroad, for *Trust* it is distrust, and finally, for *Fairness,* it is that the household disagrees with the statement.

The employment and income levels were hypothesized to negatively impact the decision to migrate from rural areas since the availability of higher income and employment creates favorable conditions not to migrate. Accordingly, the education level was anticipated to negatively impact the decision to migrate, because higher education levels create opportunities for better employment. Age is expected to have a negative impact on the decision to migrate, since the older people become, the higher the willingness to leave the county becomes. Household income per member was anticipated to negatively impact the willingness to migrate in future, since with higher income, living conditions will improve. The variable that shows whether the respondents have relatives currently living abroad is anticipated to positively impact to the willingness to leave the country, since their living conditions abroad may motivate them to migrate. The trust towards Parliament and Executive Government and Fairness of the Government are anticipated to negatively impact the decision to migrate, because as more people trust the Parliament and Executive Government, the willingness to live in their country rather than migrate increases; the following statement is true in the case of Fairness of Government.

Estimation results

This study's estimation results are represented in Table 3. The following table summarizes the logit parameter estimated with the associated p-values, odds ratios, and the percent changes in odds ratios. The estimation results were obtained using the STATA software package. The estimation results were discussed only in terms of statistically significant percent change in odds ratios using 1%, 5%, and 10% significance level for each country.

Statistically significant variables for rural areas in Armenia are the household's income level per member, age of the respondent, years of education, trust towards Parliament/Executive Government, and fairness of the Government.

The findings for rural areas in Armenia reveal that the employment status is not statistically significant, while the other independent variable – the Household's monthly income level per member is a statistical significance indicator of the willingness to migrate from rural areas, and

shows that with other factors held constant, as the monthly income level of the household (per member) increases by 1 USD, the likelihood of willingness to migrate in the future increases by 0.4%. This finding shows that unlike the increase in income level, people are more willing to migrate from rural areas of Armenia.

As a result of this study, the control variables used in the model show the following impact for rural areas in Armenia: everything else held constant;

• Each additional year of age of the respondent decreases the likelihood of willingness to migrate in the future by 5.8%,

• Each additional year of education decreases the likelihood of willingness to migrate in the future by 7.4%,

• The trust towards the Government and Parliament decreases the likelihood of the willingness to migrate by 50.8%,

• The belief that people are fairly treated by the Government increases the likelihood of the willingness to migrate in the future by 66.3%.

The findings for rural areas in Georgia show that both the income and employment status are not statistically significant indicators of the willingness to migrate in the future, whereas some of the control variables are significant.

As a result of the analysis, the control variables used in the model show the following impact for rural areas in Georgia: everything else held constant;

• Male respondents are less willing to migrate in the future than females, by 43.8%,

• Each additional year of age decreases the likelihood of the willingness to migrate in the future by 6.6%,

• Each additional year of education increases the likelihood of the willingness to migrate in the future by 12.7%;

• Having relatives living abroad increases the likelihood of the willingness to migrate in the future by 16.8%.

Table 3: Estimation results; Authors own calculations: *p<0.1; ** p<0.05; *** p<0.01

	ARMENIA			GEORGIA		
	Coeffi-cients	Odds ratios	% change in odds ratios	Coeffic ients	Odds ratios	% change in odds ratios
Respondent gender (base: female)	**-0.251**	**0.777**	**-22.2%**	**-0.576**	**0.562**	**-43.8%**
Male	*(0.277)*			*(0.007) ****		
Age	**-0.601**	**0.942**	**-5.8%**	**-0.068**	**0.934**	**-6.6%**
Age	*(0.000)****			*(0.000) ****		
Education level(years)	**-0.076**	**0.926**	**-7.4%**	**0.119**	**1.127**	**12.7%**
Education level	*(0.080)**			*(0.003) ****		
Employment (base: unemployed)	**0.153**	**1.165**	**16.5%**	**0.372**	**1.451**	**45.2%**
Employed	*(0.511)*			*(0.121)*		
Relatives living abroad (base: do not have)	**0.137**	**1.147**	**14.7%**	**0.989**	**2.688**	**168.8%**
Have	*(0.733)*			*(0.000) ****		
Trust towards Government (base: distrust)	**-0.709**	**0.492**	**-50.8%**	**0.041**	**1.042**	**4.2%**
Trust	*(0.004)****			*(0.872)*		
Fairness of the Gov. (base: Disagree)	**0.508**	**1.663**	**66.3%**	**-0.099**	**0.905**	**-9.4%**
Agree	*(0.080)**			*(0.673)*		

Household's income per member	0.003	1.003	0.4%	-0.002	0.997	-0.3%
Monthly USD	(0.100)*			(0.148)		

Discussion

Considering the importance of migration flows from Armenia and Georgia (especially from rural areas,) and the importance of understanding the causes of these flows, a logit model was estimated to evaluate the impact of social-demographics, economic, and political factors on the decision to migrate from rural areas by using the 2015 survey data (Caucasus Barometer) collected by the CRRC's regional offices in Armenia and Georgia.

The analysis of this study found that the main push factors that create the willingness to migrate from rural areas of Armenia are the monthly income level of the household (per member) and fairness of the government, while years of education, age, and trust towards Government decrease the willingness of migration.

In Georgia, the main push factors are the years of education and the presence of relatives living abroad, while the other factors – the age and gender of the respondents – decreases the willingness of migration.

Taking into account the hypothesis and the findings, the hypothesis is partially accepted for Armenia, since only the households' income level is a statistically significant factor that impacts the willingness to migrate in the future from rural areas. Considering this fact, the important issue to consider in both the Armenian and Georgian cases is the creation of employment opportunities, especially for rural areas, since the main cause of migration flows is the lack of appropriate employment.

Bibliography

Aleshkovski, Ivan, and Vladimir Iontsev. 2004. "Mathematical Models of Migration." Accessed October 14, 2016. http://www.eolss.net/sample-chapters/c15/e1-26-09-06.pdf.

Asatryan, Armen. 2007. "Migration in the South Caucasus Republics." Accessed October 11, 2016. http://www.crrc.am/hosting/file/_

static_content/fellows/fellowship06/A%20Asatryan/Armen%20Asatryan_r eport.pdf.

Badurashvili, Irina. 2004. "Determinants and consequences of irregular migration in a society under transition. The case of Georgia, Caucasus." Accessed September 23, 2016. http://paa2004. princeton.edu/papers/41960.

Ballard, Roger. 1987. "The political economy of migration: Pakistan, Britain and the Middle East." *Workers and the Social Order* 17-21.

CRRC. 2015. *Caucasus Barometer Household Survey.* Accessed 2016.

Dermendzhieva, Zvezda. 2011. "Migration from the South Caucasus: who goes abroad and what are the economic implications?" Accessed October 8, 2016. http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/ 14631377.2011.595135?scroll=top&needAccess=true.

Esadze, Ketevan. 2010. "Population Migration from Georgia to EU Countries." Accessed January 2017. http://ies.tsu.edu.ge/data/file_db /esadze/Ketevan%20Esadze%20Master%20Thesis%20Population%20Migr ation%20from%20Georgia%20to%20EU%20Countries.pdf.

ETF. 2013. "Migration and Skills in Armenia and Georgia." Accessed October 12, 2016. http://www.etf.europa.eu/webatt.nsf/0/B711838175EB7 62EC1257B4D0042FF65/$file/Migration&skills_Armenia&Georgia.pdf.

Galstyan, Mihran. 2011. *Labor-Migration of Rural Popoulation in Post-Soviet Period.* Accessed November 26, 2016. http://lraber.asj-oa.am/5862/1/2011-1-2_(164).pdf.

Grigoryan, Aleksandr. 2013. "Who else migrates from Armenia?" Accessed October 12, 2016. http://www.aea.am/files/papers/w1318.pdf.

ILO. 2009. *Migration and Development.* Yerevan: UN Armenia.

IOM. 2008. "Migration in Georgia: A Country Profile ." Accessed October 12, 2016. http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/georgia _profile2008.pdf.

ISET. 2017. "Georgia and the Gravity of Migration."

Korobkov, Andrei. 2014. "The Post-Soviet Labor Migrations: The socio-economic, legal and financial aspects." Accessed October 12, 2016. http://citation.allacademic.com//meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/0/7/4/2/ 5/pages74259/p74259-2.php.

Labadze, Lasha, and Mirjan Tukhashvili. 2013. "Costs and Benefits of Labour Mobility between the EU and the Eastern Partnership Partner Countires." Accessed September 29, 2016. http://www.case-research.eu/sites/default/files/Georgia%20country%20study%20-%20final.pdf.

Makaryan, Gagik, and Mihran Galstyan. 2012. "Costs and Benefits of Labour Mobility between the EU and the Eastern Partnership Partner Countries." October 31. Accessed October 11, 2016. http://www.case-research.eu/sites/default/files/Armenia%20country%20study%20-%20final.pdf.

Manasyan, Heghine, and Gevork Poghosyan. 2012. "Social Impact of Migration and Rural-Urban Migration in Central and Eastern Europe." April. Accessed September 25, 2016. ec.europa.eu .

Mayda, Anna Maria. 2008. "International Migration: A panel data analysis of the determinants of bilateral flows." Accessed October 5, 2016. http://faculty.georgetown.edu/amm223/InternationalMigration.pdf.

MPC. 2013. "The Demographic-Economic Framework of Migration ." Accessed September 29, 2016. http://www.migrationpolicycentre.eu/docs/migration_profiles/Georgia.pdf.

O'Rourke, Kevin, and Richard Sinnott . 2013. "Migration Flows: Political Economy of Migration and the Empirical Challeneges." *IIIS Discussion Paper No. 6, SSRN.*

UN. 2012. "Migration and human mobility." Accessed October 5, 2016. http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/Think%20Pieces/13_migration.pd.

UNDP. 2009. "MIGRATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES." Accessed October 2, 2016. www.am.undp.org.

WorldBank. 2002. *Growth Challenges and Government Policies in Armenia.* Washington, D.C.: The World Bank.

—. 2006. "Migration and Remittances." Accessed October 10, 2016. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTECA/Resources/257896-1167856389505/Migration_FullReport.pdf.

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻՑ ԵՎ ՎՐԱՍՏԱՆԻՑ ՄԻԳՐԱՑԻԱՅԻ ՆՊԱՏԱԿԱԴՐՈՒՄՆԵՐԻ ՎՐԱ ԱԶԴՈՂ ԳՈՐԾՈՆՆԵՐԻ ՎԵՐԼՈՒԾՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ԸՍՏ ԿՈՎԿԱՍՅԱՆ ԲԱՐՈՄԵՏՐԻ 2015

Ամփոփագիր

Աննա Դալալյան,
ԱՌԻՎ- Ազրոբիզնեսի ուսուցման կենտրոն
anna.dalaryan@gmail.com

Բանալի բառեր. *գյուղական միգրացիա, տնային տնտեսություն, եկամուտ, զբաղվածություն, տնտեսական և քաղաքական գործոններ*

Անցած դարից ի վեր մեծացել են միգրացիոն հոսքերը Հարավային Կովկասի երկրներից: Այդ հոսքերը ունենում են ինչպես դրական, այնպես էլ բացասական ազդեցություն այն երկրների վրա, որոնցից հոսքը տեղի է ունենում: Մինչ այդպիսի ազդեցությունների վելուծությունը, պետք է առավել խորը հաշվի առնել և ուսումնասիրել միգրացիայի մտադրություն ունենալու հիմքում ընկած պատճառները: Այս ուսումնասիրության համար կդիտարկվեն Հայաստանը և Վրաստանը, քանի որ երկար տարիներ այս երկրներում նկատվել են միգրացիայի համանման հատկություններ: Հաշվի առնելով այն փաստը, որ միգրանտների մեծամասնությունը Հայաստանի և Վրաստանի գյուղական բնակավայրերից է, այս ուսումնասիրությունը նպատակ ունի հասկանալու այն գործոնները, որոնք նպաստում են գյուղական բնակավայրերից արտագաղթելու մտադրություններին: Ուսումնասիրությունը իրականացնելու համար օգտագործվել է Կովկասյան հետազոտական ռեսուրսների կենտրոնի Հայաստանի և Վրաստանի տարածաշրջանային գրասենյակների կողմից 2015 թվականին իրականացված տնային տնտեսությունների

Կովկասյան բարոմետր հետազոտությունը, ինչպես նաև լոգիստիկ ռեգրեսիայի մոդելը, որն օգտագործվել է Հայաստանի և Վրաստանի գյուղական բնակավայրերից արտագաղթելու մտադրության վրա ազդող գործոնները գնահատելու համար։ Ուսումնասիրության մեջ ներառված վերլուծության ենթակա հիմնական գործոններն են՝ տնային տնտեսությունների եկամուտները և զբաղվածությունը, իսկ որպես վերահսկող գործոններ՝ հարցվողի սեռը, տարիքը, կրթական մակարդակը, արտերկրում հարազատների առկայությունը, կառավարության և խորհրդարանի նկատմամբ վստահությունը և արդյոք կառավարությունը արդար է վերաբերվում բնակչությանը։ Գնահատման արդյունքները ցույց տվեցին, որ Հայաստանի գյուղական վայրերից արտագաղթելու մտադրության վրա ազդող գործոններից վիճակագրորեն նշանակալի են հետևյալները՝ տնային տնտեսությունների եկամուտները, տարիքը, կրթական մակարդակը, կառավարության և խորհրդարանի նկատմամբ վստահությունը և արդյոք կառավարությունը արդար է վերաբերվում բնակչությանը։ Վրաստանի գյուղական վայրերից արտագաղթելու մտադրության վրա ազդող գործոններից վիճակագրորեն նշանակալի են հետևյալները՝ սեռը, տարիքը, կրթական մակարդակը և արտերկրում հարազատների առկայությունը։

SEARCHING FOR A PLACE:
THE CASE OF IDPS OF ABKHAZIA

Ketevan Epadze,
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University
kate.epadze@gmail.com

Key words: *Abkhazia, Conflict, Migration, Identity, Resettlement, Place Identity.*

> *"In his hand he holds earth, and in our hands we hold a mirage"*
> *(Barghuthi 2003: 13)*

Abstract

Within the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Georgia turned into a war zone. Territorial conflict over Abkhazia occurred in 1992 and lasted for over one year. This event traumatized thousands of Georgian families who were forced to leave their homes in order to survive and find peaceful shelters. Most of them had nowhere to go and were settled in the old state-owned building. Those people who migrated inside the Georgian state were identified as internally displaced persons (IDPs.) Over the years, they were trying to overcome the trauma of survival and losses. However, memories that remained after the war changed their identities, and their personal and social development. There is a stark contrast between old and new lives, which led to the tendency to shy away from reality and travel to the imaginary past. Most of the people who migrated could not regulate time and space rapture. It took a significant amount of time to realize the need to adapt to their new communities. The current situation indicates that nostalgia for the past still exists in the lives of internally displaced people, despite being able to attempt to balance the past and present. This paper utilizes the cause-effect structure and explains how and why war migration changed the lives of Georgian IDPs.

Georgians also have a mirage, which starts at the border of the Enguri river. This territory was separated from Georgia as a result of the conflict in Abkhazia 1992-1993. During this period, local Georgians were forced to leave their homes and flee to different areas of Georgia, or to different shelters abroad. Those people who moved from Abkhazia to other parts of Georgia were identified as internally displaced people (IDPs). The definition of IDPs is mostly used in the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement framework, which states:

"IDPs are persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border"(International Committee of the Red Cross, 2010: 1).

The migration of IDPs of Abkhazia left Georgia with a set of new challenges, but addressing such issues, required a significant amount of resources. The Government had to feed large quantities of people and provide them with places to live. These tasks were difficult for the economically and politically weakened State. At the first stage, homeless families were settled in the kindergartens, hospitals, factories, old hotels, and other State-owned buildings. Limited space and poverty had a negative impact on these families livelihood. During a visit to Georgia in December 2005, the UN Secretary General's Representative on the Human Rights of IDPs was appalled by the misery faced by thousands of Georgian IDPs (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2006: 8). As a result, there was a stark contrast, between IDPs former and new lives. The following concepts pushed IDPs to deny their new reality: Mythologizing the past, memories of old places, fear of the future and the unbelievable and relatively dismal present. To overcome this, IDPs searched for suitable living conditions, which unfortunately dragged out endlessly.

The aim of this paper is to provide a case study in order to depict how migration potentially correlated with identity following the military conflict in Abkhazia. It is divided into three parts.1) *Migration After a War*

discusses how war-driven migration influences identity; 2) *Place identity* explains why people replace old homes instead of seeking to settle in new places in their imagination; 3) *Case of Abkhazia* discusses the results of migration and displacement in the everyday lives of Georgian IDPs from Abkhazia.

The research method framework used in this study are based on the theory of American Geographers D.J Walmsley and G. Lewis, described in their work: "People and Environment: Behavioral Approaches in a Human Geography" (1993). This paper relies on the desk review of empirical and theoretical studies that are related to the migration and place identity and it incorporates Group Interviews with IDPs of Abkhazia who settled in a kindergarten in Tskneti.

Migration after a War

It is crucial to mention that statistics is not the only method of discussing, human tragedies caused by war. The stories listened to or told by the internally displaced persons (IDPs) are significantly more emotional. Their lives are divided into two parts: prior and post trauma. This type of separation is one of the features of a post-traumatic state where people grow accustomed to living within the myths about the golden age of the past. The confrontation between the "old" and "new" places often leads to confusion amongst the rest of society. The questions are logically delivered as follows: 1) why the IDP members are not able to adjust to the new environment after several years? 2) What is the reason for separation and how is it reflected in different generations? These questions would be easy to answer if displacement was considered as internal migration and was connected to the concept of "place identity". This is because it plays the most important role in the lives of IDPs as offered by D.J Walmsley and G. Lewis.

Migration is the process, whereby an individual or a group of individuals move from one location to another. It is always related to stress and threatens the human psyche (even in the most positive experiences). To this end, the Sicilian saying shed light on the migration process as follows: "When you leave home, you know what you leave behind, but not

what you will find." Migration is a challenge for the individual capabilities and it is related to the most important human needs - hope, roots, and identity. In most cases, people who migrated are faced with different attitudes from the "hosts", who often get anxiety because of newcomers and deny them (Marsella, Ring 2003: 2-18). This process commonly occurs at the personal level and develops a sense of alienation with regards acclimating to new neighborhood and place. As psychoanalyst Wouter Gomperts claims, ethno - cultural differences, geographical environments strengthen the "splitting tendency" in an individual's mind. After migration, people create two parallel worlds in order to avoid internal confrontation (Gomperts 2010: 118). Thus, it can be argued, that any type of migration changes human perception. Constant remembrance of the past and the lack of adjustment to new places affect both -mental processes and social life.

There are many causes for migration and one of them is war. Mass violence pushes people to leave their homes and find shelters in peaceful areas. As seen in other types of migration, war migration implies the expectation of returning back to the place of origin. This reverse migration phenomenon is related to the "old housing" and restoration of disturbed order. Old housing is connected to the old memories and social ties. However, some people can find the correct solution based on the situation and try to adapt to the new way of life quickly. For example, migration experiences of the Georgians from Gali differ from the experiences of the Georgians from Sokhumi or Gagra. People from Gali return occasionally, since borders are open for them, making it more flexible and pragmatic in their decision-making process in leading a new life or resuming to live life as they did in the past. Therefore, they can easily regulate time and space rapture, while other IDPs cannot.

The new generation has no personal migratory experiences, but it gains access to information about old places and develops some psycho-emotional connections to them.

Events and situations define the formation of individual perception: they disperse or localize space. Thus, it is not defined as a permanent residence. It abides by continuity, changes, and transformation. The events

make the "Synthesis of the life stories" contributive to erasing past and present-borders. The strong antagonism emerges from the space previously experienced and places that differ from each other (Radu 2010: 410, 416).

War and wartime migration arise from the radical changes IDPs lives. They have to change living space and everyday life by force, not by their own will. It is difficult to achieve the synthesis of the life stories because people are not ready for any change. Therefore, in the imagination of this group, space is separate in the old and new places, which have vague time frame.

Certain examples clearly show that belated adaptation escalates confrontation between "hosts" and "newcomers", even if they have no ethnocultural differences and migration occurs inside a specific State. Mostly, IDPs do not recognize the need to adapt and strictly separate "in" and "out" groups. Their migration does not end, even if they are settled in a new place. In their consciousness, the concept of their lost home is emerged despite it being left behind in the past. In order to restore the ruined space, IDPs focus on restoring continuity between the past and present. It is well known that further development of the life of a migrant is affected by geographical environment. When a person is no longer in a familiar space, he/she also has to change his/her own identity from how it was connected to the old roles performed in the old neighborhood, at work, and in the home. In cases of forced migration people have to change their identity abruptly and unwillingly. However, mostly IDPs lack the ability to find adequate and pragmatic solutions to avoid negativity in the future.

Place Identity

According to D.J. Walmsley and G. Lewis people are bonded to the places where they live. In most cases, such psychological bonds are unconscious. Individuals place great value on the activities according to their environment, which forms their concept oneself. Therefore, psychologists and sociologists stress, that place affects the process of identification. Identity, rootedness and "homeness" are the concepts that often determine the sense of belonging to certain places and neighborhoods. Beliefs, evaluation systems, social integration and

the roles, people perform in a wider society are formed under the influence of some places where people belong to for an extended period of time (Walmsley, Lewis 1993: 223-225).

The internal cognitive mechanism regulates the identity formation process. It evaluates the relevance between selected roles and expectations. The verification process is possible due to the interaction between the internal and external processes (Burke, Streyker 2000: 287-290). When the environment where an individual performs a variety of social roles is changed, one must start searching for new roles. Internal frustration emulates this process. In the book by Edward T. Hall the author accurately states: "every member must adjust to the environment and other people of the community, in order to survive" (Hall 1966: 187).

Since the second half of the 20th century in the scientific strata (among the Geographers, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists) the place has been defined as the location for social relations, the area for concentration of practice and the zone for experience and shared values. Recollection of places occurs within the emotions associated with a given situation at a specific time. As a result, people give symbolic meanings to a certain part of space and use it for future predictions. Autobiographical memory connects everything together – place, emotional attachment and event context. Moreover, semantic knowledge can form the perception of those places that have never been experienced (Lengena, Kistemann 2012: 1162).

As a part of place identity, home always exists in the human mind. It is linked to the place of origin or to the future place. This type of connection scenario creates a certain continuity of time and space where the present serves as a bridge between the past and the future. When people have to leave their places and start life under the uncomfortable circumstances after migrating, they shun reality and begin searching for a new future, which is mostly linked to the old and familiar places. While seeking to resume the continuity from the past, present and future, the IDPs tend to avoid integration in their new environment and community. They think it is disturbing because they

strive to return to their old lives. However, there is one exception: those people who stay in contact with their homes and occasionally visit old places develop an ability to adapt to new environments. In the Georgian case, this scenario fits the case of IDPs from Gali (Lundgren 2016: 129-148).

By analyzing IDPs life processes, it is evident that the first period of post-war migration begins once people leave their homes. They have not yet realized, what actually has happened and are keen to only find peaceful areas in order to survive. Instincts come to the forefront and they identify the perception of the whole situation: This is a stage of *displacement and resettlement.* It is increasingly difficult when IDPs are settled in the new places because they begin to realize their losses via comparing their old and new lives and by judging themselves based on survival. The feelings that influence their thought process include: anxiety, uncertainty, alienation, separation. They feel that old identities are being lost and try to prevent this process in the *stage of survival and losses*. The third stage is accompanied by a strong desire to return to the deprived home in the past. It creates barriers for adaptation and hinders the search process for new roles in society and in the home. In everyday life the following simple idea dominates their priorities in the capacity: *Past – Old place, Present – temporary shelter*. In this dynamic future, the overall fate of their daily lives is unclear, yet it is connected to the restoration of the golden age. IDPs create an alternative reality, where they unconsciously left the present to return to their idealized past. In this phenomenon, they can avoid reality and attain peace of mind. This is because, in reality, they have lost the ability to remain calm. The fourth stage occurs when IDPs try to adapt to new places, they do not reject reality, but they maintain their personal tendencies as if they are frozen in time. It is a type of compensation for the losses they took on from the war and from war migration making it difficult to eliminate their burden. It is worth mentioning that these stages have no clear time- frame and they appear differently in particular cases.

The Case of Abkhazia

"Save life is not as important, as to know
how to start living after survival"
Psychiatrist, psychoanalyst, Iaap Ubels[1]

The Report by the Ombudsman of Georgia stipulates that according to data collected during the 2013-2014 IDP registration by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons, refugees and accommodation of Georgia, the State has 262 186 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Among them, the total 140 584 persons live in the so called "private sector" and 121 602 people are registered in the compact resettlement (*Report submitted by the Ombudsman of Georgia 2014: 10*). When the conflict began, most of these people had nowhere to go. The lack of resources made their lives difficult. In addition, people who migrated with damaged psyches could not communicate with the new neighborhood. Between the "hosts" and "guests", there was tension. The hosts did not have a clear understanding, on how to ameliorate "other's trauma", which also was their own hardship, as it was linked to Georgia's territorial interests. However, not al the groups shared this view.

The majority of Georgian IDPs come from Abkhazia. It is an autonomous region, self-declared its independence in 1992 even though the conflict between Georgia and the De Facto State of Abkhazia remains unresolved. During the war in Abkhazia, the first wave of migration occurred from 1992-1993. The second wave arose in 1998, which mostly included people from Gali. IDPs have lived under the 1) "exacerbated stigmatization" and have shown; 2) "Double Nostalgia", where both of these concepts are focused on the past and the future. For these IDPs, their home is situated in the past and is connected to security, familiarity, wealth, and comfort. Current losses and hardships are defined in contrast to the "normality of the past". It is clear that Georgian IDPs have a deeply rooted sense "future in the past". In this mentality, Georgian IDPs do not assume that present day Abkhazia differs from how it was in the past. Their homes

---

[1] This was recorded by the author of this paper in the Summer School "Mental Health, Mass Trauma and problems of Migrants", July 23-30 2016, Sachkere/Georgia.

look entirely different now. Their identities will continue to be transformed, based on how strongly they relate to Abkhazia and their sense of home (Kabachuk, Mitchneck, Regulska 2010: 317, 318, 333).

There are no instructions clearly outlining how to live in a post-war environment. The losses of space, the migration process, and the resulting identity crisis - all form the desire to be detached from the harsh reality faced by these IDPs.

This portion of the article draws upon a group interview with the family of IDPs. Allegedly this family has adjusted to a new environment and neighborhood, but it maintains an imaginary bridge between the past and present as the defense mechanism from their losses due to forced migration. Based on deep analysis of the group interview, escaping from present day life via imagination has become an indispensable part of the reality of their current living situation. They wish to remember the old place because it was vital in self-esteem formation. The new places cause this group to experience feelings of discomfort and inferiority, which explains why this group looks to the past to escape their current issues.

The respondents are from Sokhumi, Abkhazia. They currently reside in the kindergarten, in Tskneti. They have lived in this kindergarten since 1996. The oldest member of the family is 83 years old. Her daughter is 51 years old and her son in law is 55 years old. Her grandchildren are 28 and 31 years old. The Interviews were divided into three parts. Conversations concerned to the following topics: 1) The journey from Sokhumi to Tskneti; 2) A comparison between old and new places, and 3) Life, after the War. The oldest family member spoke according to her memories. Other members of the family also participated in the story telling process, where they made some amendments to the particular episodes. The narration was not coherent, there were periodic reoccurring issues that did not concern the previously discussed topics, but the respondents self-regulated this process themselves. The first interview lasted for two hours and the second interview took place in one hour. None of the family members expressed a desire to stop the interviews.

Both interviews were recorded on video that was analyzed to reveal how the respondents told their stories according to their memories, in this

study. First, all of these interviews were transcribed with key highlights for this research. Additionally, the interviews are divided into three parts with appropriate cuts in the vital episodes according to the text.

Group Interviews
The Way from Sokhumi to Tskneti
Grandmother:

I still remember that day. Shootings started before the announcing of the war but, we had a hope that situation would be normalized. When a bomb exploded near our neighborhood, we took our children inside the basement of a house and covered them with the mattresses, in order to protect them with the fragments of a grenade. Then, shootings stopped for a while. In the morning we already were in Tsebelda, in our village. We were thinking it would be safer and intended to go to another village, to Chuberi next day. My three sons fought in this war, they were volunteer soldiers. Early morning, one of them, came to me and said that they were going to go to Sokhumi, but I should go with other members of our family. I was horrified about leaving my sons in the war, but there was not any choice. He had a mad face while putting a gun on me and said that he would kill me at first and then himself, if I did not go. I was scared. I realized that it was not a joke. This war sacrificed him and his brother. Now I think it would be better if he killed me before I saw the death of my sons.

Son-in-law:

The weather got cold all of a sudden. We left Chuberi village with summer clothes and on the road was snow. Two families were together. Children could not walk. We had no food for them. We were thinking only about how to save our livee and did not take anything for eating on the road. Every moment we were expecting for an announcement of peace. On the road, our neighbor gave us sugar and coffee, to endure hunger.

Granddaughter:

I remember that day. I was playing with other children. We had a competition for the tree swing. I was taking a place on it, when I've heard a

powerful noise. We were not able to realize what was happening. I remember my mother's lips were moving but I couldn't hear any voice. I was watching at other children senselessly. Even, after then I've had this strange feeling. I remember Svaneti way. I was wrapped in the towels and was taking a little bag with sugar. My brother was taking a similar bag with coffee. When we were getting fainted, we were chewing coffee or sugar.

Second granddaughter:

There were a fog and snow on Svaneti way. My mother warned us not to look back. On the one side of the road was a big rock. On the other side was a valley. I heard someone cried – "my baby froze! " I looked back and saw how this woman with her frozen child fell from the road. I hugged my mother and after this, I've never looked back.

Mother:

Before the hiding in the basement of our house, in the village, my brother gave me a grenade. If someone came from the enemy, I would explode it. There was no mercy! Every noise scared me. I had no hope to stay alive. I often think it was a dream. After the war, everything has changed. We are other people now.

Svaneti way endured for 9 days. Afterward, the family stayed in the village of Lie, which is located in western Georgia. They lived in the kindergarten for two years, where there were abnormal and abhorrent living conditions, electricity, heating system and food. For example, the room they shared with other IDPs, some of the family members were laying on the floor in the evenings. Local people helped them in order to survive. Then they moved to Kutaisi. A friend offered them adequate living conditions in a normal flat. Some of the family members were able to find part-time jobs and somehow fed the children. After one year they decided to move to the capital. The government suggested they should live in the kindergarten. At first, they had a conflict with the new neighborhood,

because new neighbors were hostile. From this period onward the confrontation between the old and new places began.

With regards to the first four years, the family's associations reflect the beginning of their post-traumatic state. They tried to learn how to live post survival. At first the following features summarize the emotional state of the family: anxiety, uncertainty, alienation and separation. After they arrived at the house in Tskneti, the family members realized the dire need to improve their living conditions. Nevertheless, this family held self - preservation as the dominant attitude rather than the will to adopt a new home place.

Old Place vs New Place

Son-in-law:

I remember all places of Sokhumi. I spent my childhood, my youth there. Sometimes I miss my house very much. It was a heaven! Heaven! We had good neighborly relations with Abkhazians. If I had a chance to visit Sokhumi, I would hug all the trees there. I've never thought if I had to live in such conditions. I am not complaining, gradually we accustomed to the new environment. At first local people tried to avoid us. The kids at school were treated badly. Then they have seen our wedding, our funeral our neighborly relations and realized, we are not bad people.

Grandmother:

My relative called me two years ago. He is a Georgian but has an Abkhazian identity. He told me that in my yard Abkhaz man was buried. I was astonished. I know Abkhazians have such a rule they bury dead family members in the yard of their house. It was built by my husband. On that day, I realized everything was lost. I was crying all day. Until it happened, I had a hope of returning to my roots. Now I have nowhere to go. Thanks to God, we have a shelter here, but it does not look like home.

Mother:

We are being reproached for leaving Sokhumi. It happened because of the war. We had to leave not only our property but also our life, there.

Confrontation between the old and new places is often associated with heaven/hell controversies. It can be seen that idealized image of the past emerges when the present is not acceptable. It causes problem in the integration process. When a person "leaves" his/her own life somewhere, it is difficult for him/her to start thinking about the adjustment to the new environment. The sense of losses is so hard, that people tried to avoid the unwanted reality and they don't consider what is actually lost. The Abkhazian man's funeral in the yard was a symbolic loss, because this house was already lost during the war. However acceptance of this fact became possible when the symbolic meaning was lost. All memories connected to the old place are colorful, clear and full of emotions. New place emerged after the crisis. It is temporary shelter and it is necessary to escape from it. It is empty and associated only with pain, hunger, negative feelings and problems. People are unable to identify it with the home place. It needs to be changed. However, they are unable to do this and therefore their and development of social relations is blocked.

Life after the war

Grandchild 1:

We were kids and because and it might be the reason, why integration to the new social environment was easier for us, than for our parents. I have friends, work, my own space here I think our parents have lost lots of time, while searching for a past. I can't say that even nowadays they have not nostalgia. We often argue, at home. Father is still organizing new plans what he will do after returning back, to Sokhumi. I have no desire to go there. I saw some new pictures. There are only ruins.

Grandchild 2:

I would go. I have some memories about the house and certain places. I wonder how Sokhumi looks like. I also have local friends. Currently, I am not working, but have some plans for the future. I've got family, husband and a child. He is seven years old. He goes to school. My husband is not an IDP. However, my son knows I come from Sokhumi and sometimes he says

that he comes from Sokhumi too. He has no complex because of the status of IDP. I remember it was a shame for us to say that we were IDPs.

Grandmother:

I often dream of my old house, my neighbors, my dead boys as if they were still alive and then I am satisfied. I had the pear trees in my yard. Sometimes I feel their smell and taste. I still have a hope of returning back. I would go to the village, take care of the old house. We had a large farm there and tons of citrus. Now I do nothing. I spend time recollecting my old memories.

Father:

After the war was very difficult time. We had nowhere to go, we did not know what to do. My friends helped me, but it is difficult for a man when others bring the bread for your family. Time has taught us lots of things. Now, we feel better. Thanks to the God, most of us have a job. We have good relations with neighbors, but if I had a chance I would go, immediately. I am an engineer. My wife was an economist. I worked at Pepsi - Cola factory in Sokhumi. I started working by profession again a few years ago.

Mother:

I had to change everything in my life. I worked as an accountant in Sokhumi. In the beginning of exile, I was working at part-time jobs. Now I am a housewife. Take care of my grandchild.

This period reflects the late phase of the post-traumatic state. People grow accustomed to the traumatic mindset and do not block what seemed unacceptable in the past. However, these people consider all time periods when defining reality instead of living in the present day only. After 24 years, the first and second generations still retained hope of returning back. The third generation, which experienced migration, developed some psycho emotional connections to the past. In turn, they logically evaluate the

current situation in order to distance themselves from the past albeit allowing their parents' story affect their life.

Summary

Abkhazian war was extremely tragic for Georgia. Especially with regard to the group of IDPs that are considered in this study. Forced migration radically changed their lives. Changing places led to the identity crisis, in which they would overview future destinations and functions. These individuals do not self-identify as being a part of the new spaces, which formally does not make sense.

As the American Geographers described, places have an important influence on people. They possess the ability to change perception, social roles, and relations. This unconscious bond to the places is especially evident, after migration occurs when the desire of returning to the past is widespread.

According to Walmsley and Lewis, the migration crisis can be discussed on two levels. On the one hand an individual loses his/her home place and his/her previous identity and, on the other hand, he/she has to grow accustomed to the new identity and environment. This crisis has four phases: 1) Displacement and resettlement; 2) Trauma of Survival and loses; 3) Creation of parallel worlds, and 4) Frozen tendency.

At the first level, people interpret new information, which is traumatic and therefore they often block it out, but there are also other needs. People who migrated have to start examining life with no past experiences to serve as a platform to restart their lives, and in this process, they realize what has happened. At the second level, their everyday life drives them to create parallel worlds, where they travel into their imaginary past, which is alternative to the present. On the last phase, the frozen tendency appears, IDPs contain two lives but the balance between them is not completely solidified.

At a first glance IDPs of Abkhazia overcome the crisis and it seems as though that they have already resolved the aforementioned problems. However, the private conversations depict that this is only a superficial evaluation. It can be concluded that the third generation is more rational

toward the past than the first and second generations. The third generation is influenced by the stories of their parents, but it does not serve as a contradiction to integration into their new homes.

Bibliography

Barghuthi, Murid. :"I saw Ramallah" . USA, Anchor Books, 2003.

Burke, Peter & Stryker, Sheldon."The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory". Social Psychology Quarterly. Vol. 63, No. 4, 2000.

Gomperts, Wouter. "Similar and Yet Different. Psychoanalytical Psychotherapy among Immigrants and Refugees." In Anne Marie Schloesser & Alf Gerlach's Crossing Borders –integrating differences Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy in transition. Carnag, London, 2010.

Hall. Edward. "The Hidden Dimension". Garden City, N.Y. Doublday, 1966.

Kistemann, Thomas & Lengena Charis. "Sense of place and place identity: Review of neuroscientific evidence". Health & Place, Vol. 18, No. 5., 2012. 1162-1171.

Kabachnik, Peter., MItchneck, Beth & Regulska, Joanna. "Where and When is Home? The Double Displacement of Georgian IDPs from Abkhazia". Journal of Refugee Studies Vol. 23, No. 3 , 2010 pp. 315-335.

Lundgren, Minna. "Place matters: return intentions among forcibly displaced young Georgians from Abkhazia living in Tbilisi and Zugdidi". Caucasus Survey 2016 , Vol. 4, No. 2., 129–148.

Marsella J., Enthony & Ring, Erin. "Human Migration and Immigration: An Overview". In Adler, Leonore Loeb & Gielen, Peter Uwe's "Migration: Immigration and Emigration in International Perspective". USA, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2003.

Radu, Cosmin. "Byond Border "Dwelling": Temporalizing the Border-Space through Evenets". Anthropological Theory. Antrophological theory Vol.10 No. 4., 409–433.

Walmsley, Jim & Lewis, Gareth. People and Environment – Behavioral Approaches in a Human Geography. London. Routledge, 1993

Georgian Ombudsman, Report on Human Rights Situation among Internally Displaced Persons of Georgia - https://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/3/3373.pdf.

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. " A profile of the Internal Displacement Situation" , September 1, 2006 - http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/library/Europe/Georgia/pdf/Georgia-September-2006.pdf.

International committee of the Red Cross. "Internally Displaced Persons and International Humanitarian Law", March 31, 2010- https://www.icrc.org/en/document/internally-displaced-persons-and-international-humanitarian-law-factsheet.

ՏԵՂ ՓՆՏՐԵԼՈՎ. ԱԲԽԱԶԻԱՅԻ ՆԵՐՔԻՆ ՏԵՂԱՀԱՆՎԱԾՆԵՐԻ ԴԵՊՔԻ ՈՒՍՈՒՄՆԱՍԻՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ
Ամփոփագիր

Քեթևան Եփաձե
Իվանե Ջավախիշվիլի Թբիլիսիի Պետական Համալսարան
kate.epadze@gmail.com

Բանալի բառեր: Աբխազիա, հակամարտություն, միգրացիա, ինքնություն, վերահաստատում, վայրի հետ կապվող ինքնություն

Խորհրդային միության փլուզումից հետո Վրաստանը դարձավ պատերազմական գոտի: Աբխազական հակամարտությունը մեկնարկեց 1992 թվականին և տևեց շուրջ մեկ տարի: Այս իրադարձությունը տրավմայի ենթարկեց հազարավոր վրացական ընտանիքներ, ովքեր ստիպված էին լքել իրենց տները` կենդանի մնալու և խաղաղ ապաստան գտնելու համար: Նրանց մեծամասնությունը գնալու տեղ չուներ և հաստատվեց նախկին հանրային շենքերում: Վրացական պետության ներսում

միգրացված անձինք ձնակերպվեցին որպես ներքին տեղահանվածներ: Տարիների ընթացքում նրանք փորձում էին հաղթահարել վերապրման ու կորուստների տրավման: Այնուամենայնիվ, պատերազմից հետո մնացած հիշողությունները փոխեցին նրանց ինքնությունները, անձնական և սոցիալական զարգացման ուղիները: Հին ու նոր կյանքերի միջև կտրուկ հակասություն կա, ինչն էլ տանում է իրականությունից փախուստի ու մտահայեցողական անցյալում ապրելու միտման: Միգրացված մարդկանց մեծամասնությունը չէին կարողանում կարգավորել ժամանակի և տարածության խզումը: Երկար ժամանակ անցավ մինչ նրանք զիտակցեցին իրենց նոր համայնքներում ադապտացվելու կարիքը: Ներկայիս իրավիճակը ցույց է տալիս, որ անցյալի հանդեպ կարոտը դեռ կա ներքին տեղահանված անձանց կյանքերում` չնայած, որ նրանք արդեն կարողացել են զտնել անցյալի ու ներկայի միջև հավասարակշռությունը: Այս ուսումնասիրության մեջ դիտարկված օրինակների հիման վրա, փորձում ենք բացատրել, թե ինչպես և ինչու պատերազմի հետևանքով միգրացիան փոխեց վրացի ներքին տեղահանվածների կյանքերը:

THE GENERATION MATTERS:
ARMENIAN FAMILIES IN TBILISI
(A yard in Avlabari)

Marika Gharibashvili,
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University,
chorinea@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper is based on a case study of three different Armenian families living in Avlabari district, Tbilisi. It explores how Armenian Families in Tbilisi have preserved their cultural heritage, the memories they have of their past life, and what they expect from the society in which they live in. Furthermore, it analyzes how they perceive themselves as Tbilisi natives rather than members of the Armenian diaspora community in Georgia. These families find that Georgia is a "homeland" whereas they consider Armenia as their "ancestral land." Mostly, they practice traditions that are a mixture of Georgian and Armenian traditions, but there are some cases when participants have no knowledge of Armenian traditions, holidays, etc. Each family has its own story to tell, but they share several things that construct their self-perception – being born and raised in Tbilisi, particularly in Avlabari, which is known as the "most Armenian place" in the capital of Georgia. The article is based on fieldwork materials, Armenian and Georgian scholarly works, and some media sources. The data was collected through fieldwork conducted in Avlabari. The methodology employed included participant observation and in-depth interviews.

Introduction

The paper aims to show how Armenian families preserve their identity, cultural, and spiritual heritage. It does so by unpacking the

following: (1) How they view themselves as part of the society in Georgia and what memories do they carry with them; and (2) what are the main problems that might hamper successful integration into Georgia's political, economic and socio-cultural life.

To further understand the aforementioned core objectives of this study, the main research questions are listed as follows:

1. How do Armenian families perceive their "ethnic" or "civic" identity?

2. How they transfer cultural or spiritual heritage to the next generation in the family?

3. How do they perceive both Armenia and Georgia?

4. What challenges (if any) do they face on the daily basis?

5. What prospects do Tbilisi Armenians have to consider for ethnic self-preservation and self-realization?

To answer these questions, the fieldwork component of the research began in one specific so-called Tbilisi yard (also known as Italian yard) in Avlabari (where I live.) The following methods were primarily used: observation and in-depth interviews as data collection methods, and coding the transcribed interviews and observation notes. Every member of three Armenian families – from young members to elder ones – were interviewed. Within each family, there is a distinct story that comprises several contrasting characteristics of a family itself. For each case, there are different family structures that greatly influence the way of life, customs, and traditions. For the first case, there is a single Armenian woman, Marina, who is the fifth generation living in Tbilisi. The second family provides more information about what possibilities are offered to Armenian youth and what has changed over time. In this case, the experiences and opinions of a father, a mother and their son are shared. For the third case, the family consists of two members - a mother and her son – who somehow share the same story about not being able to know their own fathers, which clearly reveals how such background stories can affect their memory of their ancestors, forgotten traditions, customs, and even the Armenian language.

Case 1 – In-between

Case 1 consists of a 48-year-old woman, Marina, who lives alone. She was born in Tbilisi and has been living in the Avlabari yard for her entire life. Both of her parents were Tbilisi-born Armenians. She also has a sister who lives in another district of Tbilisi with her husband and children. Since her sister's marriage, both of their parents passed away, and she has been living on her own. Marina went to Russian school but never managed to continue her studies at university. While speaking about this matter, she expresses how regretful she is that she couldn't pass an exam. Although she has been working as a receptionist at a prison for the past 15 years, she does not view it as her dream job.

Family history
"The fifth generation living in the yard"
Soviet regime and the feeling of lost ownership

She lives in a small house, occupying a little space of the yard. She identifies that her ancestors owned more than what she currently lives on, underlining that there is definitely an explanation. First of all, being the fifth generation of her family to live in this particular yard of Tbilisi makes her proud. Additionally, it is important to consider the role of the Soviet period because it was the time when her family lost property and were sent to the Gulag labor camps. The Soviet regime is crucial to remember, as it is the main reason for "losing the property."

Perceptions on the dynamics of the situation, the so-called "change"
Memories of the yard: nostalgic, multiethnic and multicultural past.

Memories about the yard are clearly nostalgic; they carry positive feelings of the yard's past lifestyle. This lifestyle is explained as "one whole family." To this end, Marina states that "the life seemed much easier back then." She explains that there were Russians, Jews, Kurds, Armenians, and Georgians living in the yard, trying to underline "multiculturalism" as one of the main characteristics of the yard in the past. She also remembers some previous yard traditions that are mostly

connected with the "unity" and "living as one whole family" of the yard, and these characteristics seem lost:

"I have a funny story to tell you about the neighborhood, it's purely Tbilisi thing. Armenians and Georgians had perfect relations until two football clubs, Dinamo Tbilisi and Ararat Yerevan played against each other. That was the time when everyone forgot how to be a good neighbor. But the next day, when the match was over and everything was decided, everyone gathered in the center of the yard, where we had a big table. Men would buy some fish and beer and drank together, forgot about the day before. It was fun."

Marina's perspective stipulates that relations within neighborhood have changed. In the past, there was more connectivity between people. Children played different games than today. The interviewee tries to explain the main reasons for it, one of which and arguably the most important reason is due to "modern technologies" that decrease communication and out-door activities amongst children in the yard. Therefore, relationships within neighbors are wholly changed.

Reflections on Armenian-Georgian relations

Concerning ethnic issues (the so-called "nationality factor,") there is a certain comparison between "the past" and the present found in Marina's note. In the "past," people were underlining the nationality factor less compared to the present-day. Currently, the "past" is becoming something worth mentioning. With regard to the issues of ethnic discrimination, a certain formula was revealed as follows: "I have never experienced but I have heard from others." Within this framework and this case, as Marina observes a new generation -- the children playing in the neighboring yard -- ethnicity is occasionally mentioned in a negative context. However, she tries to avoid generalizing this problem by blaming it on every Georgian by providing an example based on her own experiences elsewhere. Marina tells the story of when she was visiting her uncle in Moscow and there was a scratching on his door, saying "Armenian," being a frequent and "usual" thing there. Here, she attempts to underline this fact, saying that she has never experienced or heard of anything like that "scratching on the door"

story in Tbilisi. Multiculturalism has always been the main characteristic of Tbilisi, which made Georgians "kind of used to it" in her words:

"Tbilisi has always been a place of different cultures, nationalities and all. Georgians are kind of used to it. I've seen good and bad things, for sure, but nothing like that. And it is my own experience".

Perceptions of "self" and of Armenia/Georgia

When discussing self-perception, the interviewee clearly is seemingly in an "in-between" (marginal) condition:

"I've finished Russian school and for Russian, I will never be Russian, for Georgian, I'll never be Georgian; and for Armenians I'll never be Armenian. I don't really know who I am. I consider myself to be a citizen of Georgia, carrying Georgian culture with me, with Armenian roots."

In this case, Georgian citizenship is highlighted more than the emphasis on the ethnic Armenian roots. Therefore, it can be inferred that Georgian citizenship matters more than Armenian ethnic roots in this context. According to Marina's perception, knowing Georgian is a core responsibility of any Georgian citizen: it is a sign of respect and a way to the hearts of Georgians. It is how she shows her love and respect for the country. Another responsibility of being a Georgian citizen is her participation in political developments, e.g. elections, stating:

"One should also be active, taking part in the country's political developments, however they can. Well, at least all I can do is to take part in elections. I do this for the hope of better future".

Since she was born and raised on Georgian land, she feels a responsibility of knowing and understanding its culture and history. In this case, Armenia is more connected to ancestry. It is a "place" where her ancestors lived. She doesn't mention it as a homeland, but as an "ethnic place" or "ethnic country;" and to her, "being Armenian" is a memory and love of ancestors, country, and Armenian language and culture. She has little experience of being in Armenia a long time ago. Such kind of experience surely shapes the whole picture and perception of Armenia proper.

Visions of Armenian cultural and spiritual heritage

As seen in several cases, the influence of the Soviet regime on religion and religious rituals is a re-emerging theme in the interviews. Marina does not remember family traditions that celebrated "Armenian holidays." As far as she can remember, her family only celebrated one New Year and Easter according to the Georgian Orthodox calendar. Also, she doesn't celebrate holidays as she only views and remembers holidays as religious. Marina has experience of going to both Armenian and Georgian churches. To this end, she is faced with the issue of a lack of knowledge and understanding of the Armenian language, which is challenging while attending rituals in the Armenian Church. She mentions how she couldn't understand the Armenian words and meanings. While visiting her house, there was a "religious corner" of icons that drew special attention. Besides that, there was no object or symbol that could bear relevance to Armenia. This small icon corner seems to be enough for her, adding:

"It doesn't matter if I am Gregorian or Orthodox, I just have to be a good person. That's all I believe in."

Therefore, in her perspective, the beliefs and religion is not worth discussing and is not indicative of "being a good Armenian" or "being a good Georgian" whatsoever.

Prior to the interview, Marina attended a "dolma festival" which was held at St. Echmiadzin Armenian Church yard in Avlabari. She views festivals like the "dolma festival" as helpful for Armenian people to maintain their traditions. In this case, the church serves as a cultural "agent." The interviewee also had information about Armenian language courses and dance circles in Avlabari. Moreover, the church is a community "place" rather than just being a spiritual one. According to Marina, preservation of national identity and self-motivation plays a decisive role as she sees no constraints for self-preservation and self-realization:

"I think the problem lies in people's attitude itself. If you want to preserve your culture, language or beliefs, go for it. You are the first to work on it."

Language competence and information sources

According to Marina's self-described formula, "national identity preservation is due to the self-motivation," where knowing Armenian is also seen as a "responsibility." To her, if she doesn't speak or write in Armenian, she thinks that it is only her fault. She is fluent in reading and writing in Georgian, yet she shows no pride of not knowing written Armenian. Marina wants to show that she tries to learn how to read and write in Armenian by watching Armenian TV shows. So in this case, Armenian TV shows are used as a source of learning the Armenian language. In this case, the Georgian schoolteacher is viewed as a key figure and main facilitator in Marina's Georgian language competence.

Case 2 – Mixed Traditions

The second family consists of 4 members: a 46-year-old mother (Mariana), a 52-year-old father, and two sons, who are 21 and 6. Both parents were born and raised in Tbilisi and have been living in the yard since their wedding. There was a time when they lived in Moscow where their first son was born. After living there for 7 years, they returned to Tbilisi and have been living in this yard ever since. Mariana went to Russian kindergarten and school in Tbilisi where she finished at the Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani Pedagogical Institute of Tbilisi. She works as a Mathematics teacher at a Russian school in Tbilisi. She views herself as a self-realized and a successful woman. Her husband also went to Russian school, but interestingly enough, he mentioned how his parents had influenced him to receive a Russian education at school, which was not a rare phenomenon in this time for several reasons. One of the reasons is due to the importance and influence of Russian in the Soviet past as it was the main language. People tried to use Russian for pragmatic reasons as it promised a better future and perspectives for getting a job, and for receiving an education. Their first son, who was born in Moscow, was also prepared to attend Russian school, so he could already speak Russian. Currently, he is studying at Tbilisi State University and is receiving an education in Georgian. It is clear that time changes perspectives and the necessity of receiving education in certain languages; for the son, the

"competitive" language is Georgian instead of Russian. According to the father, education has somehow become more accessible for Tbilisi Armenians in comparison with the Soviet period.

Family history

Mariana shares her family history and the history of the house in further detail. The house, which was built by her great-great-grandfather, holds special "value" for her. She knows how her ancestors lived, what their professions were, and what difficulties they experienced prior to settling in Georgia. While her husband was more concentrated on being the 4th generation living in Tbilisi, he also is knowledgeable of his ancestry and, within that, mentions the cross-cultural marriage in his family tree. In contrast to the parents' generation, their 21-year-old son has little knowledge about his family history and is clearly less aware of his ancestry.

Perceptions on the dynamics of the situation, the so-called "change"

Various changes are also perceived and explained by each member of the family. They have different memories about the yard. The mother and father mostly talk about difficulties and poverty in the past. By "the past," she refers to the 1990s. He also shares his memories about hard times in the 1990's[1] and mentions the influence of nationalism among Georgians.

---

[1] Note: "the hard times in the 90's" mentioned by the interviewee refers to the appraisal of the nationalistic trends in Georgia, which had a huge negative effect on the ethnic minorities of Georgia resulting in migration too. As Mamuka Komakhia mentioned: *"Parallel to the cessation from the Soviet Union and proclamation of independence, nationalistic slogans also appeared on the country scene, in certain cases entailing the open or latent oppression of ethnic minority representatives. The political rhetoric of then political leaders grew sometimes in nationalism, causing fear among the non-Georgian populations. Due to the mentioned, ethnic minority representatives maybe were not the direct victims of oppression but a vague future and*

He remembers the multicultural past where in this case, "the past" is the previous yard traditions and children games during the Soviet period, which have largely changed. He also highlights relations within the neighborhood, describing them as maintain a feeling of "unity" and "one family." To him, this set of feelings and perceptions have changed over time. In the past, the typical work-load was less, yet today's life offers more alternatives. For the son, the "change" is not a category itself as he cannot talk about the changes yet because he is still very young to have that kind of experience and memories about the yard and neighbors.

Reflections on Armenian-Georgian relations

Another interesting theme is Georgian-Armenian relations, specifically ethnicity issues. The interviewees were asked about the relations of the Armenians and Georgians living in Tbilisi. The "parents" generation" of the family shared several ideas. The "unpleasant memories" of what it is like to be a Tbilisi Armenian refers to the negative attitude held by local Georgians based on personal experience was worth mentioning. The parents' interviews, especially the mother's interview, has several "explanations" on nationalism, trying to escape from generalizing the problem, and making it more of an individual observation. Thus, she perceives ethnicity issues as a "global problem," something that can also be seen elsewhere. Within this framework, she mentions that "not all Georgians think that way;" to her, the discrimination cases stems from the individual. Moreover, there was a clear emphasis on the situation change. Thus, the mother claims that such kind of issues occur less today than in the past:

"It is better now, than several years ago."

For the father, the changes are very specific. If the nationality factor was a main theme in the past, knowledge and experience matter more than Armenian surnames today.

---

a fear factor prompted them to emigrate. Armenia and the Russian Federation were two main countries of emigration for the Armenian population," (Komakhia, 2003: 7)

Sergey, their 21-year-old son, describes the "ethnicity situation change" in correlation to the parents' ideas. However, he has never experienced ethnic discrimination personally. Yet, the reflection of the ethnicity issue over the internet, which we can follow through the difference in lifestyle of the two generations, can be seen. One is the parents' generation, and another the children's time. Some research has proven that young people use the internet more often than older people, through which they are able to discuss different matters and cooperate with each other. Sergey uses the internet often, and it is the only place where he has encountered hate-comments about Armenia and Armenians:

"In recent years, the most ubiquitous form of cooperation are the various forums of young people, during which a wide range of issues are discussed," (Armenian-Georgian Relations, Challenges, and Opportunities for the Bilateral Cooperation 2014: 22).

Perception of "self" and of Armenia/Georgia

When discussing self-perception, different answers came about. In the mother's case, she felt a connection with Armenia and Georgia together; as if one attachment complements the other. As she was born in Georgia, the role of her birthplace had a significant influence on building self-perception and making strong ties with Georgia. The interviewee also claims that she never forgets her Armenian roots. She lists some things that explain what Armenia is for her:

"...language, love for Armenian literature, music, dance, its history, the memory of our ancestors and so on."

Her views differ from her husband's: first, he discusses the "task" of deciding what he identifies with more, and then he cannot decide if "he is more Armenian or Georgian." To the son, Armenia is "an ethnic home" and he doesn't give any more perception of "self" because it is not a real "task" in his life. The son feels comfortable where he resides and his "self-perception" is not under such bold questioning as it is for his parents.

Cultural and spiritual heritage

Another theme of this research is how Tbilisi Armenians have maintained their cultural and spiritual heritage, and how they try to pass it

on to future generations. In this case, the issue that elder members of the family often mentioned is the influence of the Soviet regime on the role of religion and the church. In the interviews, there is a clear reflection of this theme:

"The communist regime confiscated religious property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism."

In the mother's case, it is evident that the first subject she mentions while talking about cultural heritage is the family tradition of meals, which seem to be "a mixture of Georgian-Armenian traditions:"

"Our traditions were clearly a mixture of both Armenian and Georgian. I also remember that my mother cooked both Armenian and Georgian meals for us. She made Halva, Dolma. I remember my father had this kind of tradition – at 6 or 7 a.m. he invited his friends to our home to eat Georgian soup – Khashi with some vodka."

With regard to the holidays, the first part of what she says contains how it was not allowed to practice religious holidays, but her family still celebrated some of the religious holidays in secrecy. Her grandmother, being religious, was the only media to the Armenian Church, and her mother was the main source of Armenian language and culture. She remembers how her mother would read Armenian fairy tales, how she taught her dances, etc. She could still remember and quote Hovhannes Tumanyan, a prominent Armenian writer. Here, it is clear that her mother was being an active agent in her Armenian ethnic socialization in preserving and passing the culture to her daughter. Later on, she herself as a mother advocated for her children to learn Armenian. The husband takes their children to the Armenian Church, which is perceived as rather a "community place" and a very special social institution that preserves cultural and spiritual heritage. The son took Armenian language courses there. Generally, cultural and spiritual institutions seem to play a vital role in maintaining Armenian heritage. When discussing national identity, the mother uses different methods for preserving it, such as going to Armenian Church, Armenian theatre, different educational circles, etc. It is particularly interesting to see how the interviewees view holidays. In this family's case, the husband also mentions the spiritual holiday – Easter –

and how his family celebrated it secretly during Soviet times. The son also pays attention to his parents' practice of celebrating both Armenian and Georgian holidays such as Armenian "Mariamoba" and then Georgian "Mariamoba", and Christmas.

The perceived sense of a "mixture" of the Armenian and the Georgian culture in this family is also vivid in the "cooking" practice and in the celebration of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary through "Armenian and Georgian Mariamoba." Another issue is the lack of knowledge of the Armenian language, which is considered as the most important "tool" for understanding the culture and receiving an education. Sometimes, little knowledge of Armenian may hamper the whole "culture learning" process.

Connections with/to Armenia

The mother has never been in Armenia, but she mentions one of her close relatives moving to Yerevan for a job-opportunity. While her husband has a minor experience of being in Armenia, there is an honest feeling of regret that there is much left for him to see. The son's case differs due to the significant role of cultural programs. Armenian programs for the "diaspora" brought positive impressions, leaving a feeling of wanting to learn more about the country in the future. There is a project implemented by the Ministry of Diaspora of Republic Armenia called Ari Tun. The aim of the project is to introduce Diaspora Armenian youth to Armenian history, culture, public life, religion, and family traditions, build strong relations with the Homeland, reinforce national identity, and establish kin relations between the youth of Armenia and the Diaspora[2]. Within this program, the Armenian community in Tbilisi is referred to as part of the "diaspora." Interesting debates and different opinions about this term have been a major subject of Elli Ponomareva's research - "Native Tbilisians or Diaspora: Negotiating the Status of Armenians in Tbilisi" – where the idea about the Armenian communities that existed in the Soviet Union have not

---

[2] See details through the following link: http://aritun.am/en/about-the-project-2/

been covered by the term "diaspora" exists. This approach is explained by the fact that Armenians as citizens of the USSR were part of the Soviet people as a "new historical entity:" (Melkonyan 2003, 12)

"Under the Soviet rule Armenians in Georgia didn't see themselves as separated from their "putative homeland"... they treated the Soviet Union as a whole as their homeland." (Ponomareva 2015, 7).

This means that during the Soviet Union, Armenians used the term "diaspora" only to describe Armenians who lived outside of the USSR. According to the research participants, they see themselves as Tbilisians, while being born in Tbilisi and having several generations of ancestors from Tbilisi itself.

Case 3 - Mother and Son: Different possibilities

In this case, the family is consistent of two members – a 72-year-old mother (Laura) and a 45-year-old son (Nika.) Both were born and raised in Avlabari. The woman went to a Russian school in Tbilisi and studied Engineering at Georgian Technical University. She has never been married and has one son who she raised with her mother. Laura managed to build a successful and long-lasting career in the Ministry of Defense. Nika went to Russian kindergarten and school in Tbilisi and then studied Arts and Painting at Tbilisi State Academy of Arts. For about 15 years upon graduation, he lived and worked in Moscow and returned to Tbilisi about a year ago. His "absence" may have influenced some of his views on certain aspects or themes of this research.

Both interviews were held individually at the interviewees' home. Their house is one of the oldest parts of the yard. While observing the home, one could easily recognize the typical Soviet style furniture and vintage dolls and toys. There was nothing that bore relevance to Armenia, but the woman kept a Georgian flag on the bookshelf, which was quite noticeable. She claimed to have many Armenian books left from her mother, which she gave to Armenian Church. The reason behind this is due to the lack of the knowledge of the Armenian language. Laura's mother was also a Tbilisi-born Armenian who knew literary Armenian and often read Armenian books. But the interviewee does not know how to read or

write in Armenian because according to her, there is less necessity of it. Generally, she knows Russian better than other languages, as it was a prior language and a number one job requirement in the past during the Soviet era. When the Russian language lost its "power," Georgian became the "lingua franca." She remembers the situation at her work when after these changes took effect, she found it was difficult to speak or write in Georgian but eventually perfected her skills. A Georgian language teacher at the Russian school also had a great influence on learning and loving the Georgian language. She states that she had no strong ties with Armenia like her mother, and for her, it is one of the main reasons why she is not competent in Armenian. Like his mother, Nika also had more competency in Russian than in Armenian or Georgian since his childhood. It appears that Russian was a main language in the family, but since his grandmother knew Armenian, he showed interest in the Armenian alphabet as a child, but it was rarely used among his friends, so he forgot most of it.

Family history

In this case, both the mother and the son have little knowledge about their ancestors, and their story is somehow different and sad compared to others. Laura's parents were both Tbilisi-born Armenians. She never knew her father in-person. Even though her mother went to school in Yerevan for some time and knew literary Armenian well, she didn't show much interest in learning and advancing the Armenian language. She also knows that her grandfather was born in Yerevan, and eventually he came to Tbilisi and married a Tbilisi-born Armenian. Nika has even less knowledge about his family history than his mother. He just underlines the fact that there were four generations of his ancestors living in Tbilisi. Like her mother, he never knew his own father, who was born in Yerevan and stayed there.

Perceptions on the dynamics of the situation, the so-called "change"

The woman's memories about the yard in the past somehow show the resemblance to the first case analyzed in this research. She has very nostalgic and positive feelings of the past lifestyle of the yard. Here, we have several shared characteristics – more trust among neighbors, the feeling of "unity" and "one whole family," and multiculturalism. The

interviewee provides a detailed account of yard traditions, one of them being the tradition of choosing the "head of the yard," which still occurs today. She remembers how the whole yard celebrated birthdays and New Years together. These practices imply that there was collective thinking in the past. However, relations within the neighbors are different today. It doesn't show that they are bad, but they are less intense and inclusive. She states that presently, there is less communication due to technological development. Migration also impacts the yard lifestyle; fewer Armenian families were left in the yard and new families are bringing more distance into current relations. As a member of another generation, the son has positive feelings towards the present days because Armenian youth have more opportunities than in the past.

In the discourse of this case, certain changes are also noticeable in the labor market. As "Russian" was the main language during the Soviet times, Georgian is now the "lingua franca" for ethnic minorities. The lack of knowing Georgian is a barrier to employment; the man thinks that due to his low competency in Georgian, he is currently unemployed. Komakhia discusses one of the aspects of connection of employment and language competencies of the representatives of the ethnic minorities in Georgia, their representation in the government, and governance bodies, stating:

*"Ethnic minorities are scarcely represented in the Georgian central government and other governance bodies, poor command of state language being a reason for that. Yet, besides knowledge of state language, hidden artificial barriers for national minorities also exist, built up on the way to central authorities by their ethnic belonging. During the Soviet rule Armenian population enjoyed quotas for certain positions in the government. This mainly concerned compactly settled regions and districts in Tbilisi. However, Armenians living in the capital no more enjoy similar quotas." (*Komakhia, 2003: 23)

Reflections on Armenian-Georgian relations

Similar to other cases, the first answer that interviewees provide is that Armenian-Georgian relations are relatively positive, indicating that Georgians are hospitable people on a conditional basis, which stipulates that there are ethnicity-related issues between the two groups of people. In

this case, the woman remembers her personal experience of discrimination as someone mentioned her nationality in a negative context; she ends the story by stating:

"...bad experiences always depend on a certain occasion and certain people."

Though the man claims that his personal experience is positive, he too has heard ethnicity-related occasions from some other people.

Perception of "self" and of Armenia/Georgia

As the third case previously stated, the woman kept a Georgian flag at home that is hanging from the bookshelf. She claims that she has had patriotic feelings for Georgia since childhood. Obviously, she is more connected with Georgia as it is her birthplace. She feels that patriotism is a responsibility towards Georgia. She finds that she is Georgian according to her birthplace, and "being Armenian" is dictated by blood. Having a minor experience of being in Yerevan, Armenia, she could never perceive Yerevan as her "home," but rather she felt like a guest there. Since this trip was many years ago, she does not have many memories of being there. Yet she highlights that she never stopped respecting her ancestors and Armenia.

For Nika, Georgia is a homeland. He is very accustomed to Georgian culture, traditions, and the lifestyle. While being "ethnically Armenian," he finds that Armenia is a homeland of his Armenian ancestors. He underlines that one should never forget the past and briefly states:

"I am Armenian, part of the Armenian community."

Even though knowing and never forgetting the past is a major "responsibility" for him, he has a minor experience of visiting Armenia a long time ago.

Armenian cultural and spiritual heritage

In this case, both participants perceive themselves to be non-religious. They do not go to church and attend spiritual rituals. Both see the church as a "community place" and a way of preserving culture. Laura gave all of her Armenian books to the Armenian Church so the books could serve a purpose. She remembers having no family traditions whatsoever of

celebrating Armenian holidays. However, she celebrates Georgian holidays. She also claims that her mother would try to teach her Armenian rhymes, but she showed no interest. While discussing this matter, she clearly showed regret for not knowing much about Armenian culture and not visiting Armenia. Her son also talks about the role of the church, knowing that it offers more opportunities to young people – providing them knowledge of Armenian culture, language, and offering them free educational circles. As he views himself as part of the Armenian community, he thinks that the community has a decisive role in preserving Armenian cultural and spiritual heritage.

Information sources and mass media

The family has no access to Armenian-language information sources or TV channels. Laura spends much of her time watching TV, primarily viewing Georgian channels and different soap operas. She mentions the Armenian-Georgian TV show[3] that she enjoyed and it gave her a sense of pride. As Nika had been living in Moscow for 15 years, he is accustomed to Russian TV shows and language, so he mostly prefers those to Georgian TV programs. He mostly uses the Internet to seek employment and to access information.

Conclusions

Each person's story is interesting and noteworthy. It is clear that the elders revealed more information than the younger participants. Some of them deliver their ancestors' memories, who had experienced political pressure, war, and emigration. Meanwhile, the young generation seems to be more integrated into Georgian society. There are even some cases when an Armenian youngster doesn't have another ethnic Armenian in his/her friend circle. This is not an unusual concept because it is often the case that

---

[3] In 2011 Georgian Public Broadcaster channel collaborated with Armenian Public Broadcaster (AMPTV) launching the musical project which presented duets performed by Georgian and Armenian popular singers together.

"ethnic minorities have to constantly redefine the group boundaries and adjust them to changing circumstances, and sadly it may lead to gradual assimilation into the host culture." (Herzig, Edmund & Kurkchiyan, Marina 2005: 12)

The reflections on the question of identity were gathered from the research participants were geared to answer the following: what does it really mean to be "Armenian"? For some of them, "Armenianness" is just inherited genes and blood, while for others, it is a cultural and spiritual heritage that they carry – speaking the language, knowing the history of Armenia, participating in community activities and attending Church. The Church can be considered as the strongest and most important social institution that plays a vital role in maintaining cultural and spiritual heritage amongst Tbilisi Armenians as displayed through the second family's case. In addition to the Church, one of the research participants also discussed the "Ari Tun" project for Armenian youth as another "connecting door" to Armenia. This study has showed the importance of the Church, Armenian community organizations, and different cultural projects for building a bridge between two countries, especially for forming a conscious ethnic community. The official "Ari Tun" program website states that the project aims to introduce Armenian culture, religion, and traditions to Armenian youth, and to help them "build strong relations with the Homeland, reinforce national identity, and establish kin relations between the youth of Armenia and the Diaspora." To this end, it is clear how the Armenian government conveys the "diaspora" concept. Unlike the Soviet period, the Diaspora Armenian is one who lives outside Armenia proper. In this case, the Armenian organization, "Ari Tun," tries to explain the concept the Homeland, and attempts to reinforce and build up national identity and ethnic community for all Armenians who live in different countries. This concept might also be strengthened by the following:

"Armenian community organizations are especially important for building a conscious ethnic community which is attached to Georgia on one hand and has cultural ties with Armenia – on the other. This way Georgia's Armenian community itself becomes a connection between Armenia and Georgia," (Chumbadze, Ketevan 2014: 93).

To conclude, it is evident that the lack of knowledge of the Georgian language is a major barrier for Armenians to participate in political and social life, and specifically while finding a job or receiving an education. Learning Georgian is key to improve the integration process, but nevertheless, it is a long-term process. A shared perception during the Soviet period was that minorities did not face as much difficulty if they did not know Georgian since Russian was the common language. Nowadays, a new generation speaks Georgian fluently, which eliminates the same problems while getting an education or accessing employment. Several generations of Armenians in Tbilisi, particularly during the Soviet period, have made a choice that has influenced the language situation. Many Armenians consider Russian as their first language because the majority of them have received an education in Russian, even though most of them are still multilingual. As Mamuka Komakhia states, "Tbilisi Armenians, in contrast to those who live in other regions, have different levels of proficiency in Georgian as well, which is predetermined by everyday contacts with Georgians." (Komakhia 2003: 23)

Based on the different cases, there are different strategies of learning the Georgian language. On the one hand, Tbilisi-born Armenians learn Georgian while communicating with their Georgian neighbors and friends. On the other hand, they also learn Georgian in Armenian and Russian schools. To this end, the family also plays a big role in understanding certain languages.

One of the main issues is that when discussing traditional Armenian culture, it was particularly noticeable that the interviewees had vague memories of the customs, habits, and traditions. It could be concluded that each generation becomes increasingly comfortable and integrated into their homeland. They are continuously engraining themselves into Georgian society. The situation could be remedied through the stimulation of mutual interest by activating media, launching educational initiatives, and establishing and boosting collaboration between the members of every society. Perception of "homeland" is another major subject of the research. Most of the interviewees perceive Georgia as their homeland and they

never call it their host-land, or "second homeland," while Armenia is more of an ancestral land to which their ethnic roots are connected:

"Armenians have been rooted in the towns and villages of Georgia for a long time, yet throughout modern history, they have been under external rule – Tsarist, Soviet, or Georgian – rather than their own. They have been living in the midst of larger cultural spheres, and struggled to preserve their national characteristics, while at the same time adjusting to the shifting social milieus," (Blauvelt, Timothy K. & Berglund, Christofer 2015: 16).

Bibliography

1. Basilaia, Merab (editor), (2008), *Ethnic Groups in Georgia*, Capacity Building of the Public Defender's Office in Georgia, Tbilisi: 90

2. Berglund, Christofer & Blauvelt, Timothy K., *Armenians in the Making of Modern Georgia*

3. Chumbadze, Ketevan (2014), *Foreign Policy Dimension of the Georgian-Armenian Bilateral Agenda: Challenges and Opportunities for the Future Cooperation* published in *Armenian-Georgian Relations: Challenges and Opportunities for the Bilateral Cooperation*, Political Science Association of Armenia, Yerevan: 71-86

4. Grigoryan, Stephan (editor), (2009), Positive Examples of Coexistence from the History of Peoples and States of the South Caucasus, Yerevan

- Zolyan, Mikayel, *Armenians and Georgias: Divided by Common History*, 19-32

- Davlianidze, Liana, *From the History of Armenian-Georgian Relations*, 69-85

5. Herzig, Edmund & Kurkchiyan, Marina (2005), The Armenians: Past and Present in the Making of National Identity (Caucasus World: Peoples of the Caucasus) 1st Edition

6. Komakhia, Mamuka (2003), *Armenian Population in Georgia*

7. Mkrtchyan, Satenik (2009), *Contemporary Armenian Community in Tbilisi*, Institute of Archeology and Ethnography, Academy of Sciences, Armenia

8. Ponomareva, Elli (2015), *Native Tbilisians or Diaspora: Negotiating the Status of Armenians in Tbilisi*, European University at St. Petersburg, the text of the speech from the author.

9. *The Ethnic Armenian Minority of Georgia* (2007), YERKIR Union

Online Sources:

10. Cagara, Dominik K., *Armenian-language radio gains ground in Georgia*, published on March 15, 2016 on dfwatch.net

11. Cagara, Dominik K., *Tbilisi Armenians Celebrate Palm Sunday,* published on April 24, 2016, on dfwatch.net

12. Vardanyan, Tamara, *Armenians of Tbilisi: New Realities*, published on April 14, 2011

13. Vardanyan, Tamara, *Armenian Schools in Tbilisi: The End of the Story*, published on January 16, 2012

14. Vardanyan, Tamara, *Reality of Tbilisi: On Armenian-Georgian Contradictions*, published on June 11, 2012

15. Georgia-Armenians on minorityrights.org

16. Javakhmedia.com Georgia-Armenian Relations

ՍԵՐՈՒՆԴԸ ՆՇԱՆԱԿՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ՈՒՆԻ. ՀԱՅԿԱԿԱՆ
ԸՆՏԱՆԻՔՆԵՐԸ ԹԲԻԼԻՍԻՈՒՄ
(Հավաքարի բակերից մեկում)
Ամփոփագիր

Մարիկա Ղարիբաշվիլի,
Իվանե Ջավախիշվիլի Թբիլիսիի Պետական Համալսարան
chorinea@gmail.com

Բանալի բառեր. *Էթնիկ փոքրամասնություններ, Թբիլիսիի հայ համայնք, հայ-վրացական հարաբերություններ, էթնիկություն, ինտեգրացիա:*

Այս ուսումնասիրությունը հիմնված է Թբիլիսիի Հավլաբար թաղամասում ապրող երեք հայկական ընտանիքների դեպքերի

դիտարկման վրա: Այն դիտարկում է, թե ինչպես են հայկական ընտանիքները Թբիլիսում պահպանել իրենց էթնիկ մշակութային ժառանգությունը, իրենց նախնիների մասին հիշողությունները, և ինչ են սպասում այն հասարակությունից, որում ապրում են: Ավելին, այն վերլուծում է, թե ինչպես են իրենք իրենց ավելի շատ ընկալում որպես Թբիլիսի տեղաբնակներ, այլ ոչ թե որպես Վրաստանում հայկական սփյուռքի ներկայացուցիչներ: Այս ընտանիքները Վրաստանը համարում են «նախնյաց հայրենիք», իսկ Հայաստանը՝ «հայրերի հող»: Հիմնականում նրանց կողմից կիրառվող ավանդական պրակտիկաները վրացական և հայկական ավանդույթների խառնուրդներ են, սակայն կան դեպքեր, երբ նրանք տեղյակ չեն որոշակի հայկական ավանդույթների ու տոների մասին: Յուրաքանչյուր ընտանիքն իր պատմությունն ունի, սակայն նրանք կիսում են սեփական ինքնարընկալման կառուցման որոշակի բաղադրիչներ, օրինակ՝ Թբիլիսիում ծնված և մեծացած լինելը, մասնավորապես, Հավլաբարում, որ հայտնի է որպես Վրաստանի մայրաքաղաքի «հայկական վայրերից մեկը»: Հողվածը հիմնված է դաշտային աշխատանքների նյութերի վրա, գիտական աշխատությունների և որոշ լրատվամիջոցների նյութերի վերլուծության վրա: Տեղեկատվությունը հավաքվել է Հավլաբարում (2016 թ.) դաշտային աշխատանքի շնորհիվ: Մեթոդաբանական գործիքների թվում էին մասնակցային դիտարկումը և խորին հարցազրույցները:

"PEREDOVIE" COMRADES: THE IMAGE OF AN "IDEAL" SOVIET CITIZEN ACCORDING TO LETTERS OF COMPLAINT WRITTEN BY ARMENIAN DEPORTEES FROM 1949

Ashkhen Hakobyan, IAE NAS RA
ashkhen.hakobyan.m@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to define an approximate image of a "right" citizen of the late Stalin era in the perceptions of Soviet Armenians. The research materials that utilized in this paper are the complaints of deportees from Soviet Armenia to the Altai region in 1949. The letters were addressed to Soviet leaders to gain permission to return to their former homes. The absence of official information available on deportation decision-making and the social groups that fall under the categories to be deported cause people to self-reflect, fabricate possible crimes, then try to justify themselves in that given context. This situation provides more opportunities to understand their perceptions about the Soviet "black and white." The vibrations in political course, staff changes in NKVD, different propagated ideas had "created" flexible citizens able to present these ideas in written texts in a required Soviet language in order to succeed in avoiding repressions. Based on the letters analyzed in this study, they believed that possessing certain skills could guarantee their freedom from special resettlement. As a result, each of them tried their best to be accepted as an "ideal" citizen and fit the requirements of the authorities when describing their lives and the circumstances in which they had possibly appeared in the lists of people liable to deportation. These texts contain much deeper signals of social and cultural processes of this period than it has been revealed in the framed of this paper and are worth exploring in

future studies. The main themes addressed in this paper are the Soviet language, the ways of referring to and addressing the leader in letters, the discussions on family, and political past issues.

With regard to the developing cultural process in the USSR, there was limited information available; testimonies from older generations were accessible upon receiving an offer to study repressed peoples personal documents during the Soviet period. After collaborating with a group of researchers, a database covering all of the victims of Soviet repressions in Armenia was created[1].

The team registered basic information about each deportee after uncovering all of the accessible cases. Each individual case was large in volume and contained differing; they remained outside the scope of the basic information included in the database insofar as the latter only included the statistical and exclusively quantitative data. Meanwhile, the cases contained a vast amount of qualitative information. To this research, the predominately attractive parts of the documents were the complaints written by deportees addressing the leaders who, in their opinion, were responsible for their deportation and/or could influence the Ministry of State Security's decision-making process.[2]

In most of the individual cases within the personal documents presented, the style and content were of particular interest and therefore required special attention with regard to writing this paper, 12 petitions were used after reading approximately 120 within the 1,5000 total documents in the database. Throughout this research, Dr. Nino Chikovani served as a significant mentor who made huge efforts to improve my personally collected database and findings to follow. The professors who read and commented on this paper, Hranush Kharatyan, Satenik Mkrtchyan

---

[1] In the frames of the project implemented by the Armenian Center for Ethnological Studies "Hazarashen" – Armenia Totalitar(is), a database was created with the information about all victims of political repressions in Soviet Armenia.
[2] The decision for deporting a certain family was made by the Ministry of State Security without any judicial process and was launched about one or two years after the operation.

and Gayane Shagoyan, also deserve special recognition as they were vital in reviewing this project.

Petitions, complaints, or pardon letters addressed to the authorities naturally occurred the Soviet Union, the previous century, and beyond. Such letters were used as research materials repeatedly because they reveal several aspects of social thinking and provide important information about the country's political life, on the lines of contact between the citizens and the authorities or between the subjects and the empire. Typically, the content differs from each other depending on the political situation in the country. Some accept accusations and ask for mercy by writing "pardon letters," while other letters tell stories that prove their innocence. Historian Oguz Cizgem describes the petitions in the Ottoman empire addressed to Sultan Hamid II. Rather than disproving their guilt, these petitions attempted to negotiate with the authority by accepting the accusations and showing regret (Cizgem, 2013, p. 19). Author Natalie Z. Davis also shows how the accused tried to highlight some features such as innocence and unpremeditated situations (i.e. composing fiction tales) in order to legitimize their actions (Davis, 1990)[3]. In these complaint-letters, there are both the regret and plea for pardon, cases of fictional stories and several other variants due to the complicated situation set forth by an unexpected deportation. Soviet writing practices combined with specific local perceptions significantly impacted the situation. Letters to the authorities and letter-writing practices were widely discussed and studied. Sending letters to the editorials of newspapers was very common and utilized as an accepted method of voicing their problems or speaking out against illegal actions previously witnessed. There is a monography of Mikhail Rozhanski about such letters sent during the last years of the USSR (Рожанский, 2014). Using this letter-writing method was strongly encouraged as a means of communication between the people and authorities. Author Sheila Fitzpatrick writes that both the citizens and authorities were convinced that writing letters to higher ranked officials was a type of democratic practice that brought the citizens closer to their government (Fitzpatrick, 2000, p.

---

[3] Seen at Cizgem, p. 18.

211). No matter how successful and democratic this communication was, to this end, the time-period covered in this paper – the late Stalin stage – still applies in the case of Armenian deportees.

The National Archives of Armenia documents state that on June 14, 1949, around 2,678 families (12.500 people) were deported from Armenia to the Altai region of Russia[4]. Overall, the order of operation is quite general. It does not provide proper information about the families choice that were liable to deportation. The operation[5] was prepared in secret and withheld from the families beforehand. It was held in the evening, and each family had approximately 2 hours to prepare for the "trip" without knowing why and where they were moving. The official accusation was made toward the head of the family, while the others were deported as his/her family members. The Special Councils (Особое Совещание) decisions were "organized" between 1949-1954; months or years following the deportation. The registration categories were as follows: Dashnak[6] nationalist, and members of the Armenian Legion in the German Army. As a result, the majority of these people lived in suspense, prompting them to write petitions, which ranged from short complaint-letters or long stories addressed to different officials. It became such a common practice that Arpenik Aleksanyan in her diary describes how she helped other deportees to compose their texts (Алексанян, Ереван, стр. 149). The number of letters per person sometimes could exceed twelve.

These letters are diverse and extremely detailed. Oftentimes, they are addressed to Stalin as the leader and to other influential Soviet officials, and occasionally to NKVD officials. Fitzpatrick calls other influential Soviet officials "Little Stalins" because she argues that Stalin was not the only leader with a cult; there were other leaders, of which she mentions some Politburo members such as Ordzhonikidze, Molotov, and Nikolai Ezhov, head of the NKVD, etc. (Fitzpatrick, 2000, p. 30)[7]. The second

---

[4] National Archives of Armenia, fond 1191, list 6.
[55] The operation was called Волна/valna/, meaning a wave.
[6] Member of Social Democratic party "Dashnaktsutyun".
[7] In the frames of this research, in the mentioned period of time and in the case of this certain group of people the most popular political leader is Anastas Mikoyan,

collection of letters -- those addressed to Soviet officials -- include practical application letters, while the first group only contains letters expressing the people's hope to restore "justice," often imparting pity and attempt to resolve their problems in a multitude of approaches.

However, such dialogues letters are supposed to reflect the propagated ideas and values that were prominent during this time-period. The ideas suggested in Party rhetoric are reflected in these application letters. The reason behind this conformity is obvious as the latter indicates the "flexibility" of the truth. It is evident that this practice was far from being a democratic or rational way of promoting societal and daily life i.e. the so-called "socialist" society, according to the political tone and content of the letters. In citing Kotkin, Elza-Bair Guchinova mentions that speaking out is in the obligatory language of self-identification; it is "to speak in the Bolshevik way." Such language serves as a measure of political loyalty (Guchinova, 2016, p. 105).

The goal of this paper is to discover what the "ideal" Soviet citizen looked like based on the letters of deported families from Armenia to Siberia in 1949.[8] It aims to identify the main characteristics of a person living in this time-period was supposed to possess and to show how Soviet citizens could perceive the ideological messages coming from above. The discussion includes the typical indicators of the officially constructed Soviet citizen in the USSR, particularly in Armenia, and the behavior that this type of citizen was likely to display in public sphere. The chosen period (from 1949 to 1953) is especially relevant for portraying the changes that Soviet rule brought about and Stalin's influence. The main focus of this research includes a review of how people adapted to the regime and eventually fit the ideological requirements to their individual understanding. Although the research is mainly based on archival material - particularly on the complaint letters in the individual files of the deported people - documents concerning the Big Terror (1930s,) and interviews with

Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union. This is mostly connected to his Armenian origin.

[8] See the detailed description of the deportation in Н. Л. Поболь, П. М. Полян, Сталинские Депортации 1928-1953, Москва, "Материк", 2005.

the former deportees from 2015 as a supporting material were also used in order to display the evolution of people's perception of Soviet ideology. This ideology itself has undergone some changes in conjunction with the political course.

The "Soviet language" in the petitions

The language which was used to write these petitions, no matter Armenian or Russian, is undoubtedly a "Soviet" one with prominent hints of the local perspective (thoughts, perceptions, etc.) Y. V. Surovtseva classifies the letters addressed to the Soviet Russian leaders according to their genres. One of these categories is letter-complaint/plea/apology: the author explains their progress by strengthening restrictions and persecutions against the intelligentsia (Суворцева, 2010, p. 44). In this case, the letters belong to the same genre but include those written by the intelligentsia, among others. The texts (complaint letters to the leaders of the USSR) will be observed as complaint letters or petitions, even though they contain staunch differences in their style and content. The majority of the letters are entitled as applications (заявление) and a considerable amount of letters are complaints. In other cases, the authors give their text different titles such as asking «просьба», begging «мольба», etc., in order to stress their inclinations from the very beginning of their words. Sometimes, this emphasis is used to prompt the certain content to be discussed or to create a specific attitude of the reader. The complaint letters were addressed to Josef Stalin, Anastas Mikoyan, Lavrenti Beria, Nikolay Shvernik, some delegates of Supreme Council, and occasionally to the Ministry of Internal Affairs sans mentioning a single person, The Special Meeting («Особое Совещание»), The Prosecutor's Office, and to other authorities.

It is impossible to outline the complete image of the Soviet citizen in one single article because the rhetoric changed during over time, along with the changes occurring within the political elite. Although Soviet propaganda had a significant influence on the society, it could not produce the expected outcomes due to the gigantic size and stature of the Soviet state with highly diverse cultural communities. The ultimate goal of Soviet

propaganda was to create a society comprised of people with certain qualities, for the same ideology, rhetoric, and support for common propaganda. Therefore, it could not have the same effect for an audience with a heterogeneous background. The ideas, the orating practices, the perception and interpretation of Soviet socialism naturally were localized in Armenia in a special manner. This can be explained by several factors such as the means of societal awareness and personal perception. General information sources were newspapers and local party propaganda. Most people did not read newspapers and attend party meetings; they could only listen to other people talking about it. This is how most of the people became aware of the "Soviet good" and "Soviet bad." At the same time, in 1949, people under 30 were the ones who attended the Soviet schools and were carrying the strong influence of Soviet propaganda. When writing their complaints, they would use certain tools to improve their writing. When trying to prove their righteousness they did the following:

- create citations from the words of Stalin or Lenin;
- mention their input in building a "socialist society";
- describe their "pure" past life, that is to say - never having been involved in any party activities other than the Communist Party.

With regards to the late Soviet period, A. Yurchak describes the public action as supportive of the official rhetoric and slogans without technically believing in them (Yurchak, 2005, pp. 26-28). In the late 1940s and early 1950s, people pretended to support the ideology without understanding its meaning.

The Soviet revolutionary ideology was to reject the old society and create a new one. The idea of creating a new person (a new kind of human being) was a key task in the entire utopian Ideology. Therefore, the values obtained during the Soviet period were especially relevant, despite having some controversy about the pre-Soviet period: the society formerly discussed it in a negative tone or failed to mention it entirely unless they had led a "trivial" life as poor peasants suffering in the hands of the Soviet exploiters. A Soviet citizen, demonstrating his/her biography in a complaint letter, was to establish the essence of the ideology once more. Creating a new person implied that there must be a change of the old one. Another

important factor was the flat-out rejection of the past, glorification of the present, and belief in the "bright future."

Although almost three decades had already passed following the formation of the USSR, the government infrequently positioned as revolutionary, calling the anti-revolutionaries "people's enemies." Similarly, the process of forming the "Soviet Person" persisted. In one of his interviews, S. Khodorovich stated that the ideology stipulated that the Soviet citizen had to be free from ethnic affiliations, have no affiliation with private property, always be prepared to sacrifice oneself for society to benefit, have no doubts that he/she originated from an ape and that nothing will remain of after death. In other words, one must be one-hundred percent materialist and atheist and know that the meaning of life is defined by the personal utility in a society where the supreme goal is to guarantee an improved, wealthier, and happier life for future generations. To this end, one would necessarily be happy (Khodorovich, p. 2). This idea of "usefulness to the society" is clearly apparent in the petitions:

"*After getting my education I have started working as an economist in the Yerevan shoe factory N1. I have been true and faithful towards all the works assigned to me, I was connected to our Soviet social work about which I can provide appropriate arguments.*" [9]

In Soviet bureaucratic slang, the aforementioned phenomenon is referred to as "organising a letter," which means finding people who would write the required texts or copy a prepared one in order to demonstrate their loyalty to the government in conjunction with maintaining absolute confidence in the local party (Гучинова, 2016, p. 105).

Even at the initial observation, some distinguishing features in the target application letters are extremely noticeable: beautiful handwriting, cautious wording, and artistic style – some of them sound as if they were short epistolary stories.

As it was described in the case of the Japanese prisoners of war letters (Гучинова, 2016), the complaint letters of the politically repressed people from Armenia contained content that was mostly in line with the

---

[9] NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 763, p. 27, 28.

government's expectations, except in the event when the writer was unaware of such expectations. There are numerous letters where it is clear that people raise similar facts to prove that they are not guilty: when somebody did not use standard expressions and vocabulary, he/she was most likely a repatriate[10] and was not adapted to living in the USSR. Sometimes, they did not manage to integrate into the recipient society and learn the "rules of the game." Aside from the repatriates, there were people not integrated into the regime.

Repeating content and general ideas - which were discussed in the texts - apart from the party rhetoric, and school and newspaper propaganda, were due to previous experiences; they were not always personal experiences but often were secondhand accounts of other people. Many of them wrote what they had thought about the Soviet state and its leaders, and described their attitude towards them. It is quite strange that one would try to make his/her argument stronger by sharing his/her thoughts about the USSR. Before and after the World War II, many people were imprisoned, exiled, or shot and killed for expressing their opinions about German army and the resolution of the War. These opinions were interpreted as anti-Soviet or anti-revolutionary[11]. Another common topic was their pre-Soviet life. According to the texts, there were two types of people during this time: kulak exploiters and poor peasants. All of the mentioned variants of explanations for deportation occurred due to the lack of information. In cases of individual repression, people were arrested and interviewed: there was a judicial process, during which they were told why they were arrested and details of their sentence. There were closed sessions where they were unable to defend themselves, but at the very least, they understood the reason behind their arrest. This deportation was unique as it was organized secretly. Within a few hours, the families were forced to prepare to leave.

---

[10] This is a term, which was used to speak about Armenians who moved to Soviet Armenia for a permanent stay from 1946-1949 in the frames of a government project.

[11] NAA, fond 1191, list 19, document 1598; list 7, document 1950, list 15, documents 2, 13, 323, 324.

They were taken to stations and sent to Altai in closed cargo coaches having no idea where they were going and what they were going to do.

In the letters' texts, one of the most interesting features that does not fit in the frames of the "Soviet language" is the "presence of God," especially of those addressed to Stalin. The form of speech sounds as if it was addressed to God, with elements expressing equal caution and praise just as religious texts are written. As Guchinova represents the application letters of Japanese prisoners of war, she observes that the letters' content and structure similarly resemble religious rituals and liturgical elements. (Гучинова, 2016).

The texts were developed and controlled by the current political discourse; they were guided by the developments in Soviet political rhetoric and ideology as a guarantee to success. In each of the texts, the demonstrated caution in the content and narrative to be corresponding to the expectations of the authorities is quite noticeable. This causes a dissonance such that these texts were written as complaints, disagreements, and demands to reestablish the "justice" whereas there was a large necessity to appease the authorities. To combine and to overcome (1) how to express faithfulness to the system and, (2) how to complain about the acts carried out as a result of the system various methods were used. The Soviet country, its leader, ideology, and the recipient of the letter are praised, sometimes even worshiped, while the complaint and the irritation have no addresser. In specific cases, they go to a single local officer or a common person. Evidently, it was often a game with the authorities: sometimes it was a serious distortion of the reality in order to present themselves at their best. Other times, there were silently agreed ways of meeting the expectations of the authorities.

How to call

In Stalin period, it was quite natural to refer to the country's central figures in a dignified and paternal way, as seen in the texts referring to Stalin. Stalin is greeted with words and phrases such as '*Father Stalin*,' '*dear father*,' '*lovely father*,' '*Great Stalin*,' '*General*,' and even as '*Your Majesty*,' as if he was a king. Sometimes, the author used all of his/her

vocabulary to praise the recipient. Stalin's image is portrayed as an adorable leader, and not as one who held and presented ideas like Lenin. Stalin is depicted as a symbol of a multifunctional supra-manager who put ideas into practice in reality and controlled everything that was taking place domestically. It is clear how this attitude was dictated by the media. On nearly every page of "Soviet Armenia,"[12] one can read the following expression: "Under Lenin's banner, under Stalin's leadership." To this end, Stalin was developing and implementing what Lenin had previously established. The usage of the expression "Stalin's sun" is not occasional either: it indicates that the sun belongs to Stalin or, perhaps, shined the way Stalin wanted the sun to shine. Everything positive that took place during the Soviet Union was attributed to Stalin. In the late 1940s, the daily newspapers contained columns entitled "Reports to comrade Stalin. Thus, it can be concluded that every citizen generally behaved well in order to please the leader. Some parallels can be drawn between this situation and the religious perceptions of how to behave in order to please God.

The following passage is written by a former NKVD agent and an administrative officer:

I am turning to you with pleading and tears, Father Shvernik[13]. I am asking you in the name of Our Beloved Leader and Teacher, Dear Father Stalin – to give us mercy, do a disposal, and return me and my family to my native hearth where my bones will find peace[14].

In another letter, an 11-year old girl writes:

Our Great Father Stalin,

I hope you will not reject my plea. I am 11 years old. I have a sister who is 9 years old. We have neither father nor mother… I have read many books and learned that our Great Father Stalin loves kids. Many kids like my sister and me now suffer in Siberia. If our parents have committed a crime, let them suffer. Let us return to our studies and remember our father Stalin forever. Please forgive us.

---

[12] January 7, 1949, N 5 (8464)

[13] Nikolay Mikhailovich Shvernik - Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet from 1946 to 1953.

[14] NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 278.

I kindly ask your Majesty to order your subordinates to consider our case[15].

It is evident that the letter is not from the child directly. Speaking via children was a widespread strategy during the Soviet Union. In the aforementioned case, it is clear that the author constructs her speech like a prayer to God, in which she says that she has learned much about Stalin from reading. To this end, she attempted to stress that she had been raised according to Soviet ideology. Another interesting aspect of this case is that the child asked Stalin to forgive her without having committed any crimes. This can be seen in many petitions, proving that those writing them committed no crimes but were apologetic and begged for mercy anyway. As a result, these two mixed positions demonstrate uncertainty about why they were subject to punishment and the author uses all the possible methods to properly be aligned with the reader. Finally, the most paradoxical phrase in these petitions is "Your Majesty," as it belongs neither to the Soviet vocabulary nor to a religious one. It is usually used when referring to a king. This term somehow disabled the attempts to show the role of religious perceptions in the personality cult years, once again proving that the group of people writing such texts had an urge and need to please the addressee. Each of them used their knowledge and skills not only to speak in the "Soviet way," but also to demand justice without knowing its actual meaning. As a result, there is a clash of values and traditions, which stems from the initial, pre-Soviet identity and the intermixture of imposed and dictated values and rules.

Context aside, there are spectacular handwriting patterns that deserve special attention. Written with careful attention to detail, the handwriting in these petitions utilize certain tools to make them look nicer and neater. Aside from the aesthetic features, some tricks were used in order to catch the readers' attention such as writing the leader's name in bold or all capital letters, which could be interpreted as a way to stress the love and respect towards the leaders.

---

[15]NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 682.

"You, the only rescuer of people, dear Father STALIN, our family is innocent, we haven't committed any crime against our country and we cannot carry the stamp of being deported."[16]

The leader's actions were above the discussion and critic, some other circumstances were to blame (Ստեփանյան, 2015). Oftentimes, it is difficult to identify complaints in these texts that indicate that the leader – the one who was responsible for the issues at hand, and is a multifunctional figure – was actually praised and even worshiped. It is clear that there was widespread discontent, but neither the leader nor the system was held responsible for the situation. Thus, the complaint sometimes remained unaddressed; people occasionally blamed themselves or local officials.

The USSR as the World

People living in a closed country often perceived it as the whole world. It is seen in the expressions used when speaking about their country. Soviet leaders were referred to as leaders of the world, and the people were sure that all the democrats of the world follow Lenin and Stalin.

"In 1946 it was published in newspapers that all the Armenian migrants are allowed to return to Armenia. I happened to know about it with a great happiness. Me, as a physically demanding worker, hereditary and true-blooded proletarian will finally be living in a country where there is my dearest proletarian Soviet Power, where there is no exploitation of workers, where the Muslims are not going to slaughter me, where there are peace, equality, and brotherhood of nations… I am asking for a petition for the first time in 5 years of being exiled. I am a proletarian and it is all the same to me where I work, but I am a Southerner by nature and the strict climate of Altai influenced disastrously on me and my relatives."[17]

This is a letter written by a repatriate of 1946 from Bulgaria, who describes the country as the best place for proletarians to live. He does not even consider his right to choose where to live inside the Soviet territory and only asks to let him return because of the climate being too severe for

---

[16] NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 730.
[17] NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 754, p. 21.

his health. There is a strange representation of love and patriotism towards the Soviet Union: the author only lived there for 2-3 years and was deported to the special settlements staying there without a right to move. The author provided a lengthy description of how he saw the USSR and provided further thoughts on it. He was a newcomer to have had such experience, but he could have heard that people were arrested for even thinking incorrectly. For example, in 1945, many people were exiled due to expressing hesitation on the victory of the USSR in the War. In 1937 and 1938, many people were arrested for sharing their negative thoughts on Stalin. It is also evident that the author tries to prove that despite his deportation, he was not expressing discontent and he was writing the petition due to climate problems. As seen in the aforementioned experience, here is another accusation delivered by a dissatisfied person as the two testimonies share the element of dissatisfaction (недовольный элемент). Nevertheless, these authors are actually unsatisfied with the country. The author proved in many ways that he was satisfied and loved the USSR and knew why he adored it so much.

"I am asking you, Great Stalin, to send your fatherly hand to free our innocent family to live in the cities and villages under the bright Soviet sun."[18]

In this sentence, it is clearly shown which is the country: There is no Armenia, but the Soviet Union. Additionally, it is universalized by saying the "Soviet sun", as if it is a different geographical unit not on Earth.

An "Ideal family" Suitable for the Country

In Soviet times, a typical Soviet citizen's life widely depended on his/her family and parental connections. With regards to the previously discussed texts, there are family deportations in question, and only the head of the family (generally a male) was responsible for them being targeted as socially dangerous elements. Furthermore, the family relationships were widely discussed in the texts and were in the scope of this research. It is difficult to understand whether the repressions had an impact on family life

---

[18] NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 730, p. 22.

and changed it for the worse. As seen in most cases, scenes containing these elements were common in order to save the rest of their family. For example:

"My father was imprisoned in 1937 and we do not know why, we do not have any information from him, and if our father was dishonest, what is our guilt?"[19]

Aside from paternal disownment cases, one can see the deported people pretending to be divorced, which portrays some of the reasons why they were married in the first place:

"I married him because of the pleadings of my relatives, I swear that everything I am saying now, is true. I married him officially and divorced officially. I am not a member of his family, and only his family told me that he had died in Kazakhstan."[20]

In this example, a woman tries to save her family by proving her loyalty to Soviet authorities and rejecting having any ties to people who are considered untrustworthy by the authorities. Similarly:

"In 1924, I was in cohabitation with a man named Galustyan, without our marriage being officially registered. In 1926, he was arrested for political reasons and exiled…. I cut off every connection with that person ever since, considering him a non-Soviet person, and, therefore, a person harming the reputation of me and my children."[21]

In the aforementioned case, family relationships are somewhat politicized, as if a non-Soviet person could not be a husband or a father, mainly because he damages his family's reputation. Evidently, one's reputation was a vital factor in Soviet daily life as the authorities made every effort to isolate the so-called "unfamiliar elements," only to find that they were ignored by the authorities *and* by the community itself. The extent of how undesirable it was to have a family member who was not trusted by the authorities is very clear in the following example:

"… Why did you make me exile in my early 18th year? Why I, a glorious young girl gifted with all the benefits of nature, should not be able

---

[19]NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 387, p. 24-28.
[20]NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 389, p. 44.
[21]NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 297, p. 24.

to make a courageous choice for marriage? Why should not I be able to marry a military officer or a party member, only because I'm exiled?"[22]

Fitzpatrick states that petitions were a lottery and significant numbers of them were successful; the author provides an example of a woman writing a letter of complaint against her expulsion from kolkhoz because of her father-in-law, with whom she had had no connection and "couldn't have been infected with his ideology." (Fitzpatrick, 2000, p. 129) In this case, there is the exact same experience of deported people who tried to prove that they had no connection with their accused family member of which was commonly deemed as a traitor, kulak, clergyman, Dashnak, etc. Furthermore, petitions were not successful in this example. Although no quantitative research was conducted regarding the balance of successful complaint letters, it can be concluded that complaint letters were unsuccessful. The information provided in the petitions were used for their benefit only in the release process (1954 to 1956) when all of them were allowed to return to their homeland.

While analyzing such situations, it is important to consider all of the details of each circumstance. Despite the fact that it is difficult to find the objective reality via only reading the archival papers, the following can still be observed: in cases where the author did not justify or whitewash his/her family member, but denied any affiliation, then that family member was either elsewhere or dead in order to prevent the author from inflicting any harm on the aforementioned family member. In rare cases when the family member was alive and lived with his family, it is obvious that the position was arranged in a complex way in order to protect the younger family members. Eventually, there is no such a task to discover the "reality," but to present the "ideal" meant that they would provide their own testimonies.

"Pure Past" and an Origin to Boast for

A person's past[23] (origin) was a key factor for his/her future during the Soviet period, especially during the repressions period. It is interesting to

---

[22] NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 763, p. 118.

[23] More often used as "Political past" which include activities carried in the past within the scope of the interest of the authorities either during the Soviet period or

observe what was hidden and what was emphasized to be shown, which were the cases when they were (1) proud of their father or of their past, and (2) when they refused to accept their biological father as a parent and hide whatever they had been busy with in the past.

This example demonstrates how one could be proud of his/her past and use information to prove his/her positive qualities:

"In 1918 my father was imprisoned because of expressing his international ideas and because of suggesting to stop the hatred between Armenians and Azerbaijani people. There he was infected with typhus and died."[24]

The conflicts and eventual suffering under the Dashnaks[25] served as a great advantage because being an enemy of the Dashnaks meant that he/she was to an insider for the communists. The strongest piece of evidence of being a true Bolshevik was that his/her father was imprisoned due to his international statement. The author had other solid arguments, one of which was the possession of the "Soviet language." He transmitted the very ideas that were in a central position in usual rhetoric speech: international statements, negative sides of Dashnaks, and the Armenian-Azerbaijani problem:

"From the wife of a lost soldier

In 1921 my elder brother went to the war of Finland and sacrificed his life for the protection of our fatherland. In 1941 my second brother (a party member) who was working as a kolkhoz director, started serving in the Red Army and sacrificed his life in Kerch, for liberating the Crimea. In 1942 my only son went to the front too and fought for 4 years as a hero and during the last years of the war sacrificed his life for his country.

---

the pre-Soviet times. In the case of Soviet Armenia the general seeking information was the belongingness to the political party "Dashnaktsutyun" and the financial and social status.

[24] NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 727, p. 19-22.

[25] Social Democratic party Armenian Revolutionary Federation - Dashnaktsutyun ruled in the Republic of Armenia, which was formed in 1918 and existed until 1920. The party was officially cancelled in Soviet Armenia in 1923. While it continued its activities abroad, in Armenia the party reestablished only after the independence of the country.

Dear father Stalin, today we do not suffer from the loss of our son as much as we do from the pain that we are sent here."[26]

As seen in the passage above, the problem of being accepted is revealed in this example. Acceptance by the authorities stipulated acceptance by the society: at least the authorities were doing their best to provide this connection. The woman who lost two brothers and one son during the war wrote that she was more apologetic being exiled than having lost her closest loved ones. The reason behind this was that she was esteemed, while in the other scenario, she was condemned.

The methods of rejecting the past were as follows: (1) hiding their former occupation, and (2) "confessing" and proving that they have changed. As seen in many newspaper articles,[27] the horrible conditions of exploitation and slavery were prominent. These articles also tracked the progression from being a slave to being an active social worker.

Conclusion

During the time-period focused on in this article, vivid examples of Soviet life were used to attempt to portray the perception of an acceptable Soviet citizen. There are very few letters that stray from the general trends in analyzing content, approach, and style. Regardless of the content and style, the majority of the testimonies shared one common feature: the efforts made display oneself as an "ideal Soviet citizen." The following image is conclusive of an ideal Soviet Citizen:

- Being a Patriot
- Having no doubts that the Soviet Union was the most powerful and fair country in the world
- Respecting and loving the leader
- Obeying and admiring the actions of the authorities without discussing them
- Being proud of the proletarian origin
- Making a family life based on the political changes

---

[26] NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 730, p. 23-24.

[27] Սովետական Հայաստան, 6 հունվարի, 1949, N 4 (8463):

All of the aforementioned qualities were supposed to occur naturally – without force. Being a good citizen was behavioral, and was not supposed to depend on emotional patterns, as people do not have control over their feelings or thoughts. It is evident that there were dictated values, which people pretended to live and abide by. This occurrence is conditioned by both structural and institutional factors. For example, during the wartime years, people were arrested for praising the power of the German army. In 1949, people learned "to speak:" favoring the officials was both imposed/forced, and voluntary, and they were left with little decision-making rights. The lack of trust and support by the authorities could be due to ones origin, something that cannot be changed or controlled. This caused them to lie about their identity or pretend to be someone else, which was often obvious to the addressee, but nevertheless was still accepted. To this end, one was bound contractually with the authorities in order to solve vital issues.

It should be noted that attempting to be depicted as a good citizen was not the only method of self-justification. Numerous people described themselves as unintelligent and illiterate, and politically unaware to prove that they could pose no threat to the Soviet State.

Bibliography

Cizgem, O. (2013). *Negotiating the Terms of Mercy: Petitions and Pardon Cases in the Hamidian Era.* Istanbul.

Davis, N. Z. (1990). *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France.* Standford University Press.

Fitzpatrick, S. (2000). *Everyday Stalinism, Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s.* Oxford University Press.

Khodorovich, S. (n.d.). *Unsuccessful and Tragic Attempt to Create a "New Man".* http://www.roca.org/OA/76-77/76f.htm.

Yurchak, A. (2005). *Everything was Forever, Until it was no More; the Last Soviet Generation.* New Jersy: Princeton University Press.

Алексанян, А. (Ереван). *Сибирский Дневник 1949-1954 гг.* 2007: "Гитутюн" НАН РА.

Гучинова, Э.-Б. (2016). *Рисовать лагерь. Язык травмы в памяти японских военнопленных о СССР.*

Рожанский, М. Я. (2014). *Письма об истории и для истории 1988-1990 годы.* Иркутск.

Суворцева, Е. В. (2010). *Жанр «Письма вождю» в Советскую эпоху (1950-е-1980-е гг.).* Москва: «Аиро-XXI».

Ստեփանյան, Գ. (2015, December 12, 18:19). «Լիահույս եմ, որ...». արդարացման հուսահատ փնտրտուքը 1949 թ. հայկական բռնաքսորի համատեքստում. *Lragir.am.*

Sources

1. *NAA, fond 1191, list 15, documents 323, 324.*
2. *NAA, fond 1191, list 15, documents 12, 13.*
3. *NAA, fond 1191, list 7, document 1950.*
4. *NAA, fond 1191, list 19, document 1598.*
5. *NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 763.*
6. *NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 278.*
7. *NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 682.*
8. *NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 730.*
9. *NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 754.*
10. *NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 387.*
11. *NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 389.*
12. *NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 297.*
13. *NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 763.*
14. *NAA, fond 1191, list 6, document 727.*
15. *Սովետական Հայաստան օրաթերթ, հունվարի 7, 1949 թ., N 5 (8464).*
16. *Սովետական Հայաստան օրաթերթ, հունվարի 6, 1949 թ., N 4 (8463).*

«ԱՌԱՋԱՎՈՐ» ԸՆԿԵՐՆԵՐ. «ԻԴԵԱԼԱԿԱՆ» ՔԱՂԱՔԱՑՈՒ ԿԵՐՊԱՐԸ ԸՍՏ ԽՈՐՀՐԴԱՅԻՆ ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻՑ 1949 Թ. ԱՔՍՈՐՎԱԾՆԵՐԻ ԴԻՄՈՒՄ-ԲՈՂՈՔՆԵՐԻ
Ամփոփագիր

Աշխեն Հակոբյան, ՀՀ ԳԱԱ ՀԱԻ
ashkhen.hakobyan.m@gmail.com

Բանալի բառեր` *Դիմում-բողոք, աքսոր, Խորհրդային Հայաստան, «Հայր Ստալին», խորհրդային լեզու, իդեալական խորհրդային քաղաքացի, քաղաքական բռնաճնշումներ:*

Հոդվածը մի փորձ է դուրս բերել այն «ճիշտ» քաղաքացու կերպարը, որին ձգտում էր նմանվել Խորհրդային Հայաստանում` ստալինյան ժամանակաշրջանում ապրող մարդը: Հոդվածում շրջանառվել են 1949 թ. Խորհրդային Հայաստանից դեպի Ալթայի երկրամաս աքսորված անձանց բողոք-դիմումների տեքստերը: Դիմումներն ուղղված էին Խորհրդային վերնախավին` ինքնրանքով թույլ տալ վերադառնալ իրենց նախկին բնակավայրերը: Աքսորի որոշման մասին տեղեկության բացակայությունը և անտեղյակությունը, թե որ սոցիալական խմբի մարդիկ են ենթակա աքսորի, մարդկանց դրդում էր ինքնուրույն դատել և ենթադրել կամ հնարել հավանական մեղքեր և ապա արդարացնել սեփական անձը այդ համատեքստում: Այս իրավիճակը հնարավորություն է տալիս հասկանալու նրանց ընկալումները Խորհրդային «ան ու սպիտակ»-ի մասին: Քաղաքական կուրսի, ՆԳԺԿ պաշտոնյաների և քարոզվող գաղափարների փոփոխականությունը քաղաքացիներին դարձրել էր բավականին ճկուն և հարմարվող, որոնք հմուտ էին նույն գաղափարները շրջանառելով կազմել «Խորհրդային լեզվով» գրված տեքստեր` փորձելով ճանապարհ

հարթել իրենց համար: Դատելով նշված տեքստերից՝ իրենք հավատացած էին, որ նման հմտությունների տիրապետումը կարող էր դառնալ հատուկ ընակեցումից ազատվելու գրավականը: Այս տրամաբանությամբ աքսորվածների մեծ մասը, նկարագրելով իրենց անցած կյանքը և այն հավանական հանգամանքները, որի արդյունքում իրենք հայտնվել էին աքսորի ցուցակներում, չանք չէին խնայում ներկայացնել իրենց որպես «իդեալական» քաղաքացիներ՝ միանգամայն համապատասխան իշխանությունների ակնկալիքներին: Այս տեքստերը պարունակում են տվյալ ժամանակաշրջանի սոցիալ-մշակութային գործընթացների մասին շատ ավելի խորը նշաններ, քան այն, ինչ հաջողվել է վերականգնել, և հետևաբար անհրաժեշտություն կա կրկին անդրադառնալ այս նյութին: Հիմնական ուղղորտները, որոնց անդրադարձ է արվել հոդվածում, առաջնորդին դիմելու ձևերն են, ընտանիքի և սոցիալական ծագման վերաբերյալ քննարկումները:

TRACING THE HEIRS OF WWI ARMENIAN PRISONERS IN THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE

Arevik Harutyunyan,
Yerevan State University,
harutyunyan.arev@gmail.com

Abstract

In 2014, a huge variety of archival materials related covering First World War prisoners were found in Austria. It was discovered that Austrian anthropologist Rudolf Pöch conducted a large-scale racial survey across ten different POW camps of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy from 1915-1917. During these campaigns, around 5,000 men were anthropometrically assessed, photographed, plaster-casted, and additionally documented with phonogram and film samples. Among those prisoners, there were 191 Armenians, and there is little to no information known about them. Furthermore, there are no personal, familial, and social memory-related surveys about the Armenian prisoners. Although many oral histories were collected throughout the fieldwork process, it was discovered that World War I imprisonment memory was considered as too small of an episode as it is "covered" by memories of recent and more actual events, such as the memory of the Armenian Genocide, Stalin era repressions, and the Second World War.

In 2014, a huge variety of archival materials related to World War I prisoners were found in Austria. Austrian anthropologist Rudolf Pöch (1870–1921) conducted a large-scale racial survey across ten different POW camps of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy: Reichenberg (present-day Liberec, Czech Republic) in 1915, Theresienstadt (present-day Terezin, Czech Republic) in 1915, Bruck-Királyhida (present-day Bruckneudorf, Burgenland, Austria) in 1916 and 1917, Eger (present-day Cheb, Czech

Republic) in 1916, Grödig (present-day Salzburg, Austria) in 1916, Wieselburg (present-day Lower Austria) in 1916, Hart (present-day Amstetten, Austria) in 1917, and Spratzern (Lower Austria, Austria) in 1917.

During these campaigns, approximately 5,000 men were anthropometrically assessed, photographed, plaster-casted, and further documented with phonogram and film samples. The prisoners-of-war were investigated under restrictive conditions of the camp and subjected to disgraceful propaganda wars. The Department of Anthropology of the University of Vienna still holds the majority of these precarious "anthropological" documentations today; other parts of the documentations are kept in the Museum of Natural History.

Among those prisoners, there were 191 Armenians. The Austrian government launched a project to:

"*…research the identity and life history of all of 191 Armenian prisoners-of-war that were part of the Viennese racial survey in collaboration with their Armenian communities or descendants, to bring back their faces and voices to their place of origin, also by the way of an exhibition in Austria and Armenia to a broader public. Apart from being the first- time pilot study for ethically dealing with the larger anthropological POW archive, the project intends to explore a forgotten aspect of the Armenian history around 1915 - a year in the shadow of the tragedy of the Armenian Genocide.*"[1]

The Project team composition is the following:

• J. Dum-Tragut, Armenologist, University of Salzburg: Principal investigator (project leader) archival works in Vienna, Austria and in Armenia. Main coordination of archive work in Vienna and Armenia entails putting together the archival research results in Austria and Armenia and visiting families in Armenia for material on repatriation. Publication: planning the exhibition realization in Austria and Armenia.

---

[1] The Unknown Armenian Prisoners of War in Habsburg Austria, 1915-1917: The Anthropological Studies of Rudolf Pöch (project description), http://www.uni-salzburg.at/index.php?id=205987&L=0, 05.12.2016.

- K. Matiasek, anthropologist and artist-specialist for photography and cinematography, University of Vienna: archival works in Vienna, preparation, and restoration of archival material. Publication: planning and realization of an exhibition in Austria and Armenia.

- Hranush Kharatyan, Prof. of Ethnography, Pavel Avetisyan, Prof. of Archaeology, RA National Academy of Sciences: archival works in Armenia, publication and exhibition. Visiting families in Armenia for repatriation of belongings, publication, and realization of an exhibition in Armenia.

The project is implemented through the cooperation of the following entities:

- Dept. for Armenian Studies, Centre for Studies of the Christian East, University of Salzburg, Austria.

- Institute of Anthropology, University of Vienna, Austria.

- Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the RA National Academy of Sciences.

- Several Archives in Austria and the National Archive of Armenia.

Although the Austrian contributors were primarily focused on returning ancestral heirs and personal belongings, and making exhibitions in Yerevan and Vienna, the focus of this research is to collect oral histories about prisoners in order to identify the layers of personal, family, and social memories based on their imprisonment and the rest of their lives. The research problem also provides observations on situations when the heirs are made to artificially "face up to the past."

How to Find the Heirs of a Century Far Away People

Only the prisoners' names, living areas, and occupations were recorded in the documents. Even though the accessibility of information was sufficient, there was a high possibility that even in the event of successful returns, the prisoners may have migrated later; during the 20th century's internal and external stormy replacements.

In the beginning of our survey we did not have answers to the following questions:

- Did the prisoners survive if they were left alive?

- Did they repatriate?
- Is it possible to find their heirs?
- Did they get married after being held in captivity and did they have children or not?
- What do their families and relatives remember about them?

One of the main goals of this study's fieldwork was to find the direct or indirect descendants of former prisoners (the phrase "indirect descendant" here is defined as any close relative of a prisoner.) It seemed obvious that few people would remember a man who lived one hundred years ago in Armenia. At the beginning, village municipalities were contacted and briefed on the problems this research seeks to address. They were asked to find any information about people who were captured during World War I one hundred years ago.

On this stage of fieldwork (2016,) all of the prisoners' stories were not found. However, all of the cases provided in this study generated successful findings.

All of the prisoners returned to their homeland, and then some of them emigrated later. It has been surprising to receive information on prisoners' relatives, even in cases when they were abroad (particularly in Russia.) The following contact information was found: telephone number, new addresses, etc., but occasionally, there were problems. In these cases, the researchers visited the villages and tried to find missing information solely by talking to locals. During the fieldwork process in every case, a direct or indirect relative of the prisoners were found. For instance, Sergey Davityants from Getahovit, Tavush region got married and moved to Baku, Azerbaijan after repatriating. However, Davityants and his always visited his village in the summer. After the Sumgait massacres in 1988, his grandchildren returned to their native village and now they have significant memories of their grandfather.

Following the Prisoners: Fieldwork in Vayots Dzor and Tavush Regions

58 of 187 prisoners were from eight regions in the current Republic of Armenia (49 villages and cities and sometimes there were two prisoners from the same village.) The prisoners' ages ranged from 20 to 45. 20 of them were already married and even had four or five children.

The Austrian researchers measured the families' wealth by the amount of land cultivated by the family and how many horses and cow herds they own. Among the Armenian prisoners, the three richest people were farmers (one of them had 20 cows and 50 dessiatines of land, the second one had 12 cows and 50 dessiatines of land, and the third one had 25 dessiatines of land and a stud farm with 25 horses.) In addition to one painter, one workman, one confectioner, one smith, one assistant to the smith, one salesman, one mechanic, and one secretary, the prisoners' occupations are as follows:

Farmer	Carpenter	Shoemaker	Cooker	Teamster	Servant
38	4	4	2	2	2

For this stage of our survey we have done fieldwork in Tavush and Vayots Dzor regions of Armenia.

Geography presents the following picture: Syunik region (Lichq, Ltsen, Kyurdamir (Kernadzor), Khot, Tegh, Agarak, Vachagan, Brnakot, Zeyva (Davit Bek), Ghushchi (Tasik), Khnatxakh villages), Vayots Dzor region (Khoytur (Getap)), Areni, Rind, Bardzruni, Gndevaz, Gnishik, Gladzor, Aznaburd (Nor Aznaberd), Zaritap villages), Kotayk region (Verin Akhta (Lernanist), Kaghsi villages), Aragatsotn region (Gharanagyug (Lusagyugh), Ghazaravan (Nazrivan), Garnahovit villages), Gegharkuniq region (Bashkend (Artsvashen), Karakaya (Dzoravank), Atdash villages), Tavush region (Ghoshghotan (Voskevan), Movses, Chinchin, Shamshadin (Berd), Tala (Getahovit), Dilijan, Alachugh), Lori region (Shahnazar (Metsavan), Kurtan, Hamamlu (Spitak), Dsegh villages),

Shirak region (Meshidli (Nor Kyanq), Karnut, Pokr Sariar, Musayelyan, Bandivan, Ghazanchi, Geghanist, Gusanagyugh, Saratak, Gyumri).

Meeting With the Heirs of Prisoners

Prior to conducting fieldwork, there were certain anxieties with regards to meeting with the prisoners' heirs. One concern posed was whether people who live in financially bad conditions would be accepted because there was no financial compensation or incentive to provide a plethora of ancestral information along with asking too many questions. However, most of the families were informed about the fieldwork and what that entailed in positive anticipation. When visits were unanticipated, (as it happened in Getahovit,) there was also positive feedback. The following reasons are hypothesized to explain why the respondents embraced the visits and fieldwork:

• Some people are *suddenly* interested in their grandfathers; they bring photos and some artifacts. There were families who did not have a single photo of their ancestors. Therefore, the families were quite happy to obtain the photos and details in order to know more about their ancestral history, and to see what they looked like, etc.

• The desire to share positive or tragic memories of their families' past.

• The desire to tell someone about the positive impacts their grandfathers left in their living areas.

• The widespread notion that hosting foreigners (Jasmine Dum-Tragut and Katarina Matiasek) could be worth taking pride in among their relatives and neighbors:

"Hello, I can't talk now, some foreigners have come to us related with grandpa, we are too busy" (a woman is talking on the phone with one of the relatives with satisfied smile, village Kharberd.)

• The social pleasure to meet new people and enjoy cross-cultural communication.

• An overall willingness and pleasure to accept a guest.

What do the Heirs Remember?

One of the peculiarities of this study is that the oral history sources are mainly from prisoners from the third and fourth generations. Unfortunately,

The POW's children (or at least the third-generation children) are not alive or if they were, they would not be able to talk about their grandfathers due to age or health. If the archives were revealed a few years earlier, perhaps there would be a greater chance to meet them. For example, one of the prisoner's daughters died in 2004.

Typically, oral histories of the prisoners are not simply reproduced memories; they are well-constructed and consistent narratives. However, as seen in the meetings in Ijevan, Ararat, and Areni with the prisoners' grandchildren or great-grandchildren who saw their pope, communicated with him, and had personal memories.

One of the descendants did not know that his/her grandfather was imprisoned in Austria. In un-doubtable cases such as when the people in the camps are depicted in the family photos, some of these families did not keep imprisonment records. There could be number of possible explanations:

a) The more important events, mainly the tragic ones that happened to the family (in most cases, during the Stalin Repressions), became a priority to remember; a metanarrative that "overshadowed" other memories or made them less important.

b) It is also possible that the former prisoner did not want to discuss his imprisonment and that is why it did not remain in the family memory.

c) When discussing WWI with the heirs, often they could not talk about themes besides the Armenian Genocide. This demonstrates how the concentration of social memory on important and tragic events for society reduces the opportunity to reflect on the events related to the individuals' private life.

For example, in two families, interlocutors' memories of their grandfather's past could not be discussed; they stubbornly returned to the memories of relatives who were killed during World War II. In one of the families, the main memory was about an uncle who was a victim of Stalinism. In the second family, the victim of Stalinism was a prisoner who returned from Austria, and whose family was targeted as the "enemy of the nation" and lived in extremely poor conditions. Family members' traumatic

experiences were so strong that the fact of imprisonment was made insignificant and tertiary.

However, in most of the families' memory, the grandfathers' "Austrian past" was one of the main narratives. There is a notable fact that sometimes the "brides of families" have more vivid memory of their ancestors whom they have never met. M. Halbwachs explains this fact with the construction of family memory via sharing everyday life.[2] And as Armenian families are traditionally patriarchal, brides not only become their husband's family member but also start to care about family memory and reproduce it even in a better way than others could.

Melanie: Emotional-Romantic Stories

In one of the families, one of the prisoners – a grandfather who embarked on a "romantic adventure" – stories were shared in a pleasant tone. The prisoner who was working in a rich Austrian farm was urged to stay at their home, marry the farmers' daughter, and inherit his property. According to the family narrative, the prisoner refused to stay there, arguing that he had to return to Austria because he had a "home, family, and children." However, it was revealed later that at that time, he was not even married. This interlocutor was obviously enjoying telling the story of his grandfather's refusal, and it is possible that the grandfather's *"home, family, and children"* argument is the narrator's own interpretation. Of course, it is also possible that the prisoner himself gave that argumentation, which he considered to be softer and more acceptable. On the other hand, it seems quite possible that the prisoner had romantic feelings for the "German bride," since after repatriating he named one of his newborn daughters Melanie, which was the Austrian "bride's" name.

In general, there are many such stories about prisoners of World War I and World War II. If the fact that most of the men were in war fronts and there was a "lack of men" is taken into account, perhaps indeed these stories are true.

---

[2] Хальбвакс М. Социальные рамки памяти / Пер. с фр. и вступ. статья С.Н. Зенкина. –М.: Новое издательство, 2007, p.185.

"German Discipline"

In one of the families, when asked whether they are aware that their grandfather was captured in Austria, they "corrected" that account and said that it was in Germany, not in Austria. In another family, one of the prisoners' relatives was told that the owner of the farm where his uncle was working once got angry because "during the works in the field, he accidentally dropped a little bit of soil on the neighbor's land. They were so disciplined". The cousin also proudly told us about his Uncle's consistency, attentiveness, and punctuality, "like Germans". It is hard to distinguish whether they were really impressed by the positive Austrian arrangements, or if it was due to the "German discipline" metaphor.

It is quite possible that in this case, the "actual" memory is about thousands of prisoners of the Second World War, and the word "war prisoner" is directly associated with the "German captivity" template. The Prisoners' "Austrian" memories seem to become "German" as seen in the descendants' interpretations. Here is an example of reconstruction of family memory by "social memory terms," which M. Halbwachs explains by the willingness to be part of a common history.[3]

"Anti-Memory"

The families visited in this study seem to have an inclination not to reveal anything about the negative effects of captivity. It is not hard to guess if there should also be negative events or memories.

One of the explanations that was not met through negative storylines could be prisoners' desire not to talk about unpleasant experiences. However, the conversation heard in one of the families revealed otherwise. The family was met in a friendly and pleasant atmosphere. During the conversation, a grandchild of the prisoner discussed the extremely abhorrent conditions of captivity: "The prisoners have been so hungry that they had no other choice than to eat barley from a horse dung." The

---

[3] Хальбвакс М. Социальные рамки памяти / Пер. с фр. и вступ. статья С.Н. Зенкина. –М.: Новое издательство, 2007, p. 202.

brothers immediately became angry at him and rebuked: "bad things should not be said, and you don't have to spoil everything."

It can be interpreted that apart from the fact that people tend to erase negative memories, in this case, it is also possible that they are afraid of spoiling "warm and friendly" relationships they gained with the research group. It is possible that the tradition of hospitality also plays a major role, which accordingly it is not allowed to talk about negative memories with a guest.

"Stoned" Memories

All of the families visited built tombstones and/or gravestones for the deceased prisoners. There is such a case: Atvatsatur Hakobyant's (from Gndevaz village) heirs were afraid of landslides, which could damage their grandfather's grave, but they moved to Dilijan where they live now and they still take care of it. Even though the prisoners' families did not know anything about their grandfather, they still take care of the tombs, keeping them clean and safe. Making gravestones is one of the most common ways to commemorate ancestors even though there is nothing known about them.

Summary

In previous decades, numerous scientific studies questioned the basic methodologies of historiography. Guy Beiner who is a historian and researcher from Israel found out that "during 1998-2008, the index of publications and research on "collective/cultural/social/state/national memory" is 11,800. Google Scholar contains a list of approximately 41,000 points."[4] Modern historiography considers the individual and collective memories collected through oral history as a major source. According to Connertonn P., in order to get more or less of a complete story of a historic period, it is ideal to have the combination of historical reconstruction and

---

[4] Guy Beiner (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel), in Anticipation of a Post-Memory Boom Syndrome, Cultural Analysis, Volume 7, 2008. (http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~caforum/volume7/vol7_discuss1.html)

social or collective memory.[5] However, the results show that collective memory is not a simple linear sequence of events.

According to Maurice Halbwachs, a memory of the past is always constructed within the social models of the construction moment.[6] This study shows people discussing their imprisoned grandfathers, and interpreting the construction moment within the scope of nowadays' social memory terms, which also reveals how memory is socially constructed. On one hand, the collective memory consists of different family memories, and on the other hand, collective memory forms family memories and it is difficult to determine the basic source of memories. As seen in this research, despite the pleasure for third and fourth generations to talk about their grandfathers, the existence of captivity during the First World War became too small of an episode as it is "covered" by memories of recent and more actual events. The recent events are also actual by the influential capacity on peoples' private lives. It is notable that not only is the family memory about prisoners is weak, but the entire First World War collective memory revolves around the "European part." The Armenian Genocide and Stalin Era Repressions have such a significant influence on collective memory that the episodes occurred during WWI are "forgotten."[7] This is a matter of different volumes on collective memory.

Bibliography

1. Connerton P., How Societies Remember, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

2. Guy Beiner (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel), In Anticipation of a Post-Memory Boom Syndrome, Cultural Analysis, Volume 7, 2008 (http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~caforum/volume7 /vol7_discuss1.html).

---

[5]Connerton P., How Societies Remember, Cambridge University Press, 2006.
[6]Хальбвакс М. Социальные рамки памяти / Пер. с фр. и вступ. статья С.Н. Зенкина. –М.: Новое издательство, 2007:
[7]Kharatyan H., Shagoyan G., Marutyan H., Abrahamyan L. Stalin Era Repressions in Armenia: History, Memory, Everday Life, Yerevan, 2015.

3. Kharatyan H., Shagoyan G., Marutyan H., Abrahamyan L. Stalin Era Repressions in Armenia: History, Memory, Everday Life, Yerevan, 2015.

4. The Unknown Armenian Prisoners of War in Habsburg Austria, 1915-1917: The Anthropological Studies of Rudolf Pöch (project description), http://www.uni-salzburg.at/index.php?id=205987&L=0, 05.12.2016.

5. Хальбвакс М. Социальные рамки памяти / Пер. с фр. и вступ. статья С.Н. Зенкина. –М.: Новое издательство, 2007.

ԱՎՍՏՐՈ-ՀՈՒՆԳԱՐԱԿԱՆ ԿԱՅՍՐՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՈՒՄ ԱՌԱՋԻՆ ՀԱՄԱՇԽԱՐՀԱՅԻՆ ՊԱՏԵՐԱԶՄԻ ԱԶԳՈՒԹՅԱՄԲ ՀԱՅ ԳԵՐԻՆԵՐԻ ՀԵՏՔԵՐՈՎ
Ամփոփագիր

Արևիկ Հարությունյան,
Երևանի Պետական Համալսարան
harutyunyan.arev@gmail.com

Բանալի բառեր*. Առաջին համաշխարհային պատերազմ, համակենտրոնացման ճամբար, ռազմագերի, ռասայական հետազոտություն, անձնական հիշողություն, ընտանեկան հիշողություն, սոցիալական հիշողություն:*

2014 թվականին Ավստրիայում բացահայտվել են մի շարք արխիվներ, ըստ որոնց պարզվել է, որ ավստրիացի մարդաբան Ռուդոլֆ Պյոխը 1915-1917 թվականներին լայնածավալ մարդաբանական (ռասայական) հետազոտություններ է արել տասը տարբեր Ավստրո-Հունգարական ճամբարներում, որոնց ընթացքում տարբեր ժողովուրդներից մոտ 5000 տղամարդիկ մարդաբանորեն ուսումնասիրվել են (լուսանկարվել, չափագրվել, ձայնագրվել և այլն): Նպատակը եղել է ֆիզիկական

մարդաբանության մեթոդներով էթնիկական առանձնահատկությունների ուսումնասիրությունը: Հետազոտվող մարդկանց թվում են եղել նաև 187 հայ ռազմագերի, սակայն նրանց հետագա ճակատագրերը մինչ այժմ հայտնի չէին: Այդ ռազմագերիների վերաբերյալ հետագոտություններ չեն արվել՝ ներառյալ նրանց մասին անձնական, ընտանեկան և սոցիալական հիշողության առանձնահատկությունների ուսումնասիրություններ: Չնայած դաշտային աշխատանքների ժամանակ այդ ռազմագերու վերաբերյալ հավաքվել են բազմաթիվ բանավոր պատմություններ, պարզվեց, որ Առաջին աշխարհամարտի գերության թեման դարձել է շատ փոքր էպիզոդ, այն «ծածկվել» է ավելի ակտուալ կամ առավել ուշ շրջանի այնպիսի հիշողություններով, ինչպիսիք են Հայոց Ցեղասպանության, ստալինյան բռնաճնշումների կամ Երկրորդ աշխարհամարտի մասին հիշողությունները:

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

Boris Komakhidze,
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University,
komakhidze95@gmail.com

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 Chkonia 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.[1]

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*

---

[1] 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.

'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 sudents 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 proffessors' 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: 'Любит, не любит…' 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: 'Любит, не любит, 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.

Bibliography:

გეგეშიძე, მიხეილ [Gegeshidze, Mikheil] . 1972. *პროფ. ვერა ბარდაველიძის ცხოვრება და სამეცნიერო მოღვაწეობა* [*Life &*

scientific activities of prof. Vera Bardavelidze]. In მასალები საქართველოს ეთნოგრაფიისთვის ["Materials for Georgian ehtnography"]. №17-18. „თბილისი" ["Tbilisi"]: "მეცნიერება" ["Mecniereba].

გუგუტუშვილი, მანანა [Gugutishvili, Manana]. 2005.*სისადავეში განფენილი სიმაღლე* [The highness in the plain]. In მასალები საქართველოს ეთნოგრაფიისთვის [Materials for Georgian ethnography]. №25. თბილისი [Tbilisi]: „მემატიანე"["Mematiane].

დე რივახო, ქრისტიან, პიგეტი [De Rivaxo, Kristian, Pigeti]. 1972. *The walking stick*. In მასალები საქართველოს ეთნოგრაფიისთვის [Materials for Georgian ethnography]. №17-18. თბილისი [Tbilisi]: „მეცნიერება" ["Mecniereba"].

დრაგაძე, თინათინ დრაგაძეს თამარი[Dragadze,Tinatin]. 1972.*ძვირფასი და დაუვიწყარი* [*Valuable & unforgettable*]. In მასალები საქართველოს ეთნოგრაფიისთვის [Materials for Georgian ethnography] №17-18. თბილისი [Tbilisi]: "მეცნიერება"["Mecniereba"].

ერიაშვილი, ჟუჟუნა [Eriashvili, Zhuzhuna]. 2005. *ყველას ჩვენ-ჩვენი გვაქვს მოსაგონარი* [*everyone has his/her own memory*] .In მასალები საქართველოს ეთნოგრაფიისთვის [Materials for Georgian ethnography]. №25. თბილისი [Tbilisi]: „მემატიანე" ["Mematiane].

ოჩიაური, თინათინ [Otchiauri, Tinatin].2005 *ერთი თვე ბარისახოს სტაციონარში* [*One month in Barisakho stacionare*]. In მასალები საქართველოს ეთნოგრაფიისთვის [Materials for Georgian ethnography]. №25. თბილისი [Tbilisi]: „მემატიანე" ["Mematiane].

რუხაძე, ჯულიეტა, ოჩიაური, თინათინ [Rukhadze, Julieta, Otchiauri, Tinatin].1988. *ვერა ბარდაველიძის ცხოვრება და სამეცნიერო მოღვაწეობა* [*The life & scientific activities of Vera Bardavelidze*]. №17-18 თბილისი [Tbilisi]: „მეცნიერება" ["Mecniereba"].

რუხაძე, ჯულიეტა [Rukhadze, Julieta].1989. *ვერა ბარდაველიძე 90 [Vera Bardavelidze 90].* In ლიტერატურული საქართველო [Literary Georgia] №24. *თბილისი [Tbilisi].*

რუხაძე, ჯულიეტა [Rukhadze, Julieta].1993. *შტრიხები აკადემიკოს გიორგი ჩიტაიას პორტრეტისტვის [Strokes for academition Giorgi Chitaia's portret].* თბილისი [Tbilisi]: "მეცნიერება" ["Mecniereba"].

შილაკაძე, მანანა [Silakadze, Manana].2005. *მეცნიერი და მოქალაქე [A scientist and a citisen (dedicated to Vera Bardavelidze's 100 annversary)].* In მასალები საქართველოს ეთნოგრაფიისთვის [Materials for Georgian ethnography] №25. თბილისი [Tbilisi]: „მემატიანე" ["Mematiane].

ჩიტაია, გიორგი [Chitaia, Giorgi]. 2001. *შრომები [The works].* 5 vols. თბილისი '[Tbilisi]: "მეცნიერება" ["mecniereba"].

ჩიტაია, გიორგი [Chitaia, Giorgi]. 1991. *ჩემი ცხოვრების გზებსა და ბილიკებზე [About my life's tracks and ways].* თბილისი [Tbilisi]: "მეცნიერება" ["metcniereba"].

ჯანელიძე, ოთარ; თაბუაშვილი, აპოლონ; თავაძე, ლერი, და სხვ. [Janelidze, Otar; Tabuashvili, Apolon; Tavadze, Leri etc.].2012. *საქართველოს ისტორია (მეცხრე კლასის სახელმძღვანელო) [History of Georgia (Students book IX grade)].* თბილისი [Tbilisi]: „კლიო" ["Kilo"].

Hall, Edward Twitchell. 1990. *The hidden dimension.* New york: Anchor books, a division of Random house.

Archival Materials:

ვ.ბ. [V.B.] 1219. ვერა ბარდაველიძის პირადი საარქივო ფონდი [Private archival fund of Vera Bardavelidze. At the archive of Iv. Javakshishvili institute of History & Ethnology.

ვ.ბ. [V.B.] 1220. ვერა ბარდაველიძის პირადი საარქივო ფონდი [Private archival fund of Vera Bardavelidze. At the archive of Iv. Javakshishvili institute of History & Ethnology.

ვ.ბ. [V.B.] 1354. ვერა ბარდაველიძის პირადი საარქივო ფონდი [Private archival fund of Vera Bardavelidze. At the archive of Iv. Javakshishvili institute of History & Ethnology.

ვ.ბ. [V.B.]1260. ვერა ბარდაველიძის პირადი საარქივო ფონდი [Private archival fund of Vera Bardavelidze. At the archive of Iv. Javakshishvili institute of History & Ethnology.

ვ.ბ. [V.B.] 1246 ვერა ბარდაველიძის პირადი საარქივო ფონდი [Private archival fund of Vera Bardavelidze. At the archive of Iv. Javakshishvili institute of History & Ethnology.

ვ.ბ. [V.B.]1243 ვერა ბარდაველიძის პირადი საარქივო ფონდი [Private archival fund of Vera Bardavelidze. At the archive of Iv. Javakshishvili institute of History & Ethnology.

Interviews:
Alaverdashvili, Ketevan. 4.10.2016. Rec. at the Institute of History and Ethnography in Tbilisi
Mindadze, Nino (Nunu). 1.11.2016. Rec at Tsu.

ՀԱՂԹԱՀԱՐԵԼՈՎ ԳԱՂԱՓԱՐԱԿԱՆ ՃՆՇՈՒՄԸ. ԽՈՐՀՐԴԱՅԻՆ ԺԱՄԱՆԱԿԱՇՐՋԱՆՈՒՄ ՎԵՐԱ ԲԱՐԴԱՎԵԼԻՁԵԻ ՄԱՍՆԱՎՈՐ ԵՎ ՄԱՍՆԱԳԻՏԱԿԱՆ ԿՅԱՆՔԻ ՀԱՐԱԲԵՐԱԿՑՈՒԹՅՈՒՆԸ

Ամփոփագիր

Բորիս Կոմախիձե,
Իվանե Ջավախիշվիլի Թբիլիսիի Պետական Համալսարան
komakhidze95@gmail.com

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 իսստորեն 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:

ONE STEP FORWARD, ONE STEP BACK: IRAN'S ECONOMIC POLICY TOWARDS THE SOUTH CAUCASUS AFTER LIFTING THE SANCTIONS

Lusine Kosakyan,
Yerevan State University
lusine.kosakyan@yahoo.com

Key words: *Iran, South Caucasus, Armenia, Georgia, energy cooperation, lifting the sanctions, "bipolar world".*

Abstract

Following the lifting of the Iran sanctions, certain developments occurred allowing for the possibility to reshape the energy geopolitics towards the South Caucasus and spark energy cooperation.

In the frameworks of the Armenian-Iranian and Georgian-Iranian relationships, there are some common concerns and conflicts of interests that stem from both internal and external factors. Each side has had to consider a series of delicate international issues in their dealings, which does not exclude the role of the economy, and particularly the energy sector.

This research analyzes current Iranian economic policy towards the South Caucasian states (particularly towards Armenia and Georgia,) and seeks to answer the following: how economic relations are affected by diplomatic relations, how Western influence in Georgia and Russian involvement in Armenia effect these bilateral relations, and what the prospects are for economic partnerships between Armenia and Iran, and between Georgia and Iran in the energy sector.

Introduction

Historically, the South Caucasus was and still is a key region for Iran.[1] After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of newly

---

[1] Djalili M.-R., *Iran and the Caucasus: Maintaining Some Pragmatism*, The Quarterly Journal, V. 1, Issue 3, 2002, p. 49

independent states in the South Caucasus, Iran was practically obliged to be as active as possible in the region due to its particular geopolitical and geo-economic position. To this end, Iran considers the role of competitive foreign actors such as Russia, Turkey, and the United States in its efforts to draft a plan.

Simultaneously, "South Caucasus-Iranian relations are influenced and shaped not only by the regional context but also by Russian-Iranian, US-Iranian, and European-Iranian relations."[2] Iranian foreign policy toward the South Caucasus states can be characterized by the following predominant issues: 1) The recognition of Russia's interests in the Caucasus and Central Asia, 2) The presence of Western powers in the Region, 3) Complicated relations with Azerbaijan, and 4) Competition with Turkey according to regional security problems.

During Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's presidency (1989-1997,) Iran considered Central Asian and Caucasian regions as the spheres of economic activities[3]. In Mohammad Khatami's presidency (1997-2005,) these regions were announced as spheres of Iranian civilization and culture.[4] In contrast to the latter ones during the Ahmadinejad's rule (2005-2013) they became an imminent arena not for cultural and economic but for political actions[5].

Despite the strategic change in Iranian foreign policy of the country, it is clear that Iran could not "overcome the presence" of the main political actors in the region such as USA and Russia.

Unlike his predecessors, the current Iranian president Hasan Rouhani delivers Iran's will to unite political, economic, and cultural aims in order to act in a more sophisticated manner towards other players, including the

---

[2]Rondeli Al., *Iran and Georgia – Relations could be closer,* Georgian Foundation for Strategic and International Studies, 2014, p. 5

[3] Niakooee S.A., Ejazee E.*, Foreign Policy and Economic Development: Iran under Rafsanjani, Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 5, No. 3, 2014, pp 195-197

[4]Ekhtiari Amiri R., Khorshidi M. and Soltani F., *Duplicate of domestic behavior in Iran's foreign policy arena during Khatami presidency,* Elixir Soc. Sci. 38, 2011, pp 4077-4078

[5] Obucina V., *Social Populism and the Futureof the Islamic Republic of Iran,*Croatian Political Science Review, Vol. 52, No. 4-5, 2015, p. 168

South Caucasus.[6] This new political strategy is demonstrated by the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2015, which creates new possibilities after the full lifting of U.N., U.S., and EU economic sanctions against Iran.[7] Simultaneously, it generated new prospects for bilateral relations with Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan (Iran-Azerbaijani economic relations are not covered in this paper.)

This research framework will analyze the following concepts: (1) Iranian economic policy towards the South Caucasian states (particularly towards Armenia and Georgia) and how the economic relations are affected by diplomatic relations, (2) How Western influence in Georgia and Russian involvement in Armenia effect these bilateral relations; and (3) Perspectives for cooperation in the energy sector and identifying potential for economic partnerships between Armenia and Iran, and between Georgia and Iran.

Georgia-Iranian bilateral relations from the economic perspective

Among the South Caucasian states, Georgia has the least developed relationship with Iran due to its lack of a shared border.[8] Furthermore, diplomatic relations were not very strong in the past as a result of Georgia's Western orientation.

During the Mohammad Khatami, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, and Hassan Rouhani presidencies (2004-present,) in Iran and after the Rose Revolution in Georgia (November 2003) high-level visits between the two countries no longer took place. However, during this period, high-level exchange visits with Armenia and Azerbaijan repeatedly occurred.

Nevertheless, current Georgian diplomacy attempts to improve its relations with Iran in order to gain a power balance in the region.

---

[6]*Iran's policy in the South Caucasus: Has Rouhani changed anything?*https://guevents.georgetown.edu/event/irans_policy_in_the_south_caucasus_has_rouhani_changed_anything_9873#.WBBNxOWLTMw 26.10.2016

[7] Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, http://www.state.gov/e/eb/tfs/spi/iran/jcpoa/ 26.10.2016

[8] Geostat-National Statistics office of Georgia, Georgian exports by countries/ Georgian imports by countries 1995-2015 http://www.geostat.ge/ ?action=page&p_id=134&lang=eng 26.10.2016

At the same time, Iran's economic policy towards Georgia is also promising. Iranian professor Mohammad Reza-Jalili wrote on the importance of Georgian-Iranian joint participation in international projects, stating:

"Unlike Armenia and Azerbaijan, Georgia does not have a direct border with Iran, but it is the only country in the region with the open sea passage. Georgia should try to use this potential by turning its territory into the transport and communications nerve center. Such a prospect will not leave indifferent even Iran."[9]

Today, the situation seems promising in this direction. In 2014 during the meeting with the new ambassador of Georgia to Iran, Rouhani stressed:

"We appreciate our contacts with Georgia. Your country represents for Iran an entry into the Black Sea ports, especially to Batumi that has for us paramount value. In this regard, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of laying a railway line from Iran to Georgia."[10]

Georgia's policy towards Iran differs from Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign policy in a plethora of ways. While not adhering to the Russian diplomacy security system, Georgia seeks to gain closer ties with the European Union and NATO.

On the other hand, the current Georgian government indicates that it is trying to balance relations with Russia, the EU, and NATO. While the government and the main opposition are committed to Georgia's pro-Western trajectory, for the first time in decades, the vote may result in one of the small pro-Russian parties to be elected to parliament.[11]

---

[9] Djalili M., *Iran and the Caucasus: Maintaining Some Pragmatism,* The Quarterly Journal, Volume 1, Issue 3, p. 49-57, 2002, http://procon.bg/bg/node/2878

[10]رییسجمهور: توسعهخطآهنایرانگرجستانبهنفعکلمنطقهاست h ttp://isna.ir/fa/news/93020201446 14.10.2016 (*President: The development of Iran-Georgia railway is in the interest of the entire region*)

[11] Georgia elections: Georgian Dream party faces off UNM, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/10/georgia-votes-key-parliamentary-election-161008042014237.html 26.10.2016

Georgia's foreign policy trajectory can be found in the developments of EU-Georgia relations. For the near future (2014-2020,) the key goal is defined as "to bring Georgia closer to the EU" bilaterally.[12]

However, Georgia has made several important strides toward deepening relations with Iran as a counterbalance to the threat of Russia and other powers. Generally, Russia lost its credibility and political influence in Georgia, unlike the situation with Azerbaijan and Armenia, despite still having instruments for influence.

Stronger economic ties with the Islamic Republic could support Tbilisi in its efforts to diversify its economic relationships abroad. According to a set of statistics from 2015, Georgia made significant trade achievements by diversifying its import volumes distributed to Russia and Turkey, which are Georgia's top-ranked import partners. Meanwhile, its export partners are listed as follows:(1) Azerbaijan,(2) Turkey, (3) Armenia, and (4) Russia, leaving Iran behind.[13] Currently, Iranian-Georgian commercial relations can be viewed that any signs of realistic cooperation are not visible due to Iran's previous sanctions and geographical features. Moreover, it is crucial to note the changes in political approximation towards Iran, particularly the fact that by lifting the sanctions, bilateral commercial relations have the potential to develop.

In the case of connecting the Iranian and Azerbaijani railways in Astana via the Georgian railway and ports, it is possible that there will be a significant increase in rail freight turnover. The highway project from Tabriz to Armenia seems important in this context.

As one of the energy powers in the South Caucasus, Iran has the potential to supply Georgia with gas (Iran has the world's second largest gas reserves after Russia). Also, Tehran is eager to find a new customer for energy exports, and to expand its economic ties. When discussing the small

---

[12] Implementation of the European Neighborhood Policy in Armenia: Progress in 2014 and recommendations for actions. High Representative of The European Union For Foreign Affairs And Security Policy. Brussels: SWD, 63 final, 2015

[13] Geostat-National Statistics office of Georgia, Georgian exports by countries/ Georgian imports by countries 1995-2015 http://www.geostat.ge/ ?action=page&p_id=134&lang=eng 26.10.2016

contract that seals natural gas exports from Iran to Georgia, Alireza Kameli, the managing director of the National Iranian Gas Export Company (NIGEC) emphasized the authorization requirement by the Armenian government in order to finalize the project.[14]

In this context, Iran is obliged to consider the presence of foreign actors, Russia, EU, and NATO, in addressing its relations with Georgia.

This 'Cold good neighborhood' between Iran and Georgia is also reflected in its economic relationship. Despite the proclaimed willingness of establishing closer economic contacts with Georgia, and after considering the gap between the two countries actual and potential economic relations, it is difficult for Iran to compete with Georgia's major political allies – Turkey, the U.S. and the EU.

The Prospects of Georgia-Iran Cooperation after lifting the sanctions

Iranian diplomacy in the South Caucasus, particularly in its dealings with Georgia, is mostly theoretical. It is limited by geography as the two countries do not directly share a border and by the presence of other political actors influence.

Nevertheless, Georgia's favorable geographical position, as well as Iran's rich energy resources and commercial-economic potential promote Georgia to become a bridge between Europe and Iran and if the sanctions are fully lifted, it can plan new projects. Also, it may be considered as a transit point for Iranian energy resources and for the shipping of Iranian cargo toward several destinations. In July 2015, six members of the Iranian Parliament visited Tbilisi to learn more about its economic reforms.[15] Iran's growing interest in Georgia is confirmed by statements from the speaker of the Iranian Parliament and Chairman of the Group of Friends of Georgia, which claim that the nuclear deal will have a positive impact on relations between the two countries.

---

[14] Iran to export 40 mcm/d of gas to Georgia, http://theiranproject.com/blog /2016/07/31/iran-export-40-mcmd-gas-georgia/ 31.10.2016
[15] Iranian MPs Visit Georgia, Civil Georgia, http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=28471, 1.10.16

In addition to the important economic revenues, transportation of Iranian gas to Europe through Georgia guarantees increased security and stability of a transit country.

At the same time, it is crucial to stress that Iran does not have a serious role in the South Caucasus energy sphere. The only stable "energy relation" that Iran has is the relation with Armenia. The connection project of the Iran-Armenia to Georgia, that would enable the gas pipeline to have a further exit to Europe, seems promising. However, execution of this project is complicated by technical and financial problems, and also by geo-political competition. It will require the involvement of extra regional actors that Iran rigidly opposes. Furthermore, it does not correspond to Russia's interests. The drop in oil prices does not help planning new pipeline projects. In turn, this cooperative direction cooperation of Iran, Armenia, and Georgia seems unrealistic in the near future.

It must be argued that due to the shorter route from Turkey, many experts are skeptical about the pipeline passing through Georgia.[16] To support the Georgian route, it can be stated that the Turkish route contains some security risks i.e. the increasing number of terrorist attacks, the Kurdish issue, etc. Additionally, there is the issue of Iranian and Turkish regional competition, within which Iran does not want to make its own energy supplies transit-dependent on Ankara.[17]

On the other hand, regardless of which route will be used for transit, the emergence of alternative gas suppliers for Europe provides an opportunity for Iran to take more principled action regarding its competition with Russia. To this end, Iran's strategy has become more cautious in order to avoid Russian interests and to compete with the predominant Western and Turkish influence. In dealing with Tehran, Tbilisi does not want to endanger its strategic relations with The U.N. and The UK.

---

[16] Maisaya V., *Islamic State, Iran and Georgia*,
http://www.for.ge/view.php?for_id=40037&cat=2 1.10.16
[17]*New Transit Corridor to Europe Bypasses Turkey*,
http://financialtribune.com/archive/2015/10/28/articles/domestic-economy/28928/new-transit-corridor-europe-bypasses-turkey 1.10.16

Even though lifting of Western sanctions on Iran grants independence to the latter for advancing its position in the South Caucasus, there are a set of explicit obstacles, including the lack of necessary infrastructures, and the opposition of the third parties. Overall, there is a gap between Iran and Georgia in the energy sector for the using this potential to mutually benefit.

Armenia-Iranian bilateral relations from the economic perspective

Over the years, Yerevan and Tehran have built up strong and stable relations. As it is highlighted by the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Edward Nalbandian, the two countries established close ties and promoted "effective cooperation" in all fields, including the energy sphere.[18] The two countries strategic links have created mutual "sympathy," and have created a possibility for safe and secure bilateral cooperation.

High-level visit exchanges between neighboring Armenia and Iran took place several times. Armenia plays a unique role in Iranian diplomacy and foreign policy. Within the framework of the 25th Anniversary of Armenia-Iranian Cooperation conference, the representative of Iran stressed, that both in the cases of Armenia and Iran the role of external factors has vital importance for them. Thus, the two countries share a common ideological outlook.

One of the factors of the strategic significance of Armenia is its advantageous geographic placement in the region, excluding the possibility of unification of Turkic-populated territories that threatens Iran's territorial integrity. It can be one of the factors derived from which Iran wants to see Armenia become powerful and independent.[19][20]

---

[18] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the republic of Armenia, *Bilateral Relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran,* Updated in November 2012 http://mfa.am/en/country-by-country/ir/

[19] Հարևանների նկատմամբ Իրանի քաղաքականությունը հիմնված է բարիդրացիության սկզբունքի վրա (Iran's policy towards the neighbours is based on the principle of "good neighbourly relations"), http://parstoday.com/hy/news/iran-i2491, 22.11.2016

There are certain preconditions in developing a close relationship between the two countries. Both sides display a willingness to deepen the established relationship and have repeatedly stated that there is serious ground for friendly ties between Iran and Armenia: 1) Both countries have enormous historical and cultural congenialities, and 2) Providing privileges to a neighboring Christian country is mutually beneficial from a security and stability standpoint.[21]

Oftentimes, Armenia seeks to be less dependent on Russia and to protect itself from the wary relationship with Azerbaijan. Armenia is neither a producer of oil nor natural gas; it is highly dependent on imported hydrocarbons. The main suppliers are Russia, which owns about 80% of the country's generating capacities and therefore Armenia is extremely dependent on Russia,) and Iran.[22]

Energy cooperation plays the largest role in dictating their mutual relations and in constructing and completing a gas pipeline from Iran to Armenia. Although the pipeline was supposed to weaken Yerevan's dependence on Russian gas, it is mostly controlled by Gazprom. Russia has become Iran's main competitor in Armenia's energy market and has successfully pressured Yerevan to reduce the pipeline's diameter in order to prevent Iran from exporting its gas to Georgia and to other countries.[23]

[20]Բեգիջանյան Է., Իրանի տեղունւդերը Հայաստանում ու Ադրբեջանում (*Iran's place and role in Armenia and Azerbaijan*),
http://www.lragir.am/index/arm/0/politics/view/115975 22.11.2016
[21]Իրանի արտաքին քաղաքականության մեջ Հայաստանը հատուկ տեղ է զբաղեցնում (*Armenia has a special place in the foreign policy of Iran*),
http://www.panarmenian.net/arm/interviews/52822/, 22.11.2016
[22]Ոլորտի գնահատում. Էներգետիկա, Երկրի գործընկերության ռազմավարություն. Հայաստան 2014-2018 (*Sector Assessment: Energy, Country Partnership Strategy: Armenia 2014-2018*),
https://www.adb.org/sites/default/ files/linked-documents/cps-arm-2014-2018-ssa-02-hy.pdf
[23]Հայ-Իրանական հարաբերությունները, պատժամիջոցներն ու Ռուսաստանը (*Armenian-Iranian relations, sanctions and Russia*),
http://www.a1plus.am/1386433.html 26.10.2016

Thus, the Armenian economy is linked with regional and Russian economic trends. In turn, the economic indicators depict the intensification of Iran's relations with Armenia.[24] In its 6th point, the 2014-2025 Strategic Program of Prospective Development of RA discusses the importance of the construction of Iranian-Armenian and Armenian-Georgian electric lines.[25]

The Prospects of Armenia-Iran cooperation after the lifting of sanctions

As previously stated, Iran does not play a serious role in the South Caucasus energy sphere. The only stable "energy relations" that Iran has, are with Armenia. Despite Iran's sanctions, there has always been a tolerant policy towards Armenian-Iranian cooperation by the West, which might consider building Armenian-Iranian relations as a countermeasure against Russia.

The end of sanctions on Iran inevitably shifts the strategic environment in the region, and the U.S. has sent positive signals regarding Iran's potential engagement with Armenia. Particularly, the U.S. ambassador to Armenia, Richard Mills, mentioned that "Armenia could become a platform for U.S.-Iran commercial relations" – thereby acknowledging that Iran may play an important role in reducing Armenia's dependency on Russia.[26] The statement subscribes to the assumption that Iran's ability to alter regional dynamics will provide Armenia with more room to maneuver its vulnerable relations with Russia.

There are some discussions that stipulate Iran and Armenia are planning to build a second pipeline with the capacity to deliver Iranian gas to other countries (the official opening ceremony of the first pipeline was in

---

[24]The Armenia-Iran Relationship, http://www.esisc.org/upload/publications /analyses/the-armenian-iran-relationship/Armenian-Iran%20relationship.pdf

[25]ՀՀ 2014-2025 թթ. հեռանկարային զարգացման ռազմավարական ծրագիր (*Strategic development perspective for the period of 2014-2025 in RA*), http://www.gov.am/am/prsp/

[26]https://www.cacianalyst.org/publications/analytical-articles/item/13343-the-potential-and-obstacles-to-armenia-iran-strategic-relations.html

2007 with the presence of both side's presidents.)[27] Also, there is a construction agreement on the Iran-Armenia gas pipeline and on the Agarak-Shinuhayr second high-voltage overhead transmission line, which will no longer be valid in eight years, it was signed in 2002 and is effective for 20 years.[28] Furthermore, Armenia and Iran have agreed to construct a third power transmission line connecting Armenian and Iranian power grids.[29] Additionally, the two countries have plans to build a large hydroelectric plant on the Arax River that flows along the Armenian-Iranian border.[30] Infrastructure projects such as the current construction of a highway from Armenia to the Iranian border are underway in order to increase the modest current trade volume of $105 million between the two countries.[31]

However, Armenia faces some challenges that limit the potential to strengthen its partnership with neighboring Iran. Another crucial issue is the *de facto* subordination of a number of state institutions, and a large part of that is due to the political-oligarchic elite to the Kremlin. Moreover, a number of agreements already bind Armenia to Russia primarily via the EEU and CSTO, precluding any tangible breakthrough with Iran without Russia's approval. Currently, monopolistic company "Armenia-Gazprom" (led and operated by Russia since 2013) has the authority to decide the thickness of imported Iranian gas, and whether or not to import, thus creating unequal competitive conditions.[32]

There are three sides in present-day Armenia-Iranian energy relations, where Russia is the main actor in decision-making. In this regard, it is viewed that in such counterproductive conditions, unproductive energetic

[27] Bilateral Relations, Trade and economic relations,
http://www.mfa.am/en/country-by-country/ir/
[28] Official News http://www.gov.am/en/news/item/79/
[29] ibid
[30] ibid
[31] Armenia deepens ties with embattled Iran,http://www.eurasianet.org/
departments/insight/articles/eav072806.shtml 18/10/2016.
[32] Հայ-Իրանական հարաբերությունները, պատժամիջոցներն ու
Ռուսաստանը, (Armenian Irainian relations, the sanctions, and Russia)
http://www.a1plus.am/1386433.html10.10.16

plans originated from Russian policy and interests towards Armenia, not from the existence of Iran's sanctions as made evident by the removal of the sanctions.

Therefore, deepening relations with Iran as a potential regional counterbalance and diversification of natural gas sources and supply routed is of paramount importance for Armenia to limit tariffs on Russian gas from withdrawing Russia from the region.

Potential Balance of the Third Side Influence in the Region by Iran

After the lifting of sanctions, Iran is able to fully return to the international "team" and develop or deepen political, economic, and other relations with countries, notably with the South Caucasus states (including Georgia, which had previously avoided intensive contacts with Iran.)

In addition, due to increased availability of large financial resources after the lifting of the sanctions, the Islamic Republic will have an easier time planning large-scale partnership objectives in the region.

Iran has traditional geopolitical interests towards the Region, which is driven by the following factors: 1) As a primary part of Iranian foreign policy, Iran seeks to show to the world that it can assume the role as a leader in the facilitating dialogue between Christian and Muslim civilizations, 2) In trying to develop increased cooperation with Armenia, Georgia, and Russia, Iran seeks to achieve its long-term goal, which is to become a springboard towards Europe in order to create cooperation ties for the future, 3) Iran as an energy producing and exporting country aims to create a variety of energy routes (in contrast to the routes through Azerbaijan and Turkey,) and in this sense, Iran is trying to export its energy resources via new directions.

Iran is extremely sensitive about the appearance of any external players in its neighborhood in The Caucasus. Iranian authorities are absolutely convinced that the problems of the Caucasus can be solved only by the countries in the region, stipulating that the presence of non-regional players in the region such as the U.S. or the U.K. only worsens the situation. With regards to conflicts, Iran considers that only regional actors

(Russia, Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia) must be involved, and Western powers should be excluded.

Logically, the common bond of Shi'a Islam should have brought Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan closer. However, the secular government of Azerbaijan is concerned with the potential growth of Iran's influence among its Shia population, which has caused an estrangement between the two countries.

On the other hand, the convergence of Georgia and Armenia with Iran does not correspond to Russian interests and Russian officials. In the Georgian case, Tbilisi tried several times to 'show' Iranians that Georgia is an ally of the U.S. and it will be used by Americans in case there is military action against Iran.[33] In turn, current quadrilateral energetic cooperation with Iran-Armenia-Georgia-Russia opens a new path for the development of mutual economic ties to take place.

Recent cooperation opportunities and the current progress between Iran and Russia indicate that the leaders of Iran gave the highest priority to Russian relations.[34] The pragmatism of Iranian politics towards Russia contradicts even the most fundamental principles of the Iranian constitution, as previously mentioned: "defense of the rights of all Muslims without allying any hegemonic power."[35] To Tehran, the strategic and economic benefits of a constructive relationship with Moscow were too valuable to risk for the uncertain gains of assisting its coreligionists.[36] The reason of this bilateral potential cooperation is mostly driven by the

---

[33]Sanikidze G., *Turkey, Iran and the South Caucasus: Challenges for Regional Policy after the 2008 August War*, Issue No: 02, 2011, pp. 78-89

[34] Geranmayeh E., Liik K., *The new power couple: Russia and Iran in the Middle East*,2016, http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/iran_and_russia _middle_east_power_couple_7113

[35]Ehteshami A., Zweiri M.,*Iran's Foreign Policy: From Khatami to Ahmadinejad*, Berkshire: Ithaca Press, 2008, XII.

[36]Maloney S., *Iran's Long Reach: Iran as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, Washington, D.C.: US Institute for Peace Press, 2008, p. 36.

commonalities of their wider view of creation and maintain a "multipolar" world.[37]

However, the Russo-Iranian relations are fragile due to existent mutual distrust and ongoing conflicts that either are unresolved or will be difficult to resolve. There are several factors to consider in light of the new U.S. government under the Trump Administration.

Therefore, Moscow is opposed to the significant presence of any other regional power.[38] In turn, Iranian-Russian relations were primarily like "a marriage of convenience and a matter of mutual commercial benefit." Neither side demonstrated any desire for a long-term commitment; both countries seemed suspicious of the other and were willing to take opposing positions (i.e. Caspian demarcation, pipeline strategies, and relations with particular Caspian states) when it suited immediate interests.[39] For example, previous experiences have shown that Russia did not want Central Asia's oil and gas to be exported via Iran. Russia was unhappy with Iranian natural gas exports to Armenia and Georgia.

On the other hand, in opposition to the Moscow's and Tehran's interests, this multipolar ideology faces the greatest foreign obstacle in light of the U.S., which is always committed to the principle that will hamper any kind of hegemony in the region. This ideology is primarily aimed against the activation of Iran.

The recent political conditions concerning the U.S. presidential campaign and the end result of the election with the Republican candidate (November 8, 2016) also are concerning as it is a basis for potential negative changes of these regional economic relations. These relations are mostly attached to international relations and the reason being that the

---

[37] Geranmayeh E., Liik K., *The new power couple: Russia and Iran in the Middle East*, 2016, http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary /iran_and_russia_middle_east_power_couple_7113

[38] Hunter Sh.*, Iran's Foreign Policy in the Post-Soviet Era: Resisting the New International Order*, Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010, p. 106.

[39] Keddie N.R., Matthee R. (eds). *Iran and the Surrounding World interactions in Culture and Cultural Politics.* Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2002, p.365

Trump administration has many options to bring significant pressure to bear on Iran.

Conclusions

In the framework of the Armenian-Iranian and Georgian-Iranian relationships, there are some shared concerns and conflicts of interests that stem from both internal and external factors. Each side has had to consider a series of delicate international issues in their dealings, which does not exclude the role of the economy, particularly the energy sector.

The bilateral relations of these countries has been promising in the economic sphere, notably in the energy sector. For Armenia and Georgia, Iran can be considered as an alternative supplier of energy while taking into account that Iran always looks for a variety of energy routes guided by its own interests in the region. In the common willingness to liberate energy and economic partnerships, both sides have renewed their drive for energy cooperation.

To summarize, it can be argued that despite the promising steps towards deeper energy cooperation both between Iran-Georgia and Iran-Armenia, they share the common fate in the way that they are not independent in their decision-making processes. At the same time, these partnerships cannot be realistic unless it does not refer to all of the spheres of relations. In other words, there is a need to find a comprehensive approach, otherwise, it will only exacerbate the existing gap.

The elimination of the sanctions was a phenomenal breakthrough in the Iranian history that will change the region and likely the entire world. It is crucial to understand that from the regional standpoint, there were no bilateral "independent" relations between the South Caucasian independent states and Iran without sanctions. Now, it is difficult to further predict possible developments of these relations in light of an "unambiguous" Iranian policy. Particularly, these developments are driven by the new political reality and, of course, foreign factors.

In this regard, it is interesting to note the optimistic viewpoints of a number of local (Iranian, Armenian, and Georgian) analysts and researchers

who are convinced that Armenian-Iranian and Georgian-Iranian relations are on a track of unprecedented progress.

It is a unique notion to convince these states (SC's states and Iran) that hold the optimistic vision which generates results. On the contrary, they outline non-binding action plans that maintain that the external actors will influence the current situation for their own potential profit.

To conclude, it can be stressed that despite the promising steps towards the deepening energy cooperation both between Iran-Georgia and Iran-Armenia, they share the common fate such that they are not independent in their decision-making processes. At the same time, these partnerships cannot develop in reality unless it does not refer to every sphere of influence.In other words, there is a dire need to implement a comprehensive approach because if it does not take place, it will only exacerbate the existing gap.

It is also worth mentioning that in both cases, – the Armenia-Iranian and Georgian-Iranian energy sphere partnerships – there are a plethora of agreements and projects that if implemented, all players will mutually benefit. Nevertheless, the existing projects are extremely dependent on the inner-workings of the "bipolar world."

With regards to cooperation or competition between Armenia and Georgia in the context of economic partnerships with Iran, it must be emphasized that there are no obvious cases of conflict of interests between them. The friendly relationship between Armenia and Georgia provides an opportunity to use the mutual favorable geopolitical conditions to create a stable and safe route linking Iran, Armenia, and Georgia.

ՔԱՅԼ ԱՌԱՋ, ՔԱՅԼ ՀԵՏ. ԻՐԱՆԻ ՏՏՏԵՍԱԿԱՆ ՔԱՂԱՔԱԿԱՆՈՒԹՅՈՒՆՆ ՀԱՐԱՎԱՅԻՆ ԿՈՎԿԱՍՈՒՄ ՍԱՆԿՑԻԱՆԵՐԻ ՎԵՐԱՑՈՒՄԻՑ ՀԵՏՈ
Ամփոփագիր

Լուսինե Քոսակյան,
Երևանի Պետական Համալսարան
lusine.kosakyan@yahoo.com

Բանալի բառեր ՝ Իրան, Հայաստան, Վրաստան, Էներգետիկ համագործակցություն, սանկցիաների վերացում, «երկրներ աշխարհի»:

Իրանի նկատմամբ սանկցիաների վերացմանը հաջորդած որոշակի զարգացումները Հարավային Կովկասի նկատմամբ էներգետիկ քաղաքականության վերաձևավորման և էներգետիկ համագործակցության նորացման հնարավորություն ստեղծեցին:

Հայ-իրանական և վրաց-իրանական հարաբերությունների շրջանակներում կան որոշակի մտավախություններ ու շահերի բախումներ, որոնք բխում են թե՛ ներքին, և թե՛ արտաքին գործոններից: Յուրաքանչյուր կողմն իր արտաքին քաղաքականությունում՝ ներառյալ տնտեսությունը և մասնավորապես էներգետիկ ոլորտը, պարտավոր է հաշվի առնել որոշակի թվով միջազգային նոր հանգամանքներ:

Սույն ուսումնասիրությունը վերլուծում է ներկայումս Իրանի տնտեսական քաղաքականությունը Հվ. Կովկասում (մասնավորապես Հայաստանում և Վրաստանում), և թե ինչքանով է տնտեսական քաղաքականությունը կախյալ դիվանագիտական հարաբերություններից, ինչպես է արևմտյան ազդեցությունը Վրաստանում և Ռուսաստանի ներգրավվածությունը Հայաստանում ազդում այս երկկողմ հարաբերությունների վրա, ինչպես նաև, էներգետիկ ոլորտում Հայաստան-Իրան, Վրաստան-Իրան երկկողմ հնարավոր համագործակցությունները:

TEACHING ARMENIAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE AT TBILISI STATE UNIVERSITY (TSU)

Tinatin Soziashvili,
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University
t.soziashvili@gmail.com

Key words: *Armenology, TSU, Education*

Abstract

This paper discusses the establishment and development process of the department of Armenology at Tbilisi State University. The main goal is to introduce the development environment for Armenological studies at different stages at Tbilisi State University.

The first part of this paper consists of a historical review. In the second part of the article, the current situation is analyzed. The information on the TSU website and curriculum structures are studied. The teaching-learning process at the department of Armenology is also observed. In addition to observation, the main research methods used in this study rely on semi-structured and in-depth interviews with professors and students.

It should be noted that the Armenology Department suffers from a lack of students; the studies in this direction are not as intensive as in the past. Mainly, the Georgian-Armenians – citizens of Georgia, – and some Georgian and Turkish students from Vani are showing interest in studying Armenian.

The clear decline of the Armenology sphere does not really indicate any unawareness of its importance, especially for historians and linguists. Moreover, it does not mean that there is no need for Armenology anymore or for the Armenian sources in general. It all depends on the market economy, which determines scientific interests. Nowadays, the humanities – including Armenology as its branch – is generally not favored.

Throughout their longstanding neighborly co-existence, Georgians and Armenians always had a close relationship. Cultural relations existed within the framework of strides in literary and scientific ties. Many artistic or scientific works were translated from Armenian to Georgian and vice versa. This process was intense and promotes cultural cooperation.[1]

The interest in Armenian culture and language has always existed in Georgian society.[2] The interest was deepened when Niko Marr appeared in the scientific arena in the 19th century.

Mr. Zaza Alexidze views the basics of Armenology in the more distant past in Georgia. From 1978-2015, he worked as the head of the Tbilisi State University, Department of Armenology. Since 2007, he has been a professor and the head of the Bachelor of Arts (BA) program of Armenology at TSU.

The development of Armenology in Georgia as a scientific discipline is connected to French Orientalist and Kartvelologist (Georgian studies expert) Marie-Felicite Brosset. Zaza Alekisidze finds that the starting point of Armenian studies in Georgia is connected to the development of the historical proceedings. He cooperated with Georgian historians and had a strong command of the Georgian language. Marie Brosset translated "The Georgian Chronicles" in French. He was not an Armenologist, but in the process of working with Georgian documents, he used Armenian sources. The new era of Armenology is connected with Niko Marr's name. Niko Marr was a linguist, philologist, Orientalist, archaeologist, and a cultural historian. After gaining his initial education background at Kutaisi gymnasium, he then entered the Faculty of Oriental Studies of St. Petersburg University (with the specialization on Georgian Studies) in 1884. Niko Marr largely contributed to the development of Georgian and Armenian Linguistics. Marr studied the Armenian language, and the Georgian and Armenian languages' relation to other languages. He was one of those scholars who praised the theory or idea that the Armenian language does not belong to the Indo-European family of languages: it was

---

[1] Alexidze Zaza. Christian Caucasus, History and Philology Studies, volume 2, 2011, Tbilisi, p.391-396

[2] Ibid.,p.391-396

independent. Niko Marr categorically stated, " [The] Armenian language is still an unsolved mystery for scientists." Marr studied the relationship between the Armenian and Georgian languages in the initial period of their formation and noted that Armenians and Georgians' distant ancestors had close neighborly relations.[3] In Zaza Alexidze's opinion, this field can be referred to as Georgian-Armenian philology, which aimed to raise and solve the problems of the Christian Caucasus. Niko Marr is also connected with the group of scholars that partake in "thinking within the new approaches." Ivahe Javakhishvili was one of the members of the group.[4] In 1895, after graduating from the gymnasium, Ivane Javakhishvili entered the Armenian-Georgian-Iranian section of the St. Petersburg University Faculty of Oriental Studies, mainly focusing on Georgian and Armenian history. Iv. Javakhishvili studied Georgian Language and Literature by Alexander Tsagareli (a well-known linguist, philosopher, historian, paleographers, journalist, essayist and literary critic, who was elected as an Assistant Professor of Georgian Narratives. The whole energy of his own was dedicated to the fight for rights of the Georgian Narratives at the St. Petersburg University,) at the University of St. Petersburg, Armenian language and literature - by Niko Marr. Iv. Javakhishvili lectured at St. Petersburg University Faculty of Oriental Languages. He held the position of Private-Docent at the Department of Armenian-Georgian Philology and was enrolled in a number of special courses on the history of Georgia and Armenia, as well as historical studies of the aforementioned countries. The courses were based on the results of his own scientific research. In 1907, Ivane Javakhishvili successfully defended a Masters thesis on "The Old State System of Georgia and Armenia." Ivane Jvakhishvili and his collaborators were aware that the development of Armenology was closely

---

[3] Baramidze Alexander. Essays on the history of Georgian literature. Volume 5, publishing house "Metsniereba", Tbilisi, 1971, p. 239-279

Chikobava Arnold. Ibero-Caucasian languages, the study of history. Publishing house "Ganatleba", Tbilisi, 1965, p. 324-326.

Dzidziguri Shota. Niko Mari Georgian cultural researcher. Publishing house "Metsniereba", 1985, p. 15, 105-106

[4] Alexidze Zaza. Christian Caucasus, History and Philology Studies, volume 2, 2011, Tbilisi, p.391-396

tied to the development of Georgian Studies. Due to this, Armenology courses were introduced in the curriculum in the newly established University in 1918. In 1922, the faculty of Armenology at Tbilisi State University was established. In 1945, the Department of Armenian Language and Literature was introduced. It currently operates under the same curriculum and is targeted for students specialized in Armenology.[5] In 1929, the professor at the University of Leon Melikset-Beg (1890-1963) became the Chair of Armenology Department, Tbilisi-Armenian sect. He was a chair until his death in 1963. His interests were wide and included the literature, archeology, art history, ethnography, epigraphy, law, bibliography of Armenian studies, etc. He was knowledgeable in Armenian and Georgian languages, both ancient and modern. His work served as a bridge between Georgian studies and Armenology.[6] Armenology actively developed during the times of Ilia Abuladze (1901-1968.) He was a philologist, a specialist in ancient Georgian language and literature, Armenologist, lexicographer, and Rustvelologist. He was a founder of the Institute of Manuscripts and served as its first director from 1959-1968. Ilia Abuladze is an author of more than one hundred scholarly works, among which a significant part is dedicated to the Georgian-Armenian philological problems. His analysis of ancient literary sources has revealed bilaterally within Georgian-Armenian literary relations.[7]

Ancient and modern Armenian languages have consistently been actively studied in Georgia. Among the significant amount of scholars engaged in it was David Kipshidze (1890-1919.) He graduated from St.

---

[5]Javakhishvili Ivane. Works in twelve volumes, volume I, Tbilisi State University, Tbilisi 1979, p.10-30

Kaukhchishvili Simon, Ivane Javakhishvili, Publishing house "Ganatleba", Tbilisi 1976, p.3-38

[6]Jikia sergi. professor-Leon Melkiset Beg life and work. Tbilisi State University, Volume 99, Oriental Series III, 1962, p.9-16

Babunashvili Zaur, Nozadze Teimuraz, Patriot Cloister, Tbilisi, 1994, p. 265-266

[7]Private archives description - Ilia Abuladze, National Center of Manuscripts, volume 2, 2010 of Tbilisi, p.7-12

Babunashvili Zaur, Nozadze Teimuraz, Patriot Cloister, Tbilisi, 1994, p.27-28

Philological-historical explorations, Mravaltavi X, dedicated to the 80th anniversary of Ilia Abuladze, Tbilisi, 1983, p. 3-15

Petersburg University Faculty of Oriental Studies, with the specialization in Georgian Studies. He was actively involved in the work of the "Georgian Studies Circle," lead by Ivane Javakhishvili. In 1916, D. Kipshidze graduated from the St. Petersburg University Department of Georgian-Armenian Studies. He studied the cave cities, including the capital of Armenia, Anisi. In 1918, he was invited to the University of Tbilisi where he taught the Armenian language until his death in 1919.[8]

Ivan (Vano) Shilakadze was born on May 24, 1910. He graduated from Tbilisi State University with honors in 1937. Since 1938, he was a postgraduate student of the University. He defended his Candidate Thesis in 1944 and since then, he became a University Professor. In 1964, Ivan was elected as the head of the Department of Armenology until his death in 1978. In 1966, he defended a doctoral thesis and was awarded the honorary title of a professor. In the last years of his life, Ivane Shilakadze founded an Armenian seminar, which aimed to unify specialists working in different scientific institutions. The seminar was regularly conducted, and representatives from the neighboring sectors also participated. Under his guidance, the library of the Armenology Chair (which was based on his teacher and lecturer Leon Melikset-Beg's library) was filled with unique literature. After his death, according to his desire, the Chair (which consisted of about 700 literary works) was given to his personal library of Armenology.

Ivane Shilakadze is the author of about 80 works (mainly about Georgian-Armenian linguistic issues,) and among them, five are published as separate books, which include the old and new Armenian grammar text-books that are not still missing the actuality. Together with scientific and pedagogical work, he was involved in intensive translation processes (translated and published many works of Armenian classics and modern authors.) Ivane Shilakadze spent a great time studying Georgian folk music and authored several interesting works in this field too.[9]

---

[8]Babunashvili Zaur, Nozadze Teimuraz, Patriot Cloister, Tbilisi, 1994, p.360-361
[9] Chantladze, N. (2017, April 7). Ivane Shalikadze. (Interview with T. Soziashvili) Tbilisi.

To analyze the current situation, Prof. Zaza Alexidze mentioned that the interest in Armenology is increased among Georgian citizens with ethnic Armenian backgrounds. According to Mr. Alexidze's opinion, the Armenology department obtained a new function: to make ethnic Armenians familiar to the Georgian School of Armenology and thus to the Georgian-Armenian scholarly interrelations. Mr. Aelksidze hopes that in the future, there will be better opportunities established for Georgian-Armenian academic cooperation and for the students whose native language is Armenian and will be able to be involved in the teaching process at high schools after finishing their studies at the Armenology Department.

The Armenology program is included in the Oriental Studies curriculum at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Faculty of Humanities, among which there are programs such as Turkish, Iranian, Arabic studies, etc. As identified by the head of the Armenology Department and by the lecturers, there is a need for Armenian language and literature in almost every field (teaching and research institutions, libraries, museums, foreign affairs and diplomatic missions, regional relations, internal and border agencies etc.) At first glance, the market demand for Armenian language and literature, in their opinion, is quite large.

To analyze the current Armenology teaching situation, the information regarding the program on the TSU website has been investigated. It contains the general description of the program as well as the outlines of the courses. Syllabi were introduced in 2011-2012. The main objective of the program is to encapture the wide humanitarian perception of science. In the goals of the program, the Armenology program prepares students for the labor market as practitioners, and as research and analytical workers. Armenology is the area that includes the work on problematic and controversial concerns regarding Georgian-Armenian relations. This program aims to provide knowledge on improving the understanding of cultural diversity, and supports tolerance towards different cultures and respecting the freedom of thought.[10]

---

[10]https://www.tsu.ge/data/file_db/QA_humanities/BA_Armenologia.pdf(Last available at 11/10/2016)

The Faculty of Humanities Armenology Bachelor programs include highly qualified specialists in the field, rounding appropriate training, guest lecturers, teachers and researchers, who have appropriate academic profiles and degrees, and teaching and research experience. Zaza Alexidze - Full Professor (former head) teaches subjects such as Classical Armenian language, Georgian-Armenian linguistic and literary relations, The History of Relations between the Georgian and Armenian Churches from the 4th-19th centuries, and Theory and Practice of translating from Armenian into Georgian. Since the departure of Zaza Alexidze, Natia Chantladze - Doctor of History (head of the department) is teaching the aforementioned subjects as well as the Modern Armenian language, History of Armenian Literature and Folklore, and a practice course on translation and interpreting in the Modern Armenian language. Nino Gokadze - (guest teacher,) is a language specialist and is teaching students the Modern Armenian language. Lela Jejelava - the teacher from Language Centre, is interested in modern Armenian politics, economy, and society. Dali Chitunashvili - Doctor (guest teacher) teaches the history of Armenia.

The Armenology program contains 17 courses:[11]

1. **Modern Armenian language 1,2,3,4.** This is a course that teaches students the Armenian alphabet and Armenian language phonetics. Students learn the necessary vocabulary and start to understand simple texts. After the completing the course, the students are knowledgeable in basic vocabulary: they can write, read, translate, and express themselves in Armenian. The outline guarantees to give students a solid knowledge-base of the Armenian language phonetic-phonological, morphological, and syntactic systems.

2. **Classical Armenian language 1, 2, 3.:** The course offers knowledge of classical Armenian Language, it's morphological and syntaxes' peculiarities. After completing the course, the students will be able to read the texts (literary and historical sources, epigraphic inscriptions) in classical Armenian of average complexity.

---

[11]https://www.tsu.ge/data/file_db/faculty_humanities/Armenian%20Studies.pdf (Last Available 23/11/2016)

3. **Theory and practice of translating from Armenian into Georgian:** This course offers students the opportunity to improve their skills in artistic and scientific translation. The students will be acquainted with the peculiarities of translation.

4. **History of the Armenian Literature and Folklore 1, 2, 3**.: The course teaches Armenian literature, history, and folklore of the early period. The knowledge of major genres of literature and the content of main works will be transmitted. The focus will be fixed on the texts of X-XIV cc. through the history of the XV-XX cc. Armenian Literature will be also discussed.

5. **History of Armenia 1, 2:** One part of the course will study the Armenian history from ancient times to the tenth century. The second part of the course covers the eleventh century to the beginning of the twentieth century. Students will learn about the peculiarities of the development of Armenian culture, as well as the epoch of historical sources and scientific literature. They will analyze and contribute to Georgian-Armenian historical relations.

6. **Armenia today (politics, economics, society)**. The course will examine the situation in the USSR and Armenia's declaration of independence. The main focus will be Georgian-Armenian relations in the modern era, its problems, and prospects.

7. **The History of relations of the Georgian and Armenian Churches in IV-XIX cc.:** This course explores the history of relations between Georgian and Armenian churches, and the characteristics of beliefs and ritual practices. These are the issues, which are important to study the history and literature of the Christian Caucasus.

8. **Georgian-Armenian linguistic and literary relations:** This course discusses the Georgian-Armenian literary and linguistic relations, its problems, and the ways of their analyses.

9. **Practice in translation and interpretation of modern Armenian language**: This course offers the opportunity to improve the skills and knowledge of translation, the knowledge of solid syntactic and phraseological constructions, and modern terminology, which are usually

used in official speeches and communication in media, correspondence, documents, and notarial activities.

I applied observation and interviewing for data collection regarding the teaching-learning process at the department of Armenology. The interviews were a combination of semi-structured and in-depth with the professors and students.

Our findings show that the Armenology Department suffers from a lack of students. At present, there are only 10 students. The ethnic composition of the students is the following: six Armenian, two Turkish, and two Georgian students. The students that are interested in studying Armenian are Georgian Armenians – citizens of Georgia. This can be explained by several reasons: first, Armenian is their native language and their desire and interest to learn it is high, the explanation is that they want to know more about the country of their historical origins. During the interviews, two students mentioned that it is very difficult to find a job after finishing this program, so they decided to pursue a major in Georgian Philology and keep Armenology as a minor. This strategy provides them with a strong possibility to be prepared after graduation and to go back to their villages to begin working at the Armenian schools as teachers.

The students from Turkey noted that Armenology is not taught in Turkish universities, which is why they decided to come to Georgia. They learn Georgian and Armenian in efforts to have a specific knowledge, which is rare in Turkey and thus is in higher demand in the labor market to gain more income. During the conversation, the students noted that they are coming from the city of Van in Turkey, which was an Armenian-populated territory in old times, and nowadays is settled by Turkish Armenians. Elderly people there still remember the Armenian language. One student's grandmother was of Armenian descent. He often goes to Yerevan. Despite the fact that students identify themselves as Turks, they are proving their Armenian roots and they do believe that the knowledge of Armenian will improve their career possibilities.

For this study I conducted interviews with the professors of Armenology Department Prof. Zaza Alexidze, Prof. Natia Chantladze and

Nino Gokadze. The former head of the TSU Department of Armenology Prof. Alexidze himself was studying at the faculty of history and decided to study the Armenian language. He had outstanding professors such as Ivane Shilakadze and Ilia Abuladze. These teachers influenced his future. Later, he started to work at the Institute of Manuscripts and deepened his knowledge in the field. He also had the possibility to visit the Armenian villages to practice the language and improve his speaking skills.

Prof. Alexidze remembers how interesting of a field it was when he was a student. In his opinion, the reason may come from the former education system when the students at the Faculty of History, Department of Oriental Studies were attending the courses held by the Turkologists, Iranists, Armenologists, etc. The students were receiving the necessary overview on the subjects and later on they were making their own decision on which direction to choose.

Prof. Alexidze states that the number of ethnic Georgian students willing to study Armenology is decreasing, especially after gaining independence. They are more attracted to the Far East Countries and its cultures and travel possibilities, thus the neighboring Armenia is dropped out of their interests.

There was a period when the Georgian citizens with Armenian origins started to be more active. They were studying Armenian culture and language. Currently, the Armenology department is in crisis due to the students. Prof. Alexidze still hopes that the problem will be resolved and the students will again gain the interest in such an interesting and important field.

Since 2015, Prof. Natia Chantladze has been the head of the Department of Armenology at TSU. She was interested in history and archeology, but the role of Prof. Zaza Alexidze was a significant factor in her decision to become an Armenologist. Prof. Alexidze encouraged her interest in investigating Georgian-Armenian historical sources, and she decided to choose Armenology considering the wanting to be involved in scientific research in the future. Gokadze Nino, the Armenian specialist, thinks that her life was accidentally connected to the department of Armenology. When she was entering the University, the Armenology

department was easily accessible compared to the others, thus she decided to study the Armenian language. Both professors are devoted to their works and the Department. They are trying to attract and engage students in the learning process of Armenian culture. In their opinion, one of the reasons that first-grade students of ethnic Georgians do not continue their studies in the Armenology Department is the complexity of the discipline, which includes the necessity to study the Armenian language. An even more problematic factor is the employment-perspective.

Conclusion

Armenian language and Armenian-lingual sources were always of high interest in Georgia in the past. This interest introduces such a group of great scholars as Niko Marr, Ivane Javakhishvili, Ilia Abuladze, etc. The Department of Armenology at TSU was established quite early and it exists today. However, it should be noted that the studies in this direction are not as intensive as before. The Armenology department experiences the lack of students. As Prof. Zaza Alexidze mentioned in one of his books, " The Christian Caucasus," the current Armenology profile has been modified. Before, the main research field consisted of Armenian written sources for comparative analyses of Georgian history, whereas now more attention is paid to Armenian philology. The students with this kind of knowledge are going to be involved in pedagogical activities at the schools. In the best cases, they will work as translators and will be employed at companies and non-governmental organizations where the Armenian language is necessary, but such cases are rare.

The clear decline of the Armenology sphere of does not really stipulate the unawareness of its importance, especially for historians and linguists; but it does not mean that there is no need to understand the meaning of Armenology anymore or of the Armenian sources. It all depends on the market economy, which determines scientific interests. Nowadays, the humanities – including Armenology as a distinct branch – is not generally popular.

Bibliography:

1**. Baramidze Alexander.** Essays on the history of Georgian literature. volume 5, Publishing house "Metsniereba", Tbilisi, 1971.

2. **Chikobava Arnold**. Ibero-Caucasian languages, the study of history. Publishing house"Ganatleba", Tbilisi, 1965.

3**. Dzidziguri Shota**. Niko MarrResearcher of Georgian Culture. Publishing house "Metsniereba", 1985.

4**. Alexidze Zaza**. Christian Caucasus, History and Philology Studies, volume 2, 2011, Tbilisi.

5. **Javakhishvili Ivane**, Works in twelve volumes, Volume I, Tbilisi State University, 1979.

6. **Kaukhchishvili Simon**, Ivane Javakhishvili, Publishing house "Ganatleba", Tbilisi 1976.

7. **SergiJikia**, professor-Leon Melkiset Beg life and work. Tbilisi State University, volume 99, Oriental Series III, 1962.

8. **Babunashvili Zaur, Nozadze Teimuraz**, Patriot Cloister, Tbilisi, 1994.

9. **Description of the personal archives - Ilia Abuladze**, National Center of Manuscripts, Volume 2, Tbilisi, 2010.

10. **Philological-historical explorations, Mravaltavi X**, dedicated to the 80th anniversary of Ilia Abuladze, Tbilisi, 1983.

11. **Chantladze, N. (2017, April 7). Ivane Shalikadze**. (T. Soziashvili interviewer) Tbilisi.

ՀԱՅՈՑ ԼԵԶՎԻ ԵՎ ՄՇԱԿՈՒՅԹԻ ԴԱՍԱՎԱՆԴՈՒՄԸ ՎՐԱՍՏԱՆՈՒՄ. ԹԲԻԼԻՍԻԻ ՊԵՏԱԿԱՆ ՀԱՄԱԼՍԱՐԱՆԻ (ԹՊՀ) ՕՐԻՆԱԿԸ
Ամփոփագիր

Թինաթին Սոզիաշվիլի,
Իվանե Ջավախիշվիլի Թբիլիսի Պետական Համալսարան
t.soziashvili@gmail.com

Բանալի բառեր. *Հայագիտություն, ԹՊՀ, կրթություն, աշխատաշուկա:*

Այս հոդվածում քննարկվում է Թբիլիսիի պետական համալսարանում հայագիտության բաժնի հիմնադրման ու զարգացման գործընթացը: Հիմնական նպատակն է ներկայացնել Թբիլիսիի պետական համալսարանում հայկական ուսումնասիրությունների միջավայրը տարբեր ժամանակահատվածներում:

Ուսումնասիրության առաջին մասը բաղկացած է պատմական վերլուծությունից: Հոդվածի երկրորդ մասում վերլուծվում է ներկայիս դրությունը: Դիտարկվել են ԹՊՀ կայքում տեղադրված տեղեկությունները և դասընթացների կառուցվածքները: Հայագիտության բաժնում սովորելու-սովորեցնելու գործընթացները ևս դիտարկվել են: Ի հավելումն դիտարկումների, որպես հիմնական ուսումնասիրության մեթոդներ կիրառվել են կիսաստանդարտացված և խորին հարցազրույցներ դասախոսների և ուսանողների հետ:

Պետք է նշել, որ հայագիտության բաժնում կա ուսանողների պակաս, իսկ դասընթացներն այս ուղղությամբ այնքան ինտենսիվ չեն, որքան անցյալում: Հիմնականում վրացահայերը՝ Վրաստանի

քաղաքացիներ, ինչպես նաև որոշ վրացի և Վանից թուրք ուսանողներ հետաքրքրություն են ցուցաբերում հայերենի ուսումնասիրության գործում:

Հայագիտության ոլորտի հանդեպ հետաքրքրության հստակ անկումը չի վկայում դրա կարևորության չգիտակցման մասին, հատկապես պատմաբանների ու լեզվաբանների շրջանում: Ավելին, դա չի նշանակում, որ հայագիտության կամ հայկական աղբյուրների ուսումնասիրության` ընդհանուր առմամբ կարիքն այլևս չկա: Այս ամենը կախված է շուկայական տնտեսությունից, որը մեծապես պայմանավորում է նաև գիտակրթական հետաքրքրությունները: Ներկայումս հումանիտար ոլորտները, որոնց մի ճյուղ է նաև հայագիտությունը, ընդհանուր առմամբ շատ պահանջարկ չունեն` հետագայում աշխատատեղերի սակավության պատճառով:

SCHOOLS, MOSQUES AND RESTAURANTS: UNDERSTANDING TURKEY'S "SOFT POWER" IN AJARA

Sona Sukiasyan,
Yerevan State University
sonasukiasyan19@gmail.com

Abstract

This research analyzes Turkish-Georgian relations, focusing on Turkish influence on Ajara and its formal and informal educational system, culture, and Turkey's use of "soft power." This paper will review Turkey's main institutions and policies, political mechanisms, and sources of influence in Ajara. Specifically, it will cover the Muslim community in Ajara and address peculiarities in its educational system, culture, religion and "Gulen Movement" in context of Turkey's foreign policy towards Georgia.

Introduction

Throughout history, the South Caucasus region has been and continues to be a cradle of religious, national, and ethnic divergences. Currently, regional interests are clashing with global ones: Turkish and Iranian interests conflict with those of Russia, The United States, and the European Union. The shifts in relations of the aforementioned regional and global actors heavily influence events and livelihood in the South Caucasus. At present, Turkey has an especially active role in these political processes and today Turkey plays important role in the life of region's states.

After the "Justice and Development Party" (AKP) came into power in 2002, key changes took place in Turkish foreign policy. Over the past decade, Turkey became actively engaged in the political processes in the Middle East, South Caucasus, Central and East Asia. The South Caucasus,

which includes Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, has always remained important in Turkish foreign policy. To this end, Turkey and Georgia have friendly relations: the two countries are actively cooperating and collaborating in a plethora of fields such as energy, economy, trade, and others.

This paper draws upon several professional literary and academic sources in Armenian, Turkish, Russian and English. To present Turkey's role in Ajara's educational and cultural fields, this study incorporates the Turkey's foreign policy vision, focusing on its approaches to the South Caucasus and moreover, on Turkish foreign policy towards Georgia. This research also analyzes Turkey's main political institutions and organizations by investigating its use of "soft power" in conducting foreign policy.

It is important to note that the findings in this paper draw upon primary fieldwork from my trip to Ajara, of which include dialogues with residents and with six citizens of Turkey who live in and do business in Ajara. It also refers to a conversation-style interview with a group that conducted fieldwork in Ajara in April 2016 for an anthropological project titled "Caucasus, Conflict, Culture," which contains partnerships from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Germany, and is funded by the DAAD and the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Additionally, the primary research used in this study considers two separate interviews: one with Ruslan Baramidze, a senior researcher at Shota Rustaveli University in Batumi, and the other with former general counsel of Armenia in Batumi Aram Grigoryan. All of the collected materials i.e. fieldwork, surveys, and interviews in conjunction with the aforementioned secondary research comprise the bulk of raw data used in this paper.

A brief historical overview

Ajara is an autonomous republic located in southwest Georgia, occupying an area of approximately 3,000 km^2. Ajara borders Turkey to the south and is surrounded by the Black Sea on its west and northwestern coasts. Ajara was occupied by the Ottoman Empire from 1614 until 1878. During the Russian-Turkish War (1877-1878,) the Russians occupied Ajara and other territories, which were granted to the Russian Empire by the

Congress of Berlin in 1878[1]. In 1918, Georgia gained independence, which lasted until 1921 because it became a member of the Soviet Union. According to the Treaty of Kars (1921) signed between Turkey and three Transcaucasian states — Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan —Ajara remained as a part of Soviet Georgia.[2] In 1921, the Ajara Autonomous Soviet Republic was founded and even after Georgia became independent from the USSR in 1991, Ajara continues to maintain the status of an autonomous republic.

According to the 2014 census, the total population of Georgia is 3,714,000, of which 334,000 live in Ajara. The 2014 census also states that the Muslim population comprises 10.7% (398,700 people) of the total population of Georgia.[3] However, there are different data sets on the total Muslim population in Georgia: the European Stability Initiative claims it is 430.000,[4] the "Muslim Education Trust" organization finds it totals 574,179 people (~11% of the total population,)[5] and Azerbaijani media estimates it is 500,000 people.[6] Although Christianity has always been the predominant religion in Georgia, Islam began to spread in Georgian

[1]M. Bakhtadze, M. Vachnadze, V Guruli, Istoria Gruzii s drevneyshikh vremen do nashikh dney, Tbilisi, 1993, pdf, 581-587pp. (М. Бахтадзе, М. Вачнадзе, В. Гурули, История Грузии с древнейших времен до наших дней , Тбилиси, 1993 г. с. 581-587)

[2] Karskii dogovor o drujbe mejdu Armyanskoy, Azerbayjanskoy, Gruzinskoy Sovetskimi Sotsialisticheskimi Respublikami i Turtsiey (13.10.1921, Kars) (Карский договор о дружбе между Армянской, Азербайджанской, Грузинской Советскими Социалистическими Республиками и Турцией (13.10.1921, Карс)), http://hrono.ru/dokum/192_dok/19211013kars.php (Accessed on 07.08.2016)

[3] 2014 General Population Census, NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE OF GEORGIA (GEOSTAT), http://geostat.ge/cms/site_images/_files/english/ population/Census_release_ENG_2016.pdf (Accessed on 07.08.2016)

[4] Georgia Country Profile, European Stability Initiative http://www.esiweb.org/ index.php?lang=en&id=321&country_ID=1&slide_ID=1 (Accessed on 07.09.2016)

[5] Muslim Education Trust, http://islamicweb.com/begin/population.htm (Accessed on 07.09.2016)

[6] Mechetsi v Gruzii ne stroyat, 24 september, 2008 (Мечети в Грузии не строят, 24 СЕНТЯБРЯ 2008), http://open.az/index.php?newsid=15826 (Accessed on 07.09.2016)

territories, including in present-day Ajara.[7] This is due to various conquests of the South Caucasus throughout different historical periods, beginning from as early on as the seventh and eighth centuries.

After conquering Georgian territories, Arabs and then Seljuk Turks tried to convert the local Christian population to Islam by basic means of forced Islamization. In both periods of Arab conquests and Seljuk domination, the main method of Islamization of Georgian territory and its population was the implementation of extremely burdening and high taxes, death threats, etc.[8] With regard to heavy taxes, this policy was overwhelmingly evident based on the fact that Seljuk leader Alp-Aslan (1063-1072) demanded the Georgian King to convert or to pay and implement the jizya (poll) tax.[9]

Forced Islamization policy became more widespread under the Ottoman Empire. Since the beginning of 16th century, Ottomans established their dominance in western and southwestern Georgia by embarking on a policy of forced religious conversion of local Christian residents. Particularly, in Ajara, Islam began to spread during the period of Ottoman conquest and domination in the 15th to the 19th centuries. However, until the 1770s, Christians mainly controlled Ajara and gained sufficient impetus, making the process of Islamization quite complex since the 1820s[10]. According to N. Kakhidze, only in the early 19th century were the Ottoman Turks able to consolidate their position and began to build places of prayer: the mosques.[11]

---

[7] G. Sanikidze and Ed. W. Walker, 'Islam and Islamic practices in Georgia', BPS Working Paper Series, University of California, Berkeley, 2004, p. 3

[8] G. Asatrian and H.Margarian, The Muslim Community of Tiflis (8th-19th Centuries), Iran & the Caucasus Vol. 8, No. 1 (2004), p. 31, pdf

[9] Özdemir V., XII. ve XIII. Yüzyılda Türk-Gürcü münasebetleri (Türkiye Selçukları ve Doğu Anadolu Türk beylikleri döneminde), Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Selçuk Üniversitesi, Konya, 2011, s. 20. http://acikerisim.selcuk.edu.tr:8080/xmlui/bitstream /handle/123456789/1437/308889.pdf?sequence=1 (Accessed on 07.09.2016)

[10] G. Sanikidze and Ed. W. Walker, op. cit. p.6

[11] R. Baramidze, Islam i ego osobennosti v Adzarii, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, South Caucasus , p. 2 (Руслан Барамидзе, Ислам и его особенности в Аджарии, с. 2), https://www.academia.edu/10774144 (Accessed on 07.09.2016)

Until the Sovietization of Georgia (1921,) 158 mosques and, until 1929, five madrasas and 150 religious primary schools operated in Ajara.[12] However, mosques and madrasas were closed in the 1930s. In 1929, Muslim Religious Department of Ajara was closed: religion was banned in schools and related subjects were excluded from school curricula. The attitude towards religion began to change when the Central Mosque of Batumi and the Islamic religious and cultural centers reopened in the 1950s and 1980s, respectively.[13]

The center of Ajara is the city Batumi. Batumi hosts a central mosque for the Muslim community ("Orta Djame") which was built in 1866. Researchers from the Niko Berdzinishvili Institute (Batumi, Georgia) conducted fieldwork in a religious community in 2010. The findings are as follows: there are 184 working Muslim institutions in Ajara, of which 119 are mosques, 22 are mosque-like structures, 15 are places of prayer, 27 are madrasas, and one is a madrasa-place of prayer.[14]
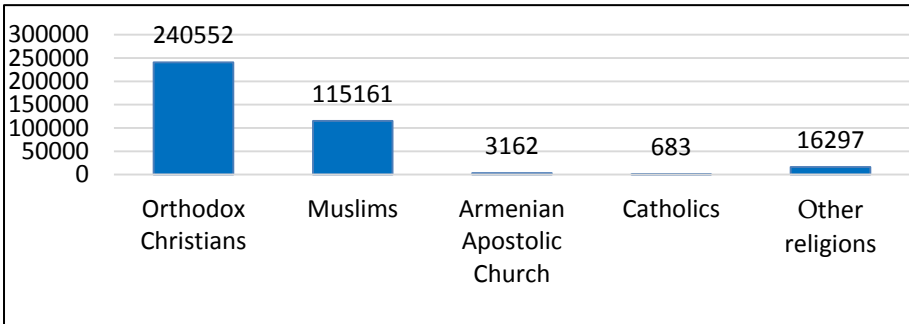
According to the latest findings from the Statistical Department of the Ministry of Economy and Development of Georgia (2002,) the population by religion breakdown of Ajara consists of 240,552 Orthodox Christians, 115,161 Muslims, 3,162 followers of the Armenian Apostolic Church, 683

---

[12] Ibid, p. 3.
[13] Ibid, pp. 3-4.
[14] Th. Liles, Islam and Religious Transformation in Adjara, European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI), February 2012, p. 15 http://www.ecmi.de/uploads/tx_ lfpubdb/Working_Paper_57_En.pdf (Accessed on 07.09.2016)

Catholics, and 16,297 representatives of other religions.[15] In 2006, The Statistical Department of Ajara calculated that Muslims and Orthodox Christians made up 30 and 63 percent of the total population, respectively.[16]

The Peculiarities of Turkish foreign policy towards Ajara

From the 1980s and 1990s, there were notable changes in Turkey's foreign policy. After Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002, changes in Turkish foreign policy became even more obvious. At its core, AKP ideology stipulates that Turkey must adopt an active policy in the region that was formerly part of the Ottoman Empire and use the historical-geographical possibilities in the territories of the Empire[17].

Thus, after the collapse of the USSR, the South Caucasus became a territory for Turkey to spread its influence over. However, as former Minister of Foreign Affairs (2009-2014) and Prime Minister (2014-May 2016) of Turkey Ahmet Davutoglu notes, Turkey was not prepared psychologically to achieve hegemony in the region because of the economic crises and political ferments.[18]

To access the natural resources of Central Asia and the Caspian Sea becomes a particularly important issue for Turkey as the latter tries to take the role of being a "unique bridge" in transferring the Middle East's energy resources to Europe. In this context, Georgia is extremely important for

---

[15] I. Vladmiri, Religyoznie izmerenie politiki Turtsii v Adzarii i deyatelnost gruzinskoy pravoslavnoy tserkvi, *Tsentralnaya Aziya* i Kavkaz, № 3, tom 14, 2011, p. 92 (И.Владимир, Религиозное измерение политики Турции в Аджарии и деятельность Грузинской Православной церкви, Центральная Азия и Кавказ, № 3, том 14, 2011, с. 92), http://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/religioznoe-izmerenie-politiki-turtsii-v-adzharii-i-deyatelnost-gruzinskoy-pravoslavnoy-tserkvi (Accessed on 07.09.2016)

[16] S. Mkrtchyan, Vrastani Mowsowlmanner, (Ս. Մկրտչյան, Վրաստանի մուսուլմանները) 29.09.2009, http://new.religions.am/hy/article/vrastani-mowsowlmannere (Accessed on 07.09.2016)

[17] A. Davutoğlu, Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu, İstanbul, Küre Yayınları, 2001, s. 178.

[18] Ibid, p. 128.

Turkey, which is due to the pivotal role of Georgia in the process of exporting Caspian and Central Asian energy resources to Europe. Furthermore, Georgia is a bridge for Turkey to contact Azerbaijan and Central Asian Turkic speaking countries.[19] Carnegie Foundation analyst Bayram Balci finds that Georgia is important for Turkey because it serves as a stable and as the shortest mode of transportation to and from the Caucasus and Central Asia. According to Balci, it is also important for Georgia to be involved in transit projects regarding Caspian energy resources, and since Turkey is a window to Europe.[20]

Turkish "soft power"[21] is of key importance in Turkey's foreign policy towards Georgia. Turkey managed to spread its influence over Georgia by using economic, political, cultural and educational tools of its "soft power."

Ahmet Davutoglu has developed a different approach for Turkey's foreign policy based on the doctrine of "strategic depth". The main slogan of this new approach in Turkish foreign policy is known as "Zero problems with its neighbors," which implies that by increasing political dialogue without meddling in other countries domestic affairs, economic dependence

---

[19]Vneshnepoliticheskie diskursi veduyushikh subyektov turetskoy politiki, pod red. V.A. Avatkova, Mockva, p. 66 (Внешнеполитический дискурс ведущих субъектов турецкой политики (2010 – лето 2015 г.), Под ред. В.А. Аваткова, Москва 2015, с. 66), http://mgimo.ru/upload/iblock/561/LOCUS _Turkey_block.pdf (Accessed on 18.09.2016)

[20] B. Balcı, Strengths and Constraints of Turkish Policy in the South Caucasus, Insight Turkey, 2014, http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/06/18/strengths-and-constraints-of-turkish-policy-in-the-south-caucasus-pub-55945 (Accessed on 18.09.2016)

[21] "Soft power" is a strategic concept of foreign policy that was created by American political scientist Joseph Nye. This concept is based on the fact that it is possible to have a significant influence on other countries, their foreign policy and on the position of the decision makers and even on the mood and attitude of the population of those countries not by means of military force, but by economic, cultural, scientific, political, humanitarian programs and partnerships, by dynamic activities of non-governmental organizations and cultural centers, through mass media. *See* Nye J. S., "Soft Power, Foreign Policy" No. 80, Twentieth Anniversary (Autumn, 1990), pp. 153-171.

and cultural consensus will occur and take hold.[22] Turkey's "soft power" played a significant role in executing this new approach, the main goal of which was to involve new countries and actors under Turkey's influence through economic development, and mutual achievements in science, education, culture, and technology.

Turkey paid special attention to its use of "soft power" in Georgia. Evidently, in order to spread its influence and maintain friendly relations with Georgia, it was necessary to ensure Turkey's adequate presence in a number of strategic areas of Georgia's economy; not exclusively as a vital geopolitical ally and as a tool of facilitated transportation and transit. As a result, political and economic goals and relations were complemented by cultural, educational, humanitarian, and religious programs, which aimed to form a positive position towards Turkey in Georgian society and within that, its Muslim community.[23] Furthermore, through the use of "soft power" in Georgia, it is likely that the Turkish authorities have been trying to erase historical memories existing in Georgians' consciousness about the negative Ottoman past.

Turkey and Georgia are actively cooperating in the fields of economy, trade, energy. Since 2005, Turkey and Georgia established a visa-free travel regime.[24] After the "Rose Revolution" (2003) in Georgia, the different economic policies of the new government had a significant impact on the trade and economic relations between the two countries. In November 2007, Georgia and Turkey signed a Free Trade Agreement, and as soon as it took effect, bilateral trade volumes drastically increased.[25] Turkey has been a prominent source of Georgia's foreign trade since 2006.

---

[22] A. Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007", Insight Turkey, Vol.10, No. 1 (January-March 2008), pp.77-96; Davutoğlu, "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy", p. 80.
http://arsiv.setav.org/ups/dosya/9595.pdf (Accessed on 27.09.2016)
[23] V. Ter-Matevosyan, Cooperation paradigms in the South Caucasus Making sense of Turkish-Georgian relations, Varia, 2014. No. 4. pp. 103-125, https://eac.revues.org/689#tocto1n3 (Accessed on 27.09.2016)
[24] D. N. Göksel, Turkey and Georgia: Zero-Problems? Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation, June 2013, pdf. p. 1.
[25] Ibid. p.8

In 2015 trade turnover between Georgia and Turkey reached ~1.51 billion dollars, 1.33 billion of which was comprised of Turkish exports.[26] The increase in trade volumes was also recorded in Turkey's direct investments in Georgia. After the United States, Turkey has the most investments in Georgia; Turkish investors are predominantly interested in the textile industry, agriculture, construction and infrastructure, and energy sectors of the Georgian economy.[27] In the period between 2006-2015 Turkey's investments in Georgia have reached totally to ≈913 million US dollars, while in 1997-2005 the investments were totally only ≈159 million US dollars[28]. In 1999, an organization called Gürcu ve Türk Işadamlari Derneği – Association of Georgian and Turkish Businessmen (GÜRTIAD) was founded in aims to protect and promote interests of Turkish investors in Georgia.[29]

Between 2006 and 2007, the Georgian market opened up to increased Turkish capital and investments. This timeframe also coincided with Turkey's search process for new markets by the Turkish "Green Capital" and the business elite known as the "Anatolian Tigers," resulting in a vast number of Turkish enterprises actively penetrating into the Georgian market.[30] In October 2015, the Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD - Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği — MÜSİAD) Georgia Branch was opened in Batumi city, which is the main driving force of Turkish "Green capital" and the Islamic

---

[26] L. Aleksanyan, Politika "Myagkoy sili" Turtsii v otnoshenii Gruzii, Diplomaticheskaya akademia Ministertsvo inostrannikh del Rossiskoy Federatsii, Moskva, p. 74 (Лариса Алексанян, Политика «мягкой силы» Турции в отношении Грузии, Дипломатическая академия МИД РФ. Москва, с.74)

[27] A. S. Dzilavyan, Neoosmanskaya doktrina i geopoliticheskie interesi Turtsii v Zakavkazie i Tsentralnoy Aziyii, Vestnik Rossiysko-Armyanskogo universiteta, No 2, Yerevan, p. 84 (А.С. Джилавян, Неоосманская доктрина и геополитические интересы Турци в закавказье и центральной Азии, Вестник Российско-Армянского (Славянского) университета № 2, Ереван 2014, с. 84)

[28] National Statistics Office of Georgia, foreign investment http://www.geostat. ge/index.php?action=page&p_id=2231&lang=eng (Accessed on 23.10.2016)

[29] Gürcu ve Türk Işadamlari derneği, http://www.gurtiad.ge/tr/Icerik.ASP?ID=191 (Accessed on 27.09.2016)

[30] V. Ter-Matevosyan, op. cit.

bourgeoisie.[31]Also, there are two branches of Turkish commercial banks in Tbilisi and Batumi (T.C. Ziraat Bankası ı Türkiye Iş Bankası).

In addition to the rise in Turkish influence on Georgia's economy, Turkey is successfully increasing its presence in the cultural, religious, educational and humanitarian fields of Georgia. Turkey began applying leverage to spread its religious, ideological and cultural influence in Georgia. The main structures of creating "soft power" policy in Georgia are Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and initiatives coordinated by three state institutes attached to the Prime Ministry of Turkey – the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (Türkiye Işbirliği ve Koordinasyon Idaresi – TIKA), Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center and the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet Işler Başkanlığı.)[32]

The TIKA has implemented large-scale projects in Georgia since 1994. According to the 2012 annual report, Georgia has received 4.23% of TIKA's overall financial, vocational, and technical support, making Georgia the seventh largest beneficiary of TIKA.[33] TIKA programs include organizing educational projects (vocational, language teaching,) repairing and furnishing educational centers, and improving social and economic infrastructures and services, healthcare, and drinking water and sanitation. In 2012, TIKA reconstructed one of the schools in Batumi. After it was built, TIKA opened a foreign language teaching center. Additionally, TIKA organizes projects to improve the quality of drinking water.[34] It is important to note that the research of TIKA's annual report allows that beneficiaries of TIKA are mostly located in the Muslim-populated territories in Georgia, especially in Ajara: only a few programs were implemented in Tbilisi and Gori. Furthermore, since 2000, TIKA has carried out the "Turkology" project in Georgia. Under the "Turkology" framework, TIKA established

---

[31] MÜSİAD Gürcistan Ofisi Açıldı, 02.10.2015, http://www.musiad.org.tr/tr-tr/haberler/musiad-gurcistan-ofisi-acildi-732 (Accessed on 27.09.2016)

[32] Ibid

[33] TIKA 2012 Annual Report, Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, ed. N. Yildiz, pp. 24-25, http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/oldpublication/tika2012AnnRep.pdf (Accessed on 28.09.2016)

[34] Ibid., p. 162.

Departments of Turkish Studies in Georgian universities, aiming to increase the interest of Georgian society towards Turkey.[35]

One of the most powerful tools of Turkey's "soft power" is the Yunus Emre Cultural center founded in 2009. In May 2012, Yunus Emre opened its branch in Georgia's Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.[36] This center contains various educational and cultural programs and supports research projects relevant to the spread of Turkish language, culture, art, and history.[37] The opening ceremony of this center was made by Deputy Prime Minister of Turkey Bülent Arınç. In his opening speech, former chairman of the Yunus Emre Foundation Ali Fuat Bilkan stated that Turkish-Georgian political and economic relations "had attained a perfect level, thus the establishment of Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Center in Tbilisi would be a bridge between the Turkish and the Georgian languages, culture, and arts. It would also heighten the cooperation between the two countries."[38]

Notably, in December 2015 during a seminar organized for teachers in the Consulate General of Turkey in Batumi, the head of the "Yunus Emre" cultural center Hayati Develi announced the following:

"Due to the great interest and demand for the Turkish language in Georgia, "Yunus Emre" cultural center will open its branch in Batumi."[39]

One of the important institutions in Turkey's "soft power" policy in Georgia is the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet.) Diyanet's activities predominantly refer to religious and spiritual issues. Diyanet helps Georgian Muslims organize the hajj, provides training to the imams of preachers in mosques, trains theologians, provides scholarships for

---

[35] L. Aleksanyan, loc. cit.

[36] TÜRKİYE – GÜRCİSTAN İLİŞKİLERİ BİLGİ NOTU, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tiflis Büyükelçiliği, http://tbilisi.emb.mfa.gov.tr/ShowInfoNotes.aspx?ID=254502 (Accessed on 28.09.2016)

[37] Yunus Emre Enstitüsü, http://www.yee.org.tr/tr/misyon (Accessed on 28.09.2016)

[38] V. Ter-Matevosyan, op. cit.

[39] Batum'da Yunus Emre Enstitüsü Açılacak, 12 Aralık 2015, http://www.haberler.com/batum-da-yunus-emre-enstitusu-acilacak-7962872-haberi/ (Accessed on 28.09.2016)

postgraduate studies, and disseminates Islamic literature in Georgian language. It also coordinates financial support and consulting services in building and restoring mosques. [40] Diyanet sponsors free secular higher education and Qur'an courses for Muslims living in Ajara, which are particularly popular among younger Adjaran Muslims.[41] Muftis and imams get their education in Turkey's religious institutions, and the Muslims of Ajara are also attending Koran courses in Turkey. In 2008, 139 students from Georgia participated in Qur'an courses in Turkey.[42] Additionally, Diyanet cooperates with the official Muftiate in Batumi.

In addition to utilizing formal organizations, Turkey also uses informal institutions in implementing its "soft power" policy. In this context, educational institutions belonging to Fethullah Gulen's network are of major significance.[43] Followers of the Gülen movement first came to Georgia after the collapse of the Soviet Union but actively started operating after 1992.[44] Commonly known as "Gulen Schools," they operate in Georgian territory under the auspices of the "Çağlar Educational Institutions" (Çağlar Eğitim Kurumları – ÇEK), established in February 1993. To date, the ÇEK has established seven schools in Georgia, among them, are Tbilisi Private Demirel School, founded in 1993, and Refaiddin Şahin Friendship Primary Secondary School of Batumi, which was established in 1994.[45]

---

[40] Th. Liles and B. Balci, GEORGIA, p. 12, https://spire.sciencespo.fr/hdl:/2441/1a4ocdgpim8lbb75p50g6q8uv8/resources/georgia-2014-final-mb.pdf (Accessed on 23.10.2016)

[41] Th. Liles, **o**p. cit.

[42] Ş. Korkut, The Diyanet of Turkey and Its Activities in Eurasia after the Cold War, Acta Slavica Iaponica, Tomus 28, p. 132. http://src-hokudai-ac.jp/publictn/acta/28/06Korkut.pdf (Accessed on 23.10.2016)

[43] Fethullah Gulen is the founder of "Hizmet" religious movement (also known by the name of Gülen movement). He is considered to be one of the followers of Islam preacher Said Nursi, who founded "Nurcu" religious movement. The main purpose of Gülen and his movement to spread Islamic and Pan-Turkic ideas, for what he has established a wide network of educational centers and schools.

[44] L. Aleksanyan, loc. cit.

[45] V.Ter-Matevosyan, op. cit.

Both the administration and the instruction at the Gülen schools are largely run by Turkish citizens, but there are also teachers from Georgia. In these schools, there is a specific focus and emphasis on the participation in Turkish language Olympiads organized in Turkey and also in Georgia[46]. Some sources note that even though these schools belong to Gulen's network, no overt propaganda is visible neither for the Gülen movement nor for Turkey. Meanwhile, the Turkish flag flies along with the Georgian flag in front of all these school buildings, signifying that students and teachers encounter Turkey-associated symbols every day.[47] But "Gulen's school" were playing important role in Turkey's "soft power" policy until the appearance of dissidence between Turkey's president and the founder of "Hizmet" religious movement Fethullah Gulen.

On July 18, 2016, Consul of Turkey in Batumi Yasin Temizkan announced that he would ask the Georgian government to close the local private R. Şahin school associated with Islamic cleric Fethullah Gülen. It was connected to the failed coup attempt on July 15, for which Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan blamed Gulen. The Consul Yasin Temizkan claimed that the R. Şahin school, which teaches five to 12-year-old children, "*is not serving the government; they're serving terrorist groups.*" The Gülen network, he claimed, uses such schools "to strengthen their own position." Temizkan also stated that he would petition for Georgia's Ministry of Education in to close the school as soon as possible. In the meantime, he called on parents to withdraw their children from Gülen school in Georgia. After speaking with Batumi broadcaster TV25, school Principal Elguja Davitadze denied the allegations.[48] During a meeting with Georgian Deputy Foreign Minister Gigi Gigiadze, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to Georgia Zeki Levent Gümrükçü

---

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Georgia: Turkey Pushes to Close "Terrorist" Gülen School, 18 June, 2016, http://www.eurasianet.org/node/79721, (Accessed on 23.10.2016)

assured that the interview of the Turkish Consul General in Batumi was misrepresented and his statements were misinterpreted by the media.[49]

The Minister of Education and Science of Georgia Alexandre Jejelava announced the following:

"Gulen is financing a lot of educational centers and there are also schools in Georgia, that belong to Gulen's network, but the education language of these schools is Georgian. We have no information about the links between these schools with the terrorist groups. There are some laws about the conditions of accreditation and if they have been violated, then appropriate measures will be implemented, up to launching a criminal case."[50]

On February 3, 2017, the council of the National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement revoked the Şahin School's authorization to carry out educational activities. According to The Center, the Şahin School committed "serious violations of the rules about enrollment and procedures."[51]

Another interesting case is that, on May 25, 2017, Tbilisi City Court sentenced one of the managers of Demirel Privet School, established by Gülen movement, Mustafa Emre Chabuk to three-month pre-extradition detention. Chabuk was arrested in May on charges of cooperation with "terrorist organization". Turkish side demanded his detention. After these nongovernmental organizations have called on the Georgian government to refrain from extradition of Mustafa Emre Çabuk to Turkey[52].

---

[49] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, Georgian Deputy Foreign Minister Gigi Gigiadze has met the Ambassador of Turkey to Georgia,
http://mfa.gov.ge/News/შეხვედრა-თურქეთის-რესპუბლიკის-ელჩთან.aspx?CatID=5&lang=en-US (Accessed on 23.10.2016)
[50] Perezhivut li tureckie shkoly v Gruzii. Konflikt Erdogana s Gyulenom (Переживут ли турецкие школы в Грузии конфликт Эрдогана с Гюленом?) https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2016/07/29/perezhivut-li-tureckie-shkoly-v-gruzii-konflikt-erdogana-s-gyulenom, (Accessed on 23.10.2016)
[51] Georgia cracks down on private school linked to Gulen network, Feb 6, 2017, http://dfwatch.net/georgia-cracks-down-on-private-school-linked-to-gulen-network-47552 (Accessed on 06.02.2017)
[52] Protest in support of Mustafa Emre Cabuk, Demirel College Manager, http://1tv.ge/en/news/view/164062.html (Accessed on 01.06.2017)

Remarkably, regarding Turkey's influence on Georgia's educational system, Turkey opened a new school in Batumi on September 19, 2016. According to Turkey's state news agency, "Anadolu," the school is entirely financed by Turkey and will be accessible to Turkish citizens in Batumi. Furthermore, Tufan Karadeniz, the education counselor at the Turkish embassy in Tbilisi, said in Anadolu that the school would follow Turkish curricula and will be supervised by Turkey's National Education Ministry.[53]

According to the Ministry of Education of Ajara, it hadn't been informed about the school Turkey opened in Batumi. The Ministry also found that the construction of the school is illegal as it lacks a construction permit by Batumi City Hall, and the building company has been fined several times for illegal construction work.[54] The Minister of Education and Science of Georgia Alexandre Jejelava mentioned that the school has not passed the accreditation according to current Georgian legislation. Minister Jejelava also expressed dissatisfaction that the school leadership did not decide to invite Ministry officials of Georgia to the opening ceremony. The Consul General of Turkey, Yasin Temizkan, explained that the new school in Ajara is only for Turkish children whose families live in Batumi. Moreover, the teachers in the school are Turkish citizens. He also claimed that the school has not officially opened as their priority has been to launch a school for the new academic year, which explains why the Georgian side was not invited to the recent opening ceremony.[55]

Later, Minister Jejelava readdressed this issue by announcing the following:

---

[53] Gürcistan'da ilk Türk devlet okulu açıldı, 19.09.2016
http://aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/gurcistanda-ilk-turk-devlet-okulu-acildi/648494
(Accessed on 23.10.2016)
[54] Turetskaya shkola otkrilas v Batumi 20.09.2016 (Турецкая школа открылась в Батуми, 20.09.2016, на грузинском),
http://www.interpressnews.ge/ge/regioni/397955(Accessed on 23.10.2016)
[55] Turkey Opens Unlicensed State School in Batumi, 23.09.2016,
http://georgiatoday.ge/news/4720 (Accessed on 23.10.2016)

"*Some wrong messages were spread in relation to the school. We have had communication with the Turkish side for months. We had an agreement with the Turkish side and the agreement is still valid.*"

According to Minister Jejelava, Turkish children will study at the school in its initial stages, while Georgian children will be able to study there after the institution gets accredited.[56]

It can be concluded that Turkey is using its "soft power" to increase its multilateral influence on all spheres of Georgia, namely in education. The main goal of Turkey's "soft power" institutions is to form positive images and attitudes towards Turkey among the population and decision-makers of Georgian political life.

Generally, there is some concern among part of the Georgian population toward Turkish expansion over the economy, cultural, education and other spheres. In this context, it is important to consider that Georgians sometimes protest against Turkish expansion in Ajara. For example, in September 2016, Georgians held several protests in Sarpi village and in Batumi city against the expansion of Turkey in Ajara.[57] On the contrary, some circles are in favor of Turkish investments and find that they greatly benefit Ajara's economy.[58]

A Georgian public opinion survey conducted in 2015 by the Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC) shows the following:[59]

---

[56] Georgian children will be able to study at the Turkish school after it gets accreditation - Education Minister, (Accessed on 23.10.2016), 23.09.2016, http://www.interpressnews.ge/en/society/81457 (Accessed on 23.10.2016)

[57] Gruzini proweli aktsiyu protiv ekenomicheskoy ekspansii Turtsii v Adzarii, na gruzinskom (Грузины провели акцию против экономической экспансии Турции Аджарии, см. на грузинском), http://www.info9.ge/regionebi/156672 (Accessed on 23.10.2016)

[58] Interview with members of the group, that conducted fieldworks in Ajara within the anthropological project "Caucasus, Conflict, Culture" ("CCC"), 09 September, 2016, Yerevan

[59] Caucasus Research Resource Center, Cross-country datasets, http://caucasusbarometer.org/en/cross-country/ Caucasus Barometer 2015 Georgia dataset. (Accessed on 23.10.2016)
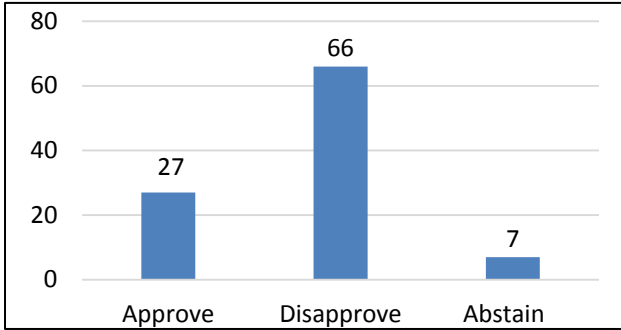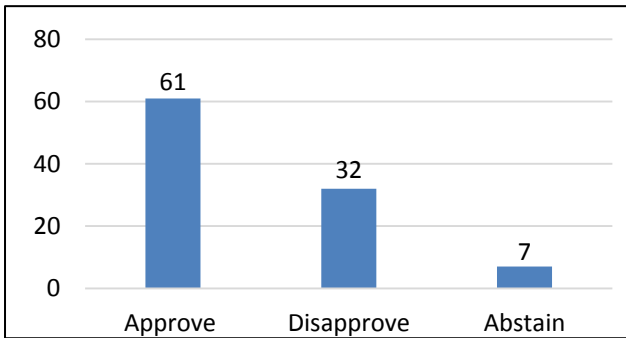
Would you approve or disapprove of women of Georgian ethnicity marrying Turks?

66 % – disapprove

27 % – approve

7 % – abstain

What do you think of doing joint business with the Turks?

32 % – disapprove

61 % – approve

7 % – abstain

By analyzing public opinion survey results over the span of several recent years, the data can show the changes in the dynamics of public opinion:

Date	Would you approve or disapprove of women of Georgian ethnicity marrying Turks?[60]	What do you think of doing joint business with the Turks?
2009	19% approve, 80% disapprove	75% approve, 19% disapprove
2010	19% approve, 78% disapprove	66% approve, 29% disapprove
2011	21% approve, 74% disapprove	65% approve, 28% disapprove
2012	20% approve, 77% disapprove	65% approve, 31% disapprove
2013	23% approve, 74% disapprove	72% approve, 24% disapprove
2015	27% approve, 66% disapprove	61% approve, 32% disapprove

Would you approve or disapprove of women of Georgian ethnicity marrying Turks?

---
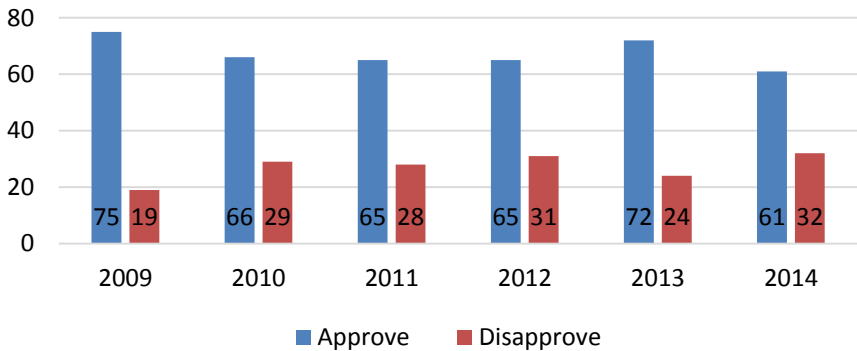
[60] It is very common in Ajara Muslim-Christian mixed families, where the customs and traditions of these two religions demonstrate a unique combination, despite the fact that according to Muslim Islamic law, men can marry only with the religious representatives who are "People of the Book» (Ahl al -Kitāb), for example, Christians, and Jews, but a Muslim woman cannot marry a representative of another religion.
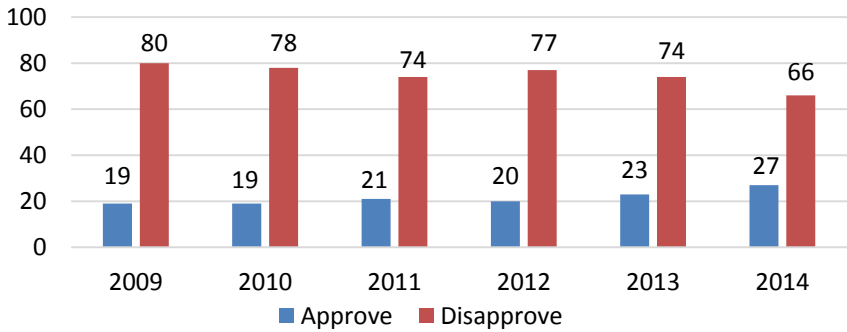
What do you think of doing joint business with the Turks?

Based on these public opinion survey findings, it is clear that public opinion on these issues in Georgia is dynamic. Further, the approval rating of the population about question of doing business with Turks has decreased from 2009 to 2015. On the other hand, the approval rating among Turks about the question of marrying ethnically Georgian women has increased from 2009 to 2015.

In this context of studying the educational sphere in Ajara, it is crucial to speak about the student, whose religion is Islam and about wearing religious headscarves (hijab) in educational institutions. In Georgia, there is no ban on wearing headscarves in educational institutions, but it is generally accepted that the girls can only cover their heads: complete hijabs are unacceptable. However, it is unpopular to wear headscarves in Batumi, and typically women start to wear them after marriage.[61]

At the same time, based on primary surveys in Ajara, it is evident that young Muslim girls often avoid wearing headscarves, because it is not embraced publicly. Particularly, during the interviews conducted in Batumi city, one of the students noted that she liked to wear a headscarf in Turkey,

---

[61] Interview with the senior researcher of Shota Rustaveli State University (Batumi) Ruslan Baramidze, 30 September, 2016, Yerevan

but she felt uncomfortable to wear a headscarf in Ajara.[62] The other student noted that Georgia is a Christian country and Islamic symbols should not be shown publicly.[63]

One of the debated issues in Georgia is Turkey's initiatives for rebuilding of the "Azizie" mosque or construction of new mosques in Georgia. For this reason, the Georgian Orthodox Church is especially against Turkish presence in Ajara.[64] It is crucial to note that it is several years since Georgian and Turkish Ministries of Foreign Affairs were negotiating about reconstruction Turkish cultural heritage in Georgia and Georgian cultural heritage in Turkey, but they have not reached any agreement yet.[65]

There is the narrative that Christians are against the rebuilding of the "Azizie" mosque in Ajara or construction of any new mosques in Georgia. This is due to the widely circulated claim by the local people Christian by the belief that not every Muslim in Ajara maintains Muslim traditions "thoroughly" including the visits to a Mosque, while many of them do also things that are inappropriate for a Muslim. This stipulates people to assume that Turkey is following its political interests by reconstructing (advocating for reconstruction of) the Azizie mosque.[66] Georgian Church leaders, some politicians, parties, and NGOs also speak up against the construction of new mosques reasoning the idea with the existence of hundreds of mosques in Ajara, while the number of churches does not exceed forty.[67] However, some Christians identify that it is better to build mosques than casinos.[68]

---

[62] Interview with members of the group, that conducted fieldworks in Ajara within the anthropological project "CCC", 09 September, 2016, Yerevan

[63] Ibid.

[64] Interview with the former general counsel of Armenia in Batumi Aram Grigoryan, 13 September, 2016, Yerevan

[65] Ibid

[66] Interview with members of the group, that conducted fieldworks in Ajara within the anthropological project "CCC", 09 September, 2016, Yerevan

[67] Georgian Patriarchate Suggests Turkey Allow Services In Christian Churches In Return For Allowing A Mosque To Be Built In Georgia, Tbilisi, April 1, 2013 http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/60586.htm, (Accessed on 23.10.2016)

[68] Interview with members of the group, that conducted fieldworks in Ajara within the anthropological project "CCC", 09 September, 2016, Yerevan

Conclusion

• Islam began to spread in Ajara during its conquest and domination by the Ottoman Empire between the 15th and 19th centuries. Nowadays, the Muslim population comprises 30 percent of the total population of Ajara. Besides Muslim citizens of Georgia, there is a large amount of Turkish Muslim citizens living and doing businesses in Ajara.

• Based on this study's observations, fieldwork, and interviews, it is conclusive that the number, mere presence and, therefore, the businesses and investments of Turkey's citizens in Ajara are rising. First, Georgia is playing a significant role for Turkey, because it is considered as a unique bridge for transferring Caspian energetic resources to Europe. Additionally, Turkey is linked with Azerbaijan and the Central Asian Turkic-speaking countries through Georgia. These factors, as well as the investments of Turkish citizens in Georgia — especially in Ajara — have made the economies of the two countries interdependent. In turn, this economic relationship has led to the spread of Turkish cultural, educational and humanitarian organizations to enter and permeate in Georgia, mainly in Ajara.

• Turkey's initiatives in Georgia's cultural, educational, religious and humanitarian spheres are aimed to form a positive attitude and position among Georgian society towards Turkey. Therefore, the main beneficiary of Turkey's investments in educational and cultural fields is the Muslim population. Several Turkish organizations are actively involved in educational fields and initiatives by opening new schools, rebuilding schools, and creating other educational institutions in Ajara. In this context, the role of Gulen network's schools is vital because they contribute to the spread of the Turkish language, culture and history, and Islamic ideology among Georgian youth.

• Some social and political figures, analysts, and other circles of the Muslim community in Georgia are in favor of Turkish investments and claim that they greatly benefit Ajara's economy. On the contrary, there is concern and caution among some circles of Georgia's population towards

Turkish expansion over the economic, cultural, educational and other spheres.

In summarizing the results of the research, this study concludes that apart from economic investments, Turkey makes efforts to create a more pro-Turkish position among the population of Ajara. This means that the Turkish authorities realize that only by economic factors they cannot keep dependency of Ajara from Turkey, as there are also other countries, particularly the United States, Kazakhstan, Ukraine and other countries that have businesses and investments in Ajara. This explains why Turkey also uses educational initiatives and cultural tools to increase its Turkish influence in Georgian society, and mainly relies on the Muslim population of Ajara to do so. After a brief look at Turkey's history, it can be argued that the current situation is not a unique case. In the past, Turkey has pursued a similar policy towards the Sanjak of Alexandretta, which was a part of Syria and became a Turkish province in 1939 as a result of Turkish foreign policy. Therefore, it can be argued that Turkish citizens' investments and initiatives in educational, cultural, and humanitarian fields are measures to maintain Turkey's influence on Ajara. In this context, the concerns of some circles of the population, politicians, and intellectuals are not groundless.

ԴՊՐՈՑՆԵՐ, ՄԶԿԻԹՆԵՐ ԵՎ ՌԵՍՏՈՐԱՆՆԵՐ.
ՀԱՍԿԱՆԱԼՈՎ ԹՈՒՐՔԻԱՅԻ ՓԱՓՈՒԿ ՈՒԺԸ ԱՋԱՐԻԱՅՈՒՄ
Ամփոփագիր

Սոնա Սուքիասյան,
Երևանի պետական համալսարան
sonasukiasyan19@gmail.com

Բանալի բառեր՝ *Թուրքիա, Վրաստան, Աջարիա, թուրք-վրացական հարաբերություններ, իսլամ, Աջարիայի իսլամադավան բնակչություն*

Սույն հետազոտությունը անդրադառնում է թուրք-վրացական հարաբերություններին, մասնավորապես, տնտեսական, ռազմական, էներգետիկայի և այլ ոլորտներում երկու երկրների համագործակցությանը, թուրքական ազդեցությանը Աջարիայում, ինչպես նաև թուրքական «փափուկ ուժի» կիրառմանը, դրա առանձնահատկություններին, հիմնական կառույցներին, մեխանիզմներին, գյուղենական շարժման դերին Վրաստանում: Հարավային Կովկասը միշտ էլ պատմության ողջ ընթացքում գտնվել է կրոնների, քաղաքակրթությունների, պետությունների բախման կիզակետում: Ներկայում այս տարածաշրջանում բախվում են ինչպես, տարածաշրջանային դերակատարների՝ Թուրքիայի, Իրանի, այնպես էլ գլոբալ դերակատարների՝ Ռուսաստանի, ԱՄՆ-ի, ԵՄ-ի շահերը: Այդ դերակատարների հարաբերությունների փոփոխությունները իրենց ազդեցությունն են ունենում Հվ. Կովկասում ընթացող իրադարձությունները վրա: Այդ գործընթացներում ներկայում ակտիվ դերակատարում ունի նաև Թուրքիան: Թուրքիայի արտաքին քաղաքականության մեջ միշտ էլ շատ կարևոր է եղել Հվ. Կովկասի տարածաշրջանը: Թուրքիան Վրաստանի հետ ունի բարիդրացիական հարաբերություններ, երկու երկրները ակտիվ համագործակցում են էներգետիկայի, տնտեսության, առևտրի և այլ ոլորտներում: