

**Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University  
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences**

**The 8<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Conference**

**“Space, Society, Politics”**

**Dedicated to the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Faculty of Social and Political  
Sciences**

**PROGRAM**

**and**

**ABSTRACTS**



**25 - 27 June, 2020  
Tbilisi**

25-27 June, 2020

The 8<sup>th</sup> International Scientific Conference

**“Space, Society, Politics”**

Dedicated to the 15th Anniversary of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences of the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

**Editors:** Tamar Dolbaia, Valerian Melikidze, Teona Mataradze, Salome Dundua

**Technical Group:** Teona Tabuashvili, Sandro Tabatadze, Miranda Mikadze

# PROGRAM

## 25 June, Thursday

### 10.00 Conference Speeches and Welcomes

**Giorgi Sharvashidze** - Rector, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

**Tamar Dolbaia** - Dean, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

### I Session (Working Language - English)

**Chairperson: Alexandre Kukhianidze**

10.20 **Alexandre Kukhianidze** – Professor, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“The Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Transnational Organized Crime”*

10.40 **Vakhtang Maisaia** – Professor, Caucasus International University, **Miranda Mikadze** – PhD student, Caucasus International University, **Sebastian Bobkiewicz** – Expert, The Georgian Geostrategic and Euro-Atlantic Integration Studies Institute. *“EU Conflict Resolution Strategy on the Example of Regional Security in the South Caucasus”*

11.00 **Jaba Urotadze** – Assistant Professor, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“Comparative Analysis of Protection of Young People at Work in Georgian and European Union Laws”*

11.20 **Nadezhda Kazarinova**, Associate professor, **Anna Chugunova**, Invited Lecturer – Saint Petersburg Electrotechnical University “LETI” (ETU), Russia. *“Paradoxes of “Soft Power” of Tourism”*

11.40 **Cenay Babaoglu**, Associate Professor, Selçuk University, **Onur Kulac**, Assistant Professor, Pamukkale University – Turkey. “*A Blueprint of Turkey’s Covid-19 Policy*”

12.00 **Salome Dundua**, Associate Professor, **Sandro Tabatadze**, MA Student – Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. “*Liberal-Democratic Values in the National Curriculum of General Education of Georgia*”

12.20 **Nikoloz Esitashvili** – Professor, ISET – International School of Economics, TSU. “*The Role of External Economic Incentives in times of Political Transitions and Consolidations*”

12.40 **Luca Zarrilli**, Associate Professor, University “G. D’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara, Italy. **Miguel Brito**, Associate Professor, Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies, Portugal. “*Alcântara (Lisbon): From Industrial District to Tourist Destination. A Survey*”

13.00 **Constantin-Vasile Toca**, Lecturer, **Edinna Lilla Meszaros**, Teaching Assistant – University of Oradea, Romania. “*Cross-Border Cooperation under Magnifying Glass: An Assessment of the Projects Implemented at the Romanian-Hungarian Border in the 2004-2013 Period*”

13.20 **Julia Kaczmarek-Khubnaia** – PhD Student, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland. “*Socio-economic Development of the Georgian Regions- Chosen Theoretical Approach*”

13.40 **Valerio Della Sala** – PhD Student, Autonomia University of Barcelona, Spain. “*Olympics Games: The Organisation, the History, the Committee, the Projects. Rome 1960 -Barcelona 1992: From a Dream to the Urban Model*”

**14.00 – 14.40 Break**

## II Session (Working Language - English)

**Chairperson: Mariam Gersamia**

14.40 **Mariam Gersamia**, Professor, **Maia Toradze**, Associate Professor, **Liana Markariani**, MA Student – Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“Challenges of Gender Equality in Media (Case of Georgia)”*

15.00 **Luca Zarrilli**, Associate Professor, **Silvia Iacuone**, PhD Student – University “G. D’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara, Italy. *“The Role of Iceland in the Arctic Issue: Diplomacy, Threats, Opportunities”*

15.20 **Temur Gugushvili** – PhD Student, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“Mountain Resident’s Livelihoods: Adaptation Strategies in the Swiftly Progressing ‘Weather’ of Tourism in Protected Areas”*

15.40 **Nino Kukhianidze** – PhD Student, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Poland. *“The Role of Peace Education in the Process of Conflict Transformation”*

16.00 **Ekaterine Lomia** – PhD Student, Caucasus International University. *“How Russian Propaganda Works in Georgia: The Consequences of the Russian Disinformation in a Long-Term Perspective”*

16.20 **Namig Karimov** – MA, Baku Engineering University, Azerbaijan. *“Turkey and Russia’s Strained Relations in Caucasia”*

16.40 **Keynote Speeches**

**Stephen F. Jones** – Professor of Russian and Eurasian Studies at Mount Holyoke College.

**Neil MacFarlane** – The Lester B. Pearson Professor of International Relations and Fellow at St Anne’s College, University of Oxford.

*“Recurrent Patterns in Georgian Politics: Culture, Geography and Institutions”*

## **26 June, Friday**

### **III Session (Working Language - Georgian)**

**Chairperson: Iago Kachkachishvili**

10.00 **Tamar Dolbaia** – Associate Professor, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“Geographical Features of Transport System Development of Georgia”*

10.20 **Revaz Gachechiladze** – Professor, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“Changing Political Geography and Geopolitics of the Central Europe”*

10.40 **Malkhaz Matsaberidze**, Professor, **Tamar Orjonikidze**, PhD Student – Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“The Representatives of National Minorities in the Constituent Assembly of Georgia (1919-1921)”*

11.00 **Iago Kachkachishvili** – Professor, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“Monitoring Knowledge, Risk Perceptions, Preventive Behaviours and Public Trust in the Current Coronavirus Outbreak in Georgia”*

11.20 **Valerian Melikidze**, Associate Professor, **Giorgi Kvinikadze**, Associate Professor – Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“Strange Bedfellows - a Comparative Analysis of Economic Geography and Geoeconomics”*

11.40 **Tengiz Verulava** – Associate Professor, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“Challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic: German strategy”*

12.00 **Teona Mataradze**, Associate Professor, **Giorgi Shubitidze**, PhD Student – Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“How is the Urban Identity of Mtskheta Residents Represented in the External Image of the City”*

12.20 **Avtandil Tukvadze**, Associate Professor, **Valerian Dolidze**, Assistant Professor – Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, **Irakli Ubilava**, PhD Student, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Russia *“Post-Pandemic World Order-Place of Georgia in Transformative International System”*

**12.40 - 13.40 Break**

## IV Session (Working Language - Georgian)

**Chairperson: Teona Mataradze**

13.40 **Iago Kachkachishvili**, Professor, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, **Lasha Tughushi**, Assistant Professor, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, **Malkhaz Gagua**, Lecturer, International Black Sea University, **Aleksandra Kalatozishvili**, Lecturer, Ilia State University – *“Cultural and Political Dimensions of Anti-Liberal Populism and Religious Nationalism in the Regions of Georgia”*

14.00 **Shorena Turkiashvili** – Assistant Professor, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“The Orthodox Religiosity and Some Aspects of Family Lives”*

14.20 **Nino Popiashvili** – Dr. of Philology, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“Global and National Totalitarianism from a Literary Perspective”*

14.40 **Eka Darbaidze** – PhD in Political Sciences, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“The Policy of Cooperation of the Georgian Government in the Occupied Tskhinvali Region”*

15.00 **Mariam Khatiashvili** – PhD, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“Theoretical Conceptualization of Russia’s Soft Power toward Georgia”*

## **27 June, Saturday**

### **V Session (Working Language - Georgian)**

**Chairperson: Salome Dundua**

10.00 **Salome Kobaidze** – PhD Student, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“Existing and Prospective Geographical Areas of Economic Development of the Black Sea Coastal Zone of Georgia in Terms of the Blue Economy”*

10.20 **Teona Tabuashvili** – PhD Student, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“Public Higher Education Institutions, as Developing Organizations: Students’ Assessments“*

10.40 **Inga Mikhanashvili** – Researcher, Institute of Political Sciences at Ilia State University. *“The “4 + 1 Program” in Higher Education Institutions as a Strategy for the Integration of Ethnic Minorities”*

11.00 **Kiarim Gumbatov** – PhD Student, Georgian Technical University. *“The Features of the Democratic Nature of Local Self-Government in the Public Administration System”*

11.20 **Tamar Orjonikidze**, PhD Student, **Natia Zedginidze**, PhD Student - Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“Issues of Election Finance and Political Ethics in the 2018 Presidential Elections in Georgia”*

11.40 **Nino Maisuradze** - PhD Student, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“Mikhako Tsereteli and the Conceptualization of Nation in Georgia in the Early 20th Century”*

12.00 **Mariana Kevkhishvili** – PhD Student, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“United National Movement's Lobbying Campaign in the USA”*

12.20 **Natia Zedginidze** – PhD Student, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. *“At the Origins of the Development of the Code of Parliamentary Ethics: Experience of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia (1919–1921)”*

12.40 **Zaza Tsotniashvili** – Professor, Caucasus International University. *“How Media Covers COVID-19 Impact in the Occupied Territories of Georgia”*

## **ABSTRACTS**

## **Alexandre Kukhianidze**

Professor

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

### **The Impact of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Transnational Organized Crime**

Due to the coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent restriction on freedom of movement and closure of state borders in most countries, transnational organized crime throughout the world has encountered unprecedented difficulties in pursuing its criminal goals. However, these difficulties prompted her to search for new opportunities, methods and ways of criminal activity. The movement of smuggled goods, trafficking of people across state borders, as well as the use of traditional methods of extortion and corruption schemes have become much more difficult due to the tightening of control and ban on many areas of human activity, primarily international transport of goods and people, as well as the use by most governments of tough measures, including the introduction of a state of emergency, curfew and the restriction of fundamental constitutional freedoms of citizens.

Transnational organized crime is a multifaceted area of criminal activity and the peak of the pandemic has not yet been reached in all countries, this is why it is too early to summarize the final results of the impact on human civilization and the international economy of its consequences. Therefore, at this stage it is possible to consider only the preliminary consequences of the ambiguous impact of the pandemic on transnational organized crime.

The United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime does not define “transnational organized crime” (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes, 2004). It also does not list the types of crime that may constitute it. This lack of definition was intended to ensure wider application of UNTOC to new types of crimes that constantly appear as global, regional and local conditions change over time. (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Retrieved on May 27, 2020). But the Convention contains the definition of an “organized criminal group”, which consists of three or more people, that was not randomly formed, exists for a certain period of time, acts in concert with the aim of committing at least one crime punishable by imprisonment for a term of at least four years, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, financial or other material benefits (Ibid.). According to the

UNODC, the term “transnational crime” refers to crimes committed in more than one state, or it is planned in one state, and committed in another. It is interpreted as covering almost all serious criminal activity motivated by profit, which has international consequences. This definition takes into account the global complexity of the problem, but seems incomplete, since it does not include such a form of transnational organized crime as international terrorism, which is motivated not by profit, but by political or religious ideology.

Based on this approach to the definition of transnational organized crime, we can identify some of its types that have most changed criminal behavior as a result of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on politics and the economy:

1. The increasing role of cybercrime;
2. Expansion of the black market for medicines and medical equipment;
3. Expanding the social role of transnational organized crime groups;
4. Reducing the scope of human trafficking, illegal migration, as well as smuggling of drugs and other illegal goods.

**Keywords:** Transnational organized crime, coronavirus pandemic, definitions, convention, cybercrime, trafficking, smuggling.

**Vakhtang Maisaia**

Professor

Caucasus International University

**Miranda Mikadze**

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**Sebastian Bobkiewicz**

Expert

The Georgian Geostrategic and Euro-Atlantic Integration Studies Institute

**EU Conflict Resolution Strategy on the Example of Regional Security in the South Caucasus**

The South Caucasus is an important region for the European Union due to its geographical location and natural resources. Since 1993, the European Union has aimed to diversify its foreign relations with the help of the regions. One of the regions that the EU has helped a lot with was the South Caucasus.

One of the most important issues on the EU's foreign policy agenda has been unresolved conflicts and threats in the South Caucasus.

The purpose of my report is to explore the EU's strategy for resolving conflicts in the conceptual framework of the South Caucasus Regional Security Example. To study the topic, I will use qualitative research methods, in particular, literature review, through which I will develop a theoretical framework for research.

In its 2003 security strategy, the European Union stressed that it must "take a stronger and more active interest in the problems of the South Caucasus, which, of course, will be a neighboring region." The European Union (EU) has appointed a representative to the South Caucasus, whose task is to promote a peaceful settlement of conflicts in the region, including the crisis in Georgia and the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as regional cooperation.

All three countries in the South Caucasus have different policies towards the European Union, and therefore each of them requires a different form of cooperation. The European Union is trying to maintain a balanced approach to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which has become an obstacle to EU-Azerbaijan relations.

However, this is clearly different from the Georgian case, where the EU never hides its support for Georgia's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

In 2009, the EU established the Eastern Partnership to strengthen relations with its eastern neighbors, including the South Caucasus.

The Common Security and Defense Policy is an integral part of the EU's foreign policy, which aims to ensure the EU's operational capabilities through the use of military and civilian means. The EU Monitoring Mission in Countries is a specific tool used to prevent conflict and build peace. In the areas surrounding the celestial boundary. The EU Monitoring Mission is active only in situations where there is a crisis and immediate response is needed. He has limited rights to act on the other side of the border, within separatist regions, although his influence is still very important.

**Keywords:** EU, South Caucasus, Conflict, Security.

## **Jaba Urotadze**

Assistant Professor

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

### **Comparative Analysis of Protection of Young People at Work in Georgian and European Union Laws**

The research examines the level of protection of young persons' (any person under 18 years of age) safety and health at work in Georgia compared to the European Union. Young persons are particularly vulnerable to risks related to working conditions, therefore the state should pay special attention to implementing international standards in this field. According to Article 78 of the Constitution of Georgia: "the constitutional bodies shall take all measures within the scope of their competences to ensure the full integration of Georgia into the European Union". On the way to integration, Georgia has to approximate its legislation with the EU law. Georgia ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) in 1996. The EU Directive 94/33/EC is based on the convention and establishes more specific provisions of protecting young persons' safety and health at work. In Georgia, provisions concerning the protection of young people at work are given in the Labour Code (the LC) and the Organic Law on Occupational Safety. The upper limit of working time (including overtime) is not directly determined in the LC, even for children. A minimum uninterrupted rest period per week and daily breaks for workers regardless of age is not regulated in the LC. Georgian Labour Inspectorate has insufficient competences, only having the right to examine occupational safety and health conditions, but not work and rest time regulations. In relation to child labour, there are other provisions needed to be harmonized with EU law. In the research, Comparative analysis of EU Directive 94/33/EC on Protection of Young People at Work with relevant clauses of Georgian labour law is conducted and recommendations are given to amend provisions in Georgian legislation regarding the protection of young persons' safety and health at work.

**Keywords:** Labour relations, child labour, working time, night work, daily break.

**Nadezhda Kazarinova**

Associate professor

**Anna Chugunova**

Invited Lecturer

Saint Petersburg Electrotechnical University “LETI” (ETU), Russia

### **Paradoxes of “Soft Power” of Tourism**

The concept of "soft power", once used by international relations specialist J. Nai, emerged as an antithesis to the concept of "hard power", i.e. instruments of military and economic pressure. Since the early 2000s, this notion has been actualizing the interest in the communicative resources of power both in academic and media environments, and in political circles. This interest was explained by the urgent need for new concepts of political science to analyze and shape the instruments of political influence of states in a changing international system and global competition, as well as taking into account constitutional constraints and public sensitivity to coercion. Behind "soft power" was the importance of the use of non-violent methods of influence, tools and technologies to solve political problems, the ability of one state to attract other states by demonstrating values and achievements in non-political areas of life.

Considering tourism - an activity that seems to be outside the political space - as a resource of "soft power" demonstrated the readiness of researchers and political practitioners to make a contextual shift in understanding the nature of political governance, namely the distance from conscious manipulation technologies, information wars, ideological sabotage and other methods of political influence towards the expansion of communication technologies and skills that lead to better understanding and reduction of tension between the two.

Our content analysis of publications in a number of international scientific journals for 2014-2019 on the topic "tourism as a Soft Power resource" showed that for most researchers of tourism soft power context remained problematic. Although the task itself was viewed positively, at the same time "the subject resisted". On the one hand, the political significance of tourism activities in the abovementioned sense of "soft power" seemed to be taken for granted. However, the methodological context in which tourism is assigned the function of a resource of power (even if it is "soft",

but power) inevitably reproduced the discourse of request, suggestion, and appeal to the authorities to pay attention to the importance of tourism as a "soft power", which, in our opinion, showed that the cognitive transition was incomplete.

An indicative practical consequence of the activity paradigm was a weak interest or formal bureaucratic approach to the development of "soft power" tourism by the executive authorities.

In turn, the global economic and social crisis of spring 2020, caused by the pandemic and most devastating impact on the tourism industry, revealed a kind of deadlock in the thinking of tourism activities in the previous paradigm and revealed the paradoxical reproduction of tourism practices in crisis and post-crisis circumstances. We formulated these paradoxes in the following way.

-The identity of a tourist is realized only as his or her role marginality, which in an acute form found its expression in the requirement to travelers to respect the temporary and territorial self-isolation when crossing state borders.

Residents of specific areas perceive tourists as both desirable and undesirable at the same time, which in sharp form finds its expression in various practices of stigmatization of travelers.

- The illusion of freedom for the traveler to choose the destination and the time of his or her journey through the territory remains.

The methodological framework of P. Bourdier's theory of the social field and the theory of social constructionalism allow us to look at the described paradoxical practices as strategies of positioning the actors of tourist activity, to discover the power lines and diversity of configurations of tourist communities, and thus to develop the concept of soft power of tourism in a meaningful way to describe the resources of civil society, not strictly connected with territorial boundaries.

The available and ongoing collection of empirical data on tourism practices, including Georgian and Russian experience, on the functioning of tourism communities online, on the behavior patterns of expats and repatriates allows us to create a kind of map of tourism space in the modern world.

**Keywords:** Tourism, soft power, political power, paradoxes.

## **Cenay Babaoglu**

Associate Professor  
Selçuk University, Turkey

## **Onur Kulac**

Assistant Professor  
Pamukkale University, Turkey

### **A Blueprint of Turkey's Covid-19 Policy**

In 2020 a new worldwide pandemic, which was named as Covid-19 started in Wuhan/China and affected deeply different regions rapidly. In the process, governments have devised various roadmaps and policies to combat the pandemic. To this end, various measures have been taken, and several restrictions have been imposed on citizens, especially curfews. Turkey has been one of the most affected countries in terms of the number of cases from the Covid-19 pandemic. The Turkish government and the citizens played a major role in keeping pandemic under control with their efforts and devotion. In this context, regulations have been made in many policy areas, especially health. New hospitals have been established, their work patterns have been changed, and Covid-19 focused preventive, and treatment studies have been carried out. Besides, economic support packages were announced, social arrangements were made, and education policies were changed. Also, personnel policies were reorganised, and new social policies were implemented. During this period, Turkey sent protective equipment, health equipment and health technologies to different countries free of charge under international aid. Crowdfunding and crowdsourcing campaigns that took place within the country have also been successful at both local and national levels. Turkey has performed successful process management in this process and has come forward as a *best practice* with its low spread and mortality rates during the epidemic. Therefore, the policy in Turkey needs to be scrutinised, to draw lessons for new cases. The foremost aim of this study is to analyse the policies made in the pandemic process in Turkey. In this context, responses and the initiatives of the official policy actors will be analysed. On the other hand, unofficial and international actors contributing to the pandemic process will be examined. Later on, the roles and effects of think tanks and street-level bureaucrats will be discussed. While analysing the Covid-19 policy Turkey, the decisions taken during the process will be handled within the framework of the

decision-making approaches in the literature. Moreover, it is aimed to have a comprehensive policy analysis by given priority the concepts of policy transfer and lesson drawing. This study reveals that Turkey's policies regarding the pandemic process are based on some of the fundamental aspects such as coordination, public relations, usage of technology and task distribution.

**Keywords:** Covid-19 Pandemic, Public Policy Analysis, Policy Transfer, Street-Level Bureaucrats, Turkey.

**Salome Dundua**

Associate Professor

**Sandro Tabatadze**

MA Student

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

### **Liberal-Democratic Values in the National Curriculum of General Education of Georgia**

The major principles of general education policy of Georgia are presented at “The Document of the National Goals for General Education” that states importance of forming and establishing the liberal and democratic values among school students. Considering the fact that after re-independence, Georgia has chosen the Western political course and therefore, the way of building a liberal-democratic political system, we reckon it is a quite interesting and noteworthy to determine the state policy in this point of view. The research question can be formulated as: how does the national curriculum of Georgia respond to the declared goals of the general education in the terms of forming the liberal-democratic values among school students. The academic literature, in this regard, mostly focuses on the political values and their role in the different curriculum (Brody, 1994; Beyer and Apple, 1998; Chisholm, 2003). Some of the authors particularly investigate the liberal and democratic values in school textbooks (Strike, 1991; Erss, 2017). However, the measurement of these values remains problematic.

The given study overviews the issue of declared political values in the European countries’ relevant documents for general education goals. Also, the research uses the method document analysis method, while coding as a research instrument. In order to avoid the possible unilateralism during the study, an interdisciplinary approach is chosen (using perspectives of both education and political sciences). As the major object of the research lies in the national curriculum and its components of all three levels of general education of Georgia, a didactic approach for curriculum research is used, that mostly focuses on the compatibility between teaching objectives, contents, methods and liberal-democratic principles.

The results of the study show that declaring the political values in their general education documents can't be seen as the universal European experience. However, in some countries, mainly in Central and Eastern Europe, the necessity of teaching democratic principles is emphasized. As Georgian national curriculum, its major goals are mostly focused on the teaching principles and pay no attention to maintaining the liberal-democratic values among school students. However, in broad sense, its content, especially in the courses of civic education at all levels of the general education, is clearly based on concepts, categories and principles of liberal-democratic values. It should be mentioned that, unlike the term "democracy", the "liberal" can't be found neither in the societal school subject standard nor in the national curriculum. Nonetheless, beside the sentences and phrases in the civic education's textbooks, even the content of school students' assignments covers the issues of tolerance, the rule of law, minority rights, separation of powers etc. Furthermore, in the national curriculum several topics are devoted to the political education, in particular: the idea of the state, the rights, duties and control necessities of governments, the active citizenship, government forms etc. However, at the same time, the national curriculum offers only one compulsory teaching technology (constructivism), that is less relevant with the freedom of choice and diversity and therefore, with the liberal-democratic values.

**Keywords:** National Curriculum, Civic Education School Courses, Liberal-Democratic Values, Didactic approach for Curriculum Research.

**Nikoloz Esitashvili**

Professor

ISET – International School of Economics, TSU

### **The Role of External Economic Incentives in times of Political Transitions and Consolidations**

Development has become a buzzword in the field of political science and policy-making. This paper tries to answer why despite crucial political and economic similarities between European countries – Spain & Portugal – and South American countries – Argentina & Peru, South Americans constantly underperformed in terms of economic development in the last quarter of the 20th century? In the mid-70s, all of the above-mentioned countries where authoritarian dictatorships characterized with poor economic performance. Important economic indicators, such as GDP/capita, economic growth and inequalities, unemployment and etc., were roughly similar in all these countries. In the late 70s and early 80s these countries experienced democratic transitions, and by the end of the twentieth century they had been democracies for at least a decade. Iberian and South American counties picked in this study started out with similar economic indicators, had contemporaneously experienced democratic transition, yet, at the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they ended up with vastly disparate economic indicators. As this study tried to demonstrate the difference in economic growth stemmed from the rational vote-maximizing behavior of the governments. Governments would not engage in painful reforms not to antagonize their electorate. As a consequence no structural economic reforms would be implemented, until the country finds itself plunged in the economic precipice. This study also suggested that the only way out from the rationality induced logic of responsibility is economic incentives provided by foreign actors. Governments can justify their harsh economic policies to their electorate with future economic gains from them. This study explored how external economic incentives can stimulate progressive economic reforms in times of democratic transitions. By understanding why South American states failed where Iberian ones succeeded, we can learn more about important intervening variables, and offer alternative answers to questions of political transitions and their impact on economic growth. Moreover, this research might have some practical value for policy-makers facing transition from authoritarian to democratic market-oriented states.

**Keywords:** Latin America, Political transition, Economic incentives.

## **Luca Zarrilli**

Associate Professor

University “G. D’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara, Italy

## **Miguel Brito**

Associate Professor

Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies, Portugal

### **Alcântara (Lisbon): From Industrial District to Tourist Destination. A Survey**

The tourist image of Lisbon and its uniqueness was shaped through the existence of “popular neighbourhoods”, spaces of intense and unchangeable social life where the elements of cultural life are present as a landmark of each different space. Alcântara, Bica, Alfama, Mouraria, and Madragoa are examples of traditional Lisbon neighbourhoods, which today continue to be closely associated with specific representations of the city and of its people’s ways of life within the city. As part of the tourism development that Lisbon has been experiencing in recent years, one of the emerging neighbourhoods is Alcântara, a former industrial district that is currently undergoing a functional reconversion. Situated by the river Tagus, next to the museum district of Lisbon (Belém), and not far from the town centre (Baixa), it presents a different tourist supply: besides the traditional local heritage, composed of monuments, palaces and museums, it is probably the best district of Lisbon to recall the industrial era, its buildings, activities and ways of life. This article deals with the transition process of the neighbourhood from an economic fabric based on industry to a tertiary type of area, within which a special reference to the tourism sector is given. As a reaction to the increasing demand of the tourists, several hotels, apartments and other types of local accommodation have emerged in the neighborhood. In Alcântara tourists seek for the trendy local restaurants, unique libraries, modern business opportunities and young entrepreneurs’ shops, which concentrate in former industrial facilities now reconverted into cultural and commercial activities, such as LX Factory and Village Underground. To understand this transformation a qualitative-quantitative method was used. Besides the documental analysis and the field research, a survey was conducted aimed at understanding the type of tourists visiting the district, their motivations and their assessment of the characteristics of Alcântara. The results show that Alcântara is an attractive district for young tourists interested in discovering trendy places.

Alcântara's barycentric position is also significant both in the transport network and in the tourist geography of the metropolitan area of Lisbon.

**Keywords:** Alcântara, Lisbon, urban tourism, urban redevelopment, heritage.

**Constantin-Vasile Toca**

Lecturer

**Edinna Lilla Meszaros**

Teaching Assistant

University of Oradea, Romania

**Cross-Border Cooperation under Magnifying Glass: An Assessment of the Projects Implemented at the Romanian-Hungarian Border in the 2004-2013 Period**

Throughout history, the Romanian-Hungarian border can be characterized as a closed, cold, exclusionary border, more precisely a border with a low degree of communication between Romania and Hungary. This being the result of the international relations existing in different periods that reflected on the inter-state communication and implicitly on the cross-border relations.

At the Romanian-Hungarian border a series of cross-border projects have operated over time, be they social, economic, educational or other. After 1989, with the fall of communism in Romania, the collaboration intensified between the two, a crucial factor being the evolution of the two countries towards the great European family, the European Union, here intervening financial instruments of cross-border cooperation.

The target period we will focus on is between 2004 and 2013, which we will split into two distinct parts. More precisely, the point of reference will be the year 2007 when Romania became a member of the European Union, together with Bulgaria.

The two periods on which we will carry out our quantitative study will be 2004-2006, the period of pre-accession of Romania, at which time at the Romanian-Hungarian border operated the PHARE CBC cross-border cooperation program 2004 - 2006, and starting since 2007, for the period 2007-2013 we discuss the functionality of the Hungary-Romania Cross-Border Cooperation Program 2007-2013 (HU-R0 2007-2013).

Thus, during the years 2004-2013 we will undertake an ex-post quantitative evaluation of the implementation of cross-border projects at the Romanian-Hungarian border through European cross-border financial instruments, while

monitoring the added value created by these projects in eligible regions, highlighting the degree of cross-border cooperation at the level of the territorial administrative units at the border, as well as at institutional level.

The target group that we will evaluate will be the cross-border counties that are located on both sides of the Romanian-Hungarian border, in total being analyzed 8 counties (4 counties on the Romanian side: Bihor, Satu Mare, Timiș and Arad and on the Hungarian side the counties are: Hajdú-Bihar, Szatmár-Bereg, Békés and Csongrád).

In our ex-post quantitative evaluation we will establish those relevant indicators of the two programs through which we can highlight the efficiency of the two programs at the Romanian-Hungarian border, the results brought by the two European cross-border financial instruments, the evaluation also revealing the degree of cross-border cooperation at the level of the 8 counties, at the institutional level as well as at the level of the cross-border communities.

**Keywords:** CBC, Romanian - Hungarian border, cross - border project, evaluation.

## **Julia Kaczmarek-Khubnaia**

PhD Student

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland

### **Socio-Economic Development of the Georgian Regions- Chosen Theoretical Approach**

The geopolitical location, natural resources, history, and domestic situation make Georgia a subject of interest for researchers in a range of scientific disciplines.

The necessity of an analysis of the regional development in Georgia is demonstrated by the problem of deepening regional disproportions and the process of depopulation of the peripheries, including high mountainous areas that are valuable in terms of both nature and culture.

Understanding the specifics and mechanisms affecting the level of development of individual regions allows the researcher to choose concepts that will best explain the process. This stage is crucial for the identification of the factors in development. The way the process is understood is also very important in the programming phase of development policy by local and central authorities, e.g. when setting the main goals and directions of their actions.

The aim of this talk is to present an original approach to research on regional development in Georgia, based on a number of complementary theories of regional development. The proposed mix of concepts has not been used previously in the context of the Georgian development path. In my choice of theoretical foundations, I rely on three theories of regional development: (1) *The concept of growth poles* - formulated by François Perroux, (2) *The concept of circular and cumulative causality* - proposed by Gunnar Myrdal and (3) *The concept of path dependence* – proposed by Douglas Cecil North.

The development of the Georgian regions has an unbalanced character, as evidenced by the existence of the motor units, so-called *growth poles* (Tbilisi, Batumi, Kutaisi) whose presence determines the level and dynamics of the country's development.

The socio-economic development of Georgia's regions should be viewed through the prism of historical and social conditions, and is dependent on *unforeseen events*

(e.g. the collapse of the Soviet Union and Georgia regaining its independence or the global economic crisis).

Furthermore, available statistical data show that in relation to development processes taking place in the area of the country under study, there is the occurrence of a vicious circle mechanism, described by Myrdal, in which wealthier areas (with growth poles within their boundaries) are developing more and more rapidly and poor regions are characterized by a deepening stagnation.

The selection of theoretical concepts also refers to the specifics of factors in Georgia's regional development. The country is currently experiencing prolonged transformation processes, so it is difficult for Georgia to base its development on modern, intangible factors, e.g. knowledge, innovations and technological progress to which researchers from all over the world currently refer, e.g. under the popular *endogenous growth theory* or concepts of "*learning regions*".

This presentation is built on older concepts, based on "traditional", largely material development factors, which seem to more accurately relate the characteristics of the socio-economic development of Georgian regions.

The presented results are part of the research project No. 2018/31/N/HS4/00178 funded by the Polish National Science Centre.

**Keywords:** Region, development, Georgia, theory, theoretical approach.

## **Valerio Della Sala**

PhD Student

Autonoma University of Barcelona, Italy

### **Olympics Games: The Organisation, the History, the Committee, the Projects. Rome 1960 -Barcelona 1992: From a Dream to the Urban Model**

The choice of analysing the Olympic Games of Rome 1960 and Barcelona 1992 belongs to the conflicting and diverse impact generated on the two cities. These two editions created a big urban transformation, which allows for a new critical perspective, concerning public services and management measures. I will examine how management models will either prevent or increase the exploitation of the intangible benefits, necessarily associated to the Olympic event. Olympic venues are at the hearth of the Olympic planning, as they constitute the citizens' Olympic legacy. In fact, these venues' sitting capacity and their technology determinate their future use and value among the citizens, possibly enhancing the sportive practice within the local community. The Olympic venues design, supported by a strong, public transportation system, is therefore of pivotal importance in order to develop a new and stable city economy able to imply its own resources and to limit the environmental impact as like as cost instability. My critical analysis, regarding these two mega- events, is carried out through the development of 13 guidelines, aiming to offer effective criteria in order to guarantee not only an economic revenue but also intangible, future benefits. This investigation shows how cities should favour from these intangible benefits, which develop as a consequence of both, the Olympic bid's success and the infrastructural evolution. Only thanks to these new philosophies, cities and regions, as a consequence, could profit from the intangible benefits, belonging to the Olympic game, such as: employment, structure and infrastructure use, tourism, job offers, SME, cultural development, decision making, trade.

The purpose is to demonstrate how socio-urban implications, impact, legacy and sustainability are fundamental aspects to be considered when planning and evaluating the Olympic Games. The analysis of the Olympic planning will also describe the obstacles around the creation of a new neighborhood and the linking network in the future Olympic city. The project involves a multi- and inter-

disciplinary methodology which, through a critical analysis approach, aims to develop a new way to study the Olympic Games.

**Keywords:** Olympic games, legacy, sustainability, urbanism.

**Mariam Gersamia**

Professor

**Maia Toradze**

Associate Professor

**Liana Markariani**

MA Student

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

### **Challenges of Gender Equality in Media (Case of Georgia)**

According to UNESCO's World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development report, while there is progress, women journalists are still more exposed to assault, threat or physical, verbal or digital attack than their male counterparts (UNESCO, 2018).

Georgia (country) faces challenges regarding feticide, domestic violence, employment of women, early or forced marriages, sexual harassment, blackmailing of female journalists, and there is a low awareness about gender equality. According to international reports (MSI, Freedom House) the media landscape in Georgia is partly free.

The goal of the research is to analyze the media landscape in Georgia from a gender equality perspective and provide recommendations for raising awareness on gender-sensitive issues.

According to EBU gender equality guidelines (2019), in Europe, women represent 44% of the public service media workforce, but only 25% of executive positions. Stereotypes and biases persist in media and there is an urgent need to show a realistic picture. Media figures can strengthen or reduce stigmatization and stereotypes regarding groups and individuals. Traditionally, the news industry has been dominated by men (Ross et al., 2018) and researchers argue (Melin-Higgins, 2014; Ruoho & Torkkola, 2018) that woman in media often have top positions in woman's magazines or in media product about beauty at etc. However, in Georgia analysis confirms the hypothesis, that women are dominated in the media sector (and not only in woman's magazines). As to the positioning, according to GMMP's replication study (2015), there were 88% Female and 12% Male presenters

(Macharia et al., 2015) in Georgia. In addition, Also in Georgian media organizations, 48% of reporters were female and 52 Male (Connor et al., 2010).

Study answers research questions as it follows:

- RQ 1: is there gender inequality regarding workplace and positions in Georgian media (TV, print, radio, online)?
- RQ 2: what are the themes covered by women and men journalists?
- RQ 3: what gender-related issues do women face in media organizations?

To answer the above-mentioned questions, mixed methodological approaches have been be used: content-analysis (Research Period: 2019: from June 1 till December 31) and survey (225 journalists have been interviewed in April, 2020).

Recommendations (based on findings) are provided for media organizations, educators and media practitioners;

**Keywords:** Media, gender, equality, Georgia, education.

**Luca Zarrilli**

Associate Professor

**Silvia Iacuone**

PhD Student

University “G. D’Annunzio” of Chieti-Pescara, Italy

### **The Role of Iceland in the Arctic Issue: Diplomacy, Threats, Opportunities**

Recently the Arctic has been spoken of as the new "navel of the world": Starting from an environmental aspect - the melting of the ice of the polar ice cap - a series of issues of extraordinary interest are emerging in the fields of geoeconomics, geopolitics, energy, trade, law and military strategy. The actors of this "game" are the member countries of the Arctic Council (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States), the so-called “permanent observers” countries (China, South Korea, Japan, India, Italy, Singapore, Switzerland) and international and transnational institutions such as the United Nations, NATO and the European Union. In this paper we want to analyse in particular the case of Iceland. It has always maintained a favorable condition of isolation/integration, from an economic and military point of view: Iceland is a member State of NATO and therefore, despite not having an army, sees its defense ensured within this organization; at the same time, it is well integrated with Europe (it is part of its economic area as an ex-EFTA country and adheres to the Schengen agreement), although it is not an EU member country. Located halfway between North America and Europe, Iceland certainly occupies a strategic position in this new geopolitical scenario. Between environmental problems, new economic interests, expansionist aims of world powers and global repercussions, it can be interesting to understand the role of this *small state* in the Arctic issue, its foreign policy, its defense strategies but also its room for maneuver. At the same time, Iceland seems interested in seizing the economic opportunities that may arise from new diplomatic relationships, such as the recent agreement with China, the latter being interested in fostering an additional trade route - the Transpolar Route - which would pass right from Iceland.

**Keywords:** Arctic, Iceland, geopolitics, geoeconomics, trade routes.

**Temur Gugushvili**

PhD Student

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

**Mountain Resident's Livelihoods: Adaptation Strategies in the Swiftly Progressing 'Weather' of Tourism in Protected Areas**

Protected Areas (PA) play a pivotal role in tourism development, which in itself creates vital economic opportunities for local communities in terms of promoting alternative livelihoods. Importantly, in most mountain regions worldwide, locals have limited possibilities to generate income; therefore, delivering mountain PAs as sustainable tourism destinations are seen as a source of employment and additional economic benefits. It appears straightforward, but protected areas may also trigger disorganization in traditional economic performances of local residents, living in or at the edge of PA.

Now that significant inroads are made in the development of PAs globally, Georgia as a country with transition economy joins this international movement. Remarkably, the data collected within the protected areas of Georgia, reveals the rapid increase in the coverage of PA and the number of visitors.

In the paper, which is based upon data collected during the scientific research project "Transformation of livelihood practices in rural settlements located at the edge of protected areas in Georgia", great emphasis is placed on empirical information analysis gathered through the triangulation method (interviews) and sustainable livelihood concept in Adjara (south-west Georgia). Selected research areas are located close to newly-established (2012) Machakhela National Park. The collected qualitative information will be analyzed using a combination of type building and 'quantitizing' approaches through CAQDA software.

The paper delves into the process of how global phenomenon, namely expansion of tourism and PAs shape livelihood practices of local mountain residents in Georgia. Importantly, the study sheds the light of the ongoing transformation pathways and its impact on the society in transition. On the one hand, restriction of the traditional livelihood practice accelerated the short-term out-migration (rural to urban). On the other hand, difference in the owned capital cause inequality during the adaptation process of the new livelihood strategy (guesthouses).

**Keywords:** Livelihood, inequality, transformation, mountain, protected areas.

**Nino Kukhianidze**

PhD Student

Maria Curie-Sklodowska University, Poland

### **The Role of Peace Education in the Process of Conflict Transformation**

Peacebuilding actions for sustainable solutions begin with shifting mindsets of war to the mindsets of peace. Education is the tool to be used in this process. Discussions about conflict transformation are natural occurrences after outbreaks of conflicts, however usually the main conflict resolution rhetoric predominantly entails the focus of discussion on issues such as territorial integrity, return of IDP's, and maintaining international support on the issues of non-recognition, this has especially been the case in the context of conflicts in the Caucasus. In this region, apart from internationally-supported peacebuilding efforts through engagement of civil society actors in peacebuilding and confidence-building processes, national efforts that would address local community peacebuilding needs are not countless.

One of the contributing factors to enforcing the mindsets of war, regretfully, have been the education systems. They have been used as a tool to implement nationalist policies aimed at building enemy images and dehumanizing the "Other", preparing the populations for war, portraying the conflict as historical and unsolvable, sustaining mobilization for the war efforts.

According to a leading voice in critical pedagogy Freire, education is designed to serve political agendas (Freire, 1985 ). In other words, as long as the state controls and mandates education, it cannot be seen as a neutral disseminator of knowledge but a tool to promote particular political agendas, affect the minds of new generations. Predominantly, in countries that are multicultural and relationships extremely delicate (such as the countries in the Caucasus region), it is important for the education systems to promote inclusion and multi-culturalism, be conscious of the role that education and educators can play in either promoting peace and stability or divisions and war.

The research intends to offer a broader perspective on the role of peace education, and aims to examine whether education systems are contributing to promoting the culture of peace and the culture of tolerance in post-conflict, multi-ethnic, multi-religious, and multi-cultural environments.

**Keywords:** Conflict transformation, education, peace education.

## **Ekaterine Lomia**

PhD Student

Caucasus International University

### **How Russian Propaganda Works in Georgia: The Consequences of the Russian Disinformation in a Long-Term Perspective**

The civil wars in Georgia, in 1991-1993, that erupted after the collapse of the Soviet Union, enormously weakened the Georgian economy and resulted in the so-called "frozen conflicts" in the country. Since then, all attempts to peacefully resolve the Georgian conflicts have inevitably ended in a deadlock. The 2008 Russia-Georgia war, ended in a unilateral recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states by the Russian Federation and once again worsened the political climate between the neighbouring countries.

Currently, 20% of Georgian territories are occupied by Russia. In addition to Russia's economic leverage against Georgia, mutual relations between the two countries have sharpened recently over Russia's illegal borderization of the occupied Georgian territories. The Russian-baked separatist forces continuously install and erect barbed-wire border posts in one of the occupied regions of Georgia, South Ossetia, and detain Georgian people under the pretext of "illegally crossing the border". Fundamental rights of the local population are violated daily since the occupants install barbers through people's houses, gardens and cultivated lands.

In addition to that, the Kremlin is actively and effectively using its propaganda machine in the post-Soviet space and, of course, in Georgia as well. Russian propaganda in Georgia is growing and getting more and more powerful daily, which in turn, poses a serious threat to Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

It is significant to emphasize that pro-Russian television and media, political parties, non-governmental organizations etc. are the main sources of Russian propaganda in Georgia. They actively promote anti-Western and pro-Russian narratives in the wider society and undermine the peaceful existence of Georgia as a democratic state. On the contrary, Georgia seeks to integrate into the Euro-Atlantic structures to avoid the threats coming from Russia.

The article aims to analyze Russian propaganda in Georgia and its consequences in a long-term perspective. Based on the primary and secondary sources, the author

conducts a retrospective analysis of the research topic. In order to better understand the subject, the methods of system-structural and comparative analysis are used as well.

**Keywords:** The Russian propaganda, disinformation, Georgia, occupation.

**Namig Karimov**

MA

Baku Engineering University, Azerbaijan

### **Turkey and Russia's strained relations in Caucasia**

The roots of the colliding interests of Russia and Turkey in the Caucasian region come from their imperial relations and it has been omitted to modern ages. Especially, Russian Imperium and followed by USSR's biased policies towards region countries laid the foundation of border problems and more importantly ethnic confrontation in the Caucasia. The dynamics inherited from the imperial ages of both countries, mainly geopolitical interests of the cold war period in the Turkish-Russian relations that haven't lost importance for centuries and currently have specific effects on their relations with independent South Caucasian countries.

On the one hand, Turkey has shaped its foreign policies based on active support for Azerbaijan on almost every platform, as well as, strong economic cooperation with Georgia in the South Caucasus. Paradoxically, Georgia is more determined to broader its relations with Turkey in the frame of NATO programs rather than Azerbaijan which is a strategic partner and has deeper historical and cultural ties with Turkey. On the other hand, although separatism and border management are actual problems in both countries, Azerbaijan pursues a sheer balanced foreign policy with Turkey, Russia, and West, as well. Instead of that, Georgian political decision-makers prefer to negotiate with Western allies using the expansionist image of Russia to solve the separatism problems, as well as, strengthen the integration process to the West. In this regard, the membership of Turkey in the alliance may motivate Georgia in the integration process to NATO and it clashes with the geopolitical interests of Russia in the Black Sea and Caucasia. In addition to this, transporting of Caspian energy resources over Turkey (bypassing Russia) and the USA's intention of using the straits to help Georgia in the 2008 crisis period changed the Turkey and Russia's bilateral relations dramatically. Subsequently, Moscow constituted the proactive support to Armenia against the national interests of Turkey included the "Armenian genocide" claims. The processes that took place after the "SU-24 jet" crash in Syria which were more complex and challenging have also affected Turkey and Russia's bilateral and multilateral relations in the South Caucasus. During this period Turkey faced the Armenian - Russian partnership in

the context of security which both countries have signed an agreement on a joint air defense system. Strong military cooperation between Russia and Armenia is indirectly linked to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict which certainly affects the national interests of Azerbaijan.

Understandably, as a NATO state - Turkey faces a myriad of problems in its policies towards Caucasia because of its internal problem in terms of security affairs. Especially, PKK is the main danger for Turkey which Russia may use it as a tool for instability in Turkey. On the contrary, Turkey's ties with Muslim people of North Caucasia may also be conceived as a potential danger for Russia. Therefore both countries as regional powers implement a fragile policy on their relations in Caucasia.

**Keywords:** South Caucasia, Turkey, Russia, bilateral relations, geopolitical interests

## **Tamar Dolbaia**

Associate Professor

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

### **Geographical Features of Transport System Development of Georgia**

The transport is a complex system, which ensures sustainable functioning and development of economic and social sectors. After gaining independence its favorable geographic location made Georgia an important part of the European-Central Asian transportation corridor and established prerequisites for the country to become the regional transport hub. By economic convergence with the EU Georgia steadily gained the status of transit country that secured its economic advance and stability.

The main modes of transport system of Georgia are: rail road, road (automobile) transport, maritime, air and pipeline transport. Almost all types of Georgian transport are involved in transit and import-export operations. Georgia's transport and logistics account for 6.3 percent of the country's gross domestic product (National Statistics Office of Georgia).

Within the presentation I will discuss transportation system of Georgia as a tool of country's economic development. For the analysis of the subject I will use the location theory or theories of spatial analysis. The methods of research will be the analysis of secondary data, comparative and statistical analysis.

The expansion of Georgia's transport networks is affected by natural-geographical and economic-geographical factors, that namely determine the peculiarities of transport network location and conditions of transport operation. Recently, Georgia's transport infrastructure has been modernized, the road network(automobile) has been rehabilitated, airports have been expanded, railway lines have been renewed, and new port projects have been planned and implemented.

Worldwide there is a tendency of increase of intermodal shipments, that means usage of different types of transportation for loads and the development of interconnected infrastructure. In order to improve the transport-logistical efficiency of Georgia, it is necessary to ensure the reliability of the system and intermodal shipments.

Georgia has to offer to the rest of the world extended infrastructure, high quality and low-cost service, otherwise it will risk losing its transit cargo, which will flow into competing alternative corridors due to low quality of service and high rates.

The prospect of Georgia's transportation system development can be seen within the integrated transport network in the South Caucasus, which is not easy task due to peculiarities of local terrain and conflicts in the region.

**Keywords:** Georgian transport system, sustainable economic development, transport corridor, cargo flows, transit.

## **Revaz Gachechiladze**

Professor

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

### **Changing Political Geography and Geopolitics of the Central Europe**

The region of Central Europe comprises contemporary Poland, Hungary, Czech and Slovak Republics. Austrian Republic as a rule is considered a part of the region of Western Europe.

The notion of “Central Europe” had been used intermittently since 1920s and it generally meant a group of states that had appeared on the territory of the former Austrian-Hungarian Empire which had dissolved in 1918. Only Poland re-established itself as a state on the territory previously (since the 18<sup>th</sup> century) annexed by Austria along with Russia and Prussia in.

The emergence of Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1918 in concrete boundaries of those days could be explained by the urgency of the already established national projects of the major ethnic groups as well as the geopolitical goals of *Entente*, especially those of the French Republic. France had a desire to sponsor rather loyal to itself states to the east of Germany, defeated in the WWI but considered in Paris as still potentially dangerous one.

Geopolitical calculations were a reason which permitted the both states, Czechoslovakia and Poland to expand at the expense of territories with ethnically heterogeneous population. A former part of Austria-Hungarian Empire, Sudetenland, predominantly populated with ethnic Germans and some territories with ethnic Hungarians on the left bank of Danube and foothills of the Carpathian mountains had been joined to Czechoslovakia. Poland received access to the Baltic Sea which effectively made East Prussia an exclave of Germany. After war with Bolshevik Russia poliethnicity of population of Poland increased.

In comparison with the abovementioned states Hungary considered itself the most aggrieved as large territories settled with ethnic Hungarians were to be ceded to the neighbouring states of Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Austria.

In interwar period geopolitical codes of Central European states frequently contradicted each other, there existed serious territorial claims.

Political-geographical peculiarities which developed in the region became a reason of “self-justification” of expansionism of Nazi Germany in 1938-1939 that led Europe to WW2.

After WW2 Central Europe turned into the sphere of interests of the Soviet Union and had undergone “Socialist transformation”. Sovereignty of all the states of the region was restricted. Large contingents of the Soviet Army had been deployed in each of them. The whole region had been joined to the military organisation of Warsaw Pact ruled from the Kremlin and the region was considered an outpost against NATO.

The sovereignty of the states of the region had been restored after the end of Cold War and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact (1990). Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary signed in Visegrad (Hungary) the document establishing a regional group in 1991. After the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia into Czech and Slovak Republics (January 1, 1993) the regional group acquired the name of The Visegrad Four (V4). In the beginning it was intended as an instrument to support common policy of joining the EU while now V4 is used as a mean of coordination of foreign policy within the EU.

The region of Central Europe joined the EU in 2004. Such membership is a prerequisite of economic and social development of all the states of the region and, simultaneously, a guarantor of avoidance of intraregional conflicts.

**Keywords:** Central Europe, geopolitical calculations, poliethnicity, Warsaw Pact, Visegrad Four, EU.

**Malkhaz Matsaberidze**

Professor

**Tamar Orjonikidze**

PhD Student

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

### **The Representatives of National Minorities in the Constituent Assembly of Georgia (1919-1921)<sup>1</sup>**

The paper reflects on the works and activities of the representatives of national minorities in the Constituent Assembly of Georgia in 1919-1921, through the analysis of the documents, stenographic reports of the sessions of the constituent assembly and those-days Georgian press and archival materials.

The 20 per cent of the population of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (which was established on May 26, 1918) were ethnic minorities: Armenians, Turkish Muslims (they are denoted as “Tatars” in those-days documents and later they were re-named as Azerbaijanians), Russians, Greeks, Abkhazians, Ossetians, Germans. A portion of them were integrated in the Georgia society, whereas others found themselves alienated in the newly declared Georgian state and demonstrated separatist tendencies; a great majority of national minorities tried to become accustomed to the new life in the new state.

The government of the Democratic Republic of Georgia granted extensive rights to the national minorities residing in the country and tried to integrate into the socio-political life of the newly created state. To this end, the significant work was undertaken by the governing political party – the Social Democratic Worker’s Party of Georgia – to ensure representation of all significant national minorities of the country into the Constituent Assembly through its party list. The paper analysis the activities of the representatives of national minorities in the Constituent Assembly of Georgia and reflects on their biographies to highlight their future fate in the emigration or under the Bolshevik repressions.

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<sup>1</sup> The paper was prepared in the framework of the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation project “Constituent Assemble of Georgia: Experience of the Georgian parliamentarism”, Code: FR – 18 – 20157

Representatives of some ethnic minorities (Muslims, Greeks) established their own political parties/unions before the elections (The National Congress of the Muslims of Georgia; The Muslim Union of the Borchalo District; The Hellen's Union of Georgia) although they did not manage to elect their nominee in the Constituent Assembly. The Armenian minority participated in the elections of the Constituent Assembly through the Dashnak Party and the Social-Democratic Worker's Party of Russia. Only Dashnak Party was successful to send the nominee in the Constituent Assembly. Representatives of ethnic minorities were also presented in the electoral list of the Georgian political parties. In this respect, the Social Democratic Party of Georgia performed extremely well as through its party list the representatives of all major ethnic groups residing in Georgia were elected in the Constituent Assembly.

The concept "People of Georgia" reflected the policy of integration of ethnic minorities, which denoted all citizens of Georgia, irrespective of their ethnic and religious belonging. The term was used by the ruling Social Democratic Party and by the representatives of the government of Georgia in their rhetoric. The policy of integration of national minorities only partially was successful, primarily due to the fact of the short time-span of the existence of the Democratic Republic of Georgia. In 1921, after the occupation and Sovietization of Georgia, the conquerors of Georgia manipulated and instrumentalized a portion of the national minorities against the central authorities of Georgia. The representatives of national minorities in the Constituent Assembly of Georgia were also affected by the Communist repressions, irrespective of the fact whether any of them collaborated with the Soviet government beforehand.

Representatives of national minorities elected in the Constituent Assembly through the party list of Social-Democrats, which emigrated abroad, remained on the position of defending the interests of Georgia.

**Keywords:** Georgia, the Constituent Assembly of Georgia, national minorities, parliamentarism, political parties, elections.

## **Iago Kachkachishvili**

Professor

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

### **Monitoring Knowledge, Risk Perceptions, Preventive Behaviours and Public Trust in the Current Coronavirus Outbreak in Georgia**

The aim of the study was to explore knowledge, attitudes and behavioral patterns of citizens of Georgia as response of COVID-19 outbreak. The quantitative research was conducted through cohort survey based on 30 minutes telephone interview in a serial cross-sectional design with multiple data collections. The data have been collected repeatedly for optimal monitoring. 1000 unique respondents have been interviewed in each wave. Given presentation includes data of three waves done in April and May, 2020.

The reality caused by COVID19 has reduced household incomes. Income for 23.3% of the Georgian population after Covid-19 outbreak has decreased, and the crisis mostly affected the poorest population; 55% of those stating to be employed before COVID19 lost their jobs.

The majority of people and their families (more than 90%) take preventive measures and are willing to take the necessary precautions even when the restrictions are gradually lifted.

Information, trust, policies

- Despite satisfaction with received information (over 90%) respondents are eager to get additional information;
- Emotional perceptions of coping with Coronavirus are moderately optimistic and increasing;
- Most of the respondents of both waves support the implementation of some strict measures. However, a significant proportion of respondents in both waves did not support overly strict/authoritarian measures;
- In general the population trusts stakeholders. Over 85% of respondents trust Clinics treating patients with COVID19, National Center for Disease Control and Public Health (NCDC), Ministry of Health and COVID State

Council. Lowest levels of trust are for private companies/ businesses in relation with COVID19;

- The majority of respondents (59%) agree that the plan presented by the government to lift the restrictions gradually (at 2-week intervals) is in line with the current situation. People who have lost their jobs due to the virus are less likely to want to remove the restrictions at a slower pace;
- Overall, the anti-crisis plan presented by the government is positively assessed by 53% of respondents; the share of negative evaluators is 17%;

According to 44% of respondents, the anti-crisis plan is the maximum that the government can do at this stage. Respondents, on the other hand, also realize that the anti-crisis plan does not provide solid guarantees for social protection.

**Keywords:** Knowledge, risk perceptions, preventive behaviours, trust, sources of information, acceptance of measures, misinformation, stigma, rumours, health and non-health related consequences.

**Valerian Melikidze**

Associate Professor

**Giorgi Kvinikadze**

Associate Professor

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

### **Strange Bedfellows - a Comparative Analysis of Economic Geography and Geo-economics**

Starting approximately from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century every scientific discipline (being that natural or social science), which is to some extent related to societal development problems, undergoes non-stop transformation. This is not the case of politization or ideologization of these disciplines (whole or their parts). Such happens sooner or later almost automatically. One may cite at least parts 19<sup>th</sup> century Western European geography or anthropology, which openly served interests of European colonial expansion of that time.

The ongoing transformation is of the more fundamental character. As a matter of fact, we deal with formation of a number of disciplines that directly aim at serving interests of government authorities or influential players which (at least formally) are not affiliated with these authorities. These disciplines consult their clients on current and strategic policy making and are directly involved in popularization and implementation of these policies.

We feel necessary to mark such research disciplines as a separate class “executive sciences”. This group is by no means homogenous. It can be differentiated as follows:

- Research disciplines, which were directly formed based on “top-down” initiatives. Such are, for instance, numerous disciplines associated with *sustainable development*, *green* (and by now with *blue*) *economy*;
- Research disciplines emerging within existing natural science disciplines, which directly serve interests of influential groups within (global?) society. They retain names of their disciplines, inside which they emerged and develop, although they do not have much to do with the original principles of *parent* disciplines. Such are for instance concurrent natural and (quasi) social research areas in *ecology* and *climatology*;
- Research disciplines, which were forming by *cloning* the preexisting research disciplines within social sciences. These form the *strange bedfellows*. They do not sever completely all ties with disciplines, through which they emerged, but at the same time attempt to distance themselves as much as possible from the former, in order to emphasize the

particular importance, which is ascribed to them in policy development and implementation by international organizations and national governments. Such couples are for example *political geography – geopolitics, economic geography-geo-economics*.

Our presentation aims at analyzing development patterns of *strange bedfellows* - economic geography and geo-economics, their current state, and to evaluate, how are they related or differentiated depending on concrete goals achieving which they serve.

**Keywords:** Economic geography, geo-economics, transformation, strange bedfellows.

## **Tengiz Verulava**

Associate Professor

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

### **Challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic: German strategy**

Strategies to combat global pandemics around the world include more or less strict quarantine or other restrictions. Nevertheless, the results achieved in the fight against coronavirus infection are different for all countries.

The number of people infected with COVID-19 in Germany is one of the highest in the world, however, the mortality rate (1.6%) is lower than in Italy (12%), Spain, France and the United Kingdom (10%), China (4%) and the United Kingdom. In the States (3%).

Germany works best among European countries in the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is evidenced by the results of a study conducted by experts from the Deep Knowledge Group. Germany ranks second in the world in terms of world security among countries that operate effectively in the context of the coronavirus pandemic. In the list of 40 countries published on the official page of Deep Knowledge Group, Germany lags behind only Israel.

Reconstruction credit bank has a special role in the history of Germany in critical situations. During the pandemic, the Reconstruction Credit Bank will issue any loans to entrepreneurs so that companies do not stop working due to lack of funds. In order to save the economy, the government is ready to take over the management of strategically important companies.

Despite the adoption of restrictive measures, most of the country's factories continue to operate. The main factor in the smooth operation of German production in the face of the pandemic is the introduction of digital technology in production systems long before. They created the "Industrial 4.0 Strategy", which involves training German companies for the fourth industrial revolution, or digital age. Germany has more ability and opportunity to protect the industry from the devastating effects of a pandemic.

Germany's success is linked to an efficient healthcare system. Germany spends \$ 5,033.45 per capita per year on health care, which is significantly higher than in other countries.

Another important factor in success is the sufficient number of hospitals and medical staff, hospital equipment. In Germany, the number of beds per 100,000 population is the highest in the European region. Germany is better equipped with artificial lung ventilation devices than other countries. Also, Germany has the opportunity to produce medical equipment and medicines inside the country.

From the beginning of the spread of the infection in Germany, the laboratories already had a supply of diagnostic tests and, as a result, soon began mass testing. Early and mass testing has made it possible to identify patients with asymptomatic infections and mild severity in order to isolate them immediately, which has dramatically slowed the spread of the virus. The testing was particularly effective for medical personnel who had direct contact with those infected.

The Robert Koch Institute has developed a control app that allows to collect data on the geographical distribution of Coronavirus. Experts attribute the success to the public's confidence in the government. Merkel's plan is based on the recommendations of the Robert Koch Research Institute.

It may be too early to draw a conclusion from the global pandemic, but one thing is clear: the pursuit of technological innovation allows Germany to relatively reduce the negative consequences of a pandemic.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Global Pandemic, Healthcare System, Germany

**Teona Mataradze**  
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**Giorgi Shubitidze**  
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### **How is the Urban Identity of Mtskheta Residents Represented in the External Image of the City**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union the political, social and economic changes affected every spare of the life of the citizens as well as the institutions. The postsocialist cities similarly undergo the rapid changes due to the migrations, privatizations, large scale illegal constructions and chaotic urban development (Tsenkova, 2012, Mariotti & Koželj, 2016). While studying the urban planning in post-socialist cities Sasha Tsenkova admits, that ‘urban-planning reforms have been initiated decade after the fall of communist regimes in an environment dominated by arguments for restricting planning and favoring private entrepreneurship’ (2012). Similarly, to the other postsocialist states, the Georgian state started to pay attention to the urban planning issue later and started to work on the general urban plan developments in the second decade of twenty-first century. Beside the capital of Georgia, the urban planning processes started in the relatively small-size cities.

The focus of our work is the urban development trends of historical capital of Georgia – Mtskheta. The project aims to conserve of the historical image of the city in order to keep the status of UNESCO world cultural heritage. Alongside this process the strengthening of historic image of Mtskheta city became essential. Dirk Verheyen connects image of the city with the urban identity and presents it as “two sides of the coin” as “cities endeavor to sell their internal identity as external image” (Verheyen, 1997: 44).

The urban identities are designed historically and it composes city architecture, monuments, cultural life, human, economic activities, street names and so on. According to Visar Hoxha, Kaliopa Dimitrovska Andrews and Alenka Temeljotov Salaj (2014) the relationship between the space and identity is equivocal as residents get their inspirations from the local surroundings (which strengthens their identity)

as well as express their identities “in the material culture of brick, stone, marble and concrete, just as they do in literature and art” (2014:77).

The aim of our presentation is to study the factors determining the Mtskheta Urban identity. The object of the study is the local population. The presentation is based on the qualitative and quantitative researches done among the population of Mtskheta in 2019 financed by the Partnership “Akolis” who is responsible entity for preparing the Master Plan of Mskheta City. Within the quantitative research survey covered 465 local residents (using stratified sample design); The method for collecting information was face-to-face interviews using structured questionnaire. Withing the qualitative research eight focus groups were conducted (6-9 participants in each group).

In the presentation we will discuss the knowledge of the locals about the city in general, its boarders, religious and archeological sites and their level of urban satisfaction. Furthermore, we will reveal how the attitudes and urban identity of locals creates the external image of the city.

**Keywords:** Urban Identity, External Image of the City, Urban Satisfaction.

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**Irakli Ubilava**

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Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Russia

**Post-Pandemic World Order-Place of Georgia in Transformative International System**

The purpose of the report is a simulated analysis of the situation which will be formed after the economic and political crises caused by COVID19. Many scenarios of organization of the international system of the post-pandemic era has been formulated. Our goal is to predict one of these scenarios in the post –pandemic world for states with great military potentials, the establishment of military-strategic and political control over countries rich in natural resources and raw materials and also those countries that have a geographic location favorable for transit will gain great importance. One of such regions are the southern Caucasus and Georgia, which has a nodal geographic position. The likely restructuring of the world system caused by theoretical and paradigmatic revisionism of world politics will force Georgia to rethink its place in the system of geopolitical relations in the region to ensure national security and stable democratic development. A sociological analysis of modern Georgian society shows a polarized worldviews of generations. A considerable part of the older generation in the cultural sphere is oriented towards traditionally collective values, while in the economic sphere, as a society of collective traditional values and a carrier of social solidarity, it expresses more active support for democratic ideas. As for young people, they are more supportive of globalization, gender equality, the environment and other democratic and liberal-individualistic values. Based on a two-paradigmatic value fragmentation, it is not so difficult to transform Georgia into a two party system, where the youth of society is located on one side of the horizontal political spectrum, which supports the transplantation of a liberal-individualistic and pro-Western value system into

Georgian reality and the opposite side will be occupied by that segment of society, which mainly consists of people of the older generation with communist value worldview, whose ideological and value orientations basically coincide with the traditionally conservative, Orthodox values of the ruling power and the population of Russia and in foreign policy will focus on the Russian world. It would be beneficial for the country to operate a bipartisan political system based on liberal and conservative ideologies. It is precisely such a political system operating on the basis of such geopolitical and ideological bipolarism that would be able to create such an order in the geopolitical structure of the region, when principle of mutual restraint of contradicting actors ensure the functioning of the security system based on a balanced foreign policy. And inside the country, this system would be transformed into a political system based on the brink of mutual balancing competence of elites with polarized ideological and world outlooks, standing on different political positions and having equal social bases. A system of balances activated as a result of two-stage differentiation would significantly deepen the democracy of the political system.

**Keywords:** Post-pandemic, nation-states, conservative, liberal, orientation, party system.

**Iago Kachkachishvili**

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**Aleksandra Kalatozishvili**

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**Cultural and Political Dimensions of Anti-Liberal Populism and Religious Nationalism in the Regions of Georgia**

In recent years, Georgia has clearly seen an increase in anti-liberal populism and religious nationalism, both in the discourse produced by political forces and in the attitudes of individual citizens. Processes triggered by the spread of the Covid-19 virus have once again exposed the vulnerability of the public in this regard, as evidenced by the strengthening of xenophobic attitudes in certain segments of society. This, in turn, has the potential to escalate into a serious confrontation of an ethnoconfessional nature. In this regard, the study of the public attitudes (both quantitative and qualitative) in the regions of Georgia carried out together with our partners is impressive.

The research revealed deep cultural differences, both between regions and within regions, among different groups of the population. There are also differences in public attitudes towards foreign policy priorities, which invoke additional dramatism to the socio-political life.

Populism, especially of an anti-liberal nature and the ultra-right sentiments built on it, are at the same time a powerful foreign policy tool for Russia. Thus, the study of public opinion is particularly important in this context.

In the report, we'll analyze the views of the population on anti-liberal populism and ultra-right, and the attitudes prevalent in the regions of Georgia. From a regional perspective, we'll also discuss endogenous (identity, including ethnicity, orthodoxy, family purity) and exogenous (risks from different states, immigration issues) aspects of the perceived threats.

In addition, based on our surveys and analysis we'll overview the acceptance of different minorities, as well as the extent to which existing attitudes create the possibility of confrontation or agitation of varying degrees. At the same time, we'll discuss how strong nativist attitudes are, the degree of prevalence conservative and liberal sentiments among regional micro-societies in terms of age, gender and religion.

**Keywords:** Populism, Anti-Liberalism, Religious Nationalism, Far-Right, Ethnic and Religious Minorities.

## **Shorena Turkiashvili**

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### **The Orthodox Religiosity and Some Aspects of Family Lives**

Religion is the one of the most important aspects of social life. In the premodern societies religion used to strengthen the social ties by using rituals. Although most of the social scientists predicted the “Death of God” (Nietzsche, 1882) or replacement of religions with civil consciousness or science (Durkheim, 2001 (1912)), even in 21<sup>st</sup> century the religion does not lose its importance and millions of people act, fight or speak according to their beliefs.

Although religion is studied from different perspectives, the role of the religious institution is often discussed in relation to some aspects of family life. Various research indicate the positive correlation between the age and church attendance in Western societies (Hoge, Johnson, and Luidens 1994, Rodgers 1990, etc.) beside the effects of cohort, length of lives in certain communities, the new analytical approaches underline the importance of marriage and parenthood (Chaves 1991, Myers 1996). Due to different types of cohabitation effecting religious activity, religions themselves encourage the ideas of traditional families and importance of parenthood. Most formal religious dogmas promote the establishment and maintenance of family relationships. Organized religions offer institutionalized moral support for love, intimacy, and childbearing in the context of religiously sanctioned marriage (D'Antonio 1983, cited in Stolzenberg, Blair-Loy, Waite 1996).

The aim of my presentation is to analyze the interdependence of orthodox religiosity and some aspects of family lives in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. The presentation is based on survey conducted in Tbilisi in 2018. The research instrument is a semi-structured questionnaire. The sample framework was the list of voters from 2016. The sample size was 445. The data was gathered by the students of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (TSU) as a part of Research Methodology curriculum.

The survey results show the positive correlation (0.152) between the marital status and religiosity. The 9% of married respondents indicate that they are not religious people, while the rate of unreligious people among single respondents is 19.9%. the portion of religious respondents among the widows/widowers is also high as religion

has acquired a functional aspect for these respondents creating the emotional support due to losing their loved one. Furthermore, the survey results reveal that the religiosity is closely connected to the traditional and conservative views of the religious wedding, family structure, gender roles and premarital sexual intercourse.

**Keywords:** Orthodox Religiosity, Marital Status, Family Structure, Conservative values.

## **Nino Popiashvili**

Dr. of Philology

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

### **Global and National Totalitarianism from a Literary Perspective<sup>1</sup>**

Totalitarianism is a mass political phenomenon of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which occurred in several states. According to the theory of totalitarianism, this is an era of mass terror, when full control over citizens is established by the state and there is no mechanism for restricting control (K. Friedrich, Z. Brzezinski). At the same time, the main axis of totalitarianism are ideology, one-party system, ultimate authority of the state apparatus and security services, censorship, mass repressions, etc.

Totalitarianism, dictatorship, autocracy, as parallel concepts and synonyms are used both at the global and national levels. It should be noted that the national totalitarianism of different countries reveals signs of a common model (H. Arendt).

A point of our interest is the presentation of global and national aspects of totalitarianism from the perspective of fiction based on the methods of comparative research. For the analysis, we took a totalitarian narrative and two novels of two small nations, Georgia and the Dominican Republic, - “Oh World (Kakhetian Chronicles)” by Georgian writer and director, national award winner, Zaira Arsenishvili, and “The Feast of the Goat” by Peruvian writer, Nobel Prize Winner, Mario Vargas Liosa. Both novels describe the era of totalitarianism and mass terror. The development of action and the historical era in the novels coincide with each other. The period of the Soviet leader, Stalin’s and the dictator of the Dominican Republic, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo’s regime begins from the 30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and continues in the case of Stalin - until 1953, and in the case of Trujillo - until 1952 as the first person of the state, and as an influential person - until 1961.

The central characters of the novels, girls, are trying to avoid direct persecution through forced migration. In one case, internal, and in the other, external migration serves the same goal - to survive. Both works mark out common signs of totalitarianism, which include gender aspects; demonstration of the narrator’s, main character’s life full of tragedies; characteristics of dictatorship; characteristic

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features of totalitarianism, etc. Totalitarianism is a source of important observations from a literary perspective.

**Keywords:** Global Totalitarianism, National Totalitarianism, Dictatorship, Fiction.

**Eka Darbaidze**

PhD in Political Sciences

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**The Policy of Cooperation of the Georgian Government in the Occupied  
Tskhinvali Region**

The Georgian-Ossetian conflict is a typical example of ethno-political conflict, largely due to the destructive policies of the Supreme Soviet Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which they pursued in the Allied republics from the 1980s. The situation became extremely tense after the collapse of the Soviet Union and took the form of a large-scale armed conflict, which had an ethnonational face and which initially took the form of a "Georgian-Ossetian conflict." Moscow's imperial policy has made a greater contribution to this conflict rather than contradictions between the Georgian and Ossetian peoples. Conflicts on the territory of Georgia have been officially registered in the international arena since the August 2008 war and have acquired the status of Georgian-Russian conflict. The so-called Ossetian population living in the so-called South Ossetian territory has always been considered as an integrated part of the economic, social, cultural, and ethnic structure of the Georgian state.

This article aims to study the strategy of the Georgian government and its policies towards the occupied regions of Georgia, in particular in so-called South Ossetia. Despite many interesting initiatives developed and presented by the Georgian side, which focused on the well-being of the population living in the region, the efforts are unfortunately inefficient, as Russia continues its policy of isolating the occupied regions of Georgia from the outside world.

For studying above mentioned issue, the political perspective of neo-realization, same as structural realism were used, with the help of which we tried to analyze the Russia-Georgia conflict and unsuccessful attempts of cooperation by the Georgian authorities in the conflict region. The theoretical framework of the project neo-realism explains the conflicts between Russia and Georgia with several possible reasons: the anarchy (internal and external), the weakness of the rights of the Georgian government, the balance of power, the secure dilemma. According to neo-realism, the most important reason that causes conflict is anarchy, because "there is no world government, which could prevent the unlawful use of force by countries.

Countries can have their own goals, including military policy. In the case of a conflict between Russia and Georgia, Russia has attacked a sovereign state and that's it what represents an international anarchy, the so-called South Ossetia was a province of Georgia and therefore the conflict was only an internal matter of Georgia.

The content analysis method of qualitative research was used to study the issue, based on secondary data, for which official documents of the Georgian government as well as of the international community and media sources were used, including: TV interviews and articles.

Today, Russia, despite its growing political, cultural and informational influence in the occupied territories of Georgia, still fails to create an attractive development paradigm for the local population. As a result of the occupation, the territories separated from Georgia are practically formed into so-called enclaves, which can have much more severe consequences than the fact that these regions are on the territory occupied by any country. There may be too many processes in these areas that will be detrimental to Ossetian communities, and this area may become a destructive space.

Consequently, the fight against the isolation of the Ossetian community living in the occupied region of Georgia is possible only through openness and the emergence of new incentives and tools for engagement. Optimization of its own policy by Europe and Tbilisi's maximum confidence in the issue of non-recognition with its partners will be an unalternative approach to build lasting peace in the country and start the process of reconciling people divided by the conflict.

**Keywords:** Abkhazia, So-called South Ossetia, Samachablo(tskhinvali) Region, Occupied territories of Georgia, Russian Occupation Forces, The August war.

## **Mariam Khatiashvili**

PhD

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### **Theoretical Conceptualization of Russia's Soft Power toward Georgia**

From a global perspective, in 2008-2018 Russia fundamentally transformed its soft power strategy. From a regional perspective, this transformation can be seen clearly in the case of Georgia. The aim of this paper is to examine Russia's soft power theoretical conceptualization toward Georgia. The paper is built upon the insight introduced by Craig Hayden in his book "The Rhetoric of Soft Power: Public Diplomacy in Global Contexts" (2012). According to Hayden "a crucial step toward understanding soft power is to ascertain how international actors understand the concept and make use of it, explicitly or implicitly, in their strategies and actions." This particular standpoint is important to better analyze an actor state's process of soft power formulation. In the framework of this viewpoint the specific objective of this paper is to evaluate Russia's soft power theoretical conceptualization by discussing it according to one of the soft power behaviors - agenda-setting. In this paper the term "Soft Power" is used in its narrowest terms presented by Joseph S. Nye in his book "The Future of Power" (2011). According to Nye, soft power refers to "the ability to get preferred outcomes through the co-optive means of agenda-setting, persuasion, and attraction." Presented in Georgian, the research is interdisciplinary as it integrates various academic fields from the humanities, social and political sciences. Different research methods have been utilized to identify and characterize the issue, including comparative historical research and critical and document analysis. The present research is based on the primary sources, such as foreign policy documents, i.e. Foreign Policy Concept and National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation. Author highlights the international and regional issues that accelerated Russia's soft power theoretical conceptualization and the need of its practical use in modern Russian diplomacy. The paper discusses Russian soft power in contrast with the traditional, classical meaning of the term proposed by Joseph S. Nye. Moreover, paper analyzes those foreign policy issues that are put into the center of Russia's soft power theoretical conceptualization toward Georgia. Research results show that Russia's soft power toward Georgia is formulated in a relatively detailed manner.

**Keywords:** Soft power, foreign policy, Georgia, Russia.

**Salome Kobaidze**

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**Existing and Prospective Geographical Areas of Economic Development of the Black Sea Coastal Zone of Georgia in Terms of the Blue Economy**

The objective of Georgia, as a country oriented and accountable to the sustainable development goals, is to pursue economic policies that contribute to the country's overall sustainable development, while "ensuring human well-being in the interests of economic development and environmental protection." One of the most important resources for the sustainable development of Georgia's economy is the Black Sea, the development of which should be based on the principles of the blue economy. Although the blue economy is a new policy for Georgia, it is necessary to implement and operate it in a timely manner.

The blue economy is the development and extension of a sustainable development-oriented concept of green economy in the coastal areas and aquatics of the seas or oceans. Blue economy policy implies the rational use of existing resources and maintenance of the sustainability of the ecosystem, with its priorities being: fisheries, aquaculture, marine resources, maritime and coastal tourism, and maritime transport and shipping.

The aim of the research is to assess the business / entrepreneurial sector in the Black Sea coastal zone of Georgia on the basis of spatial analysis, to classify this sector according to the principal directions and scales of the blue economy sectors, to map out the peculiarities of the geographical location of the business / entrepreneurial sector and define the major business/entrepreneurial tendencies/features characterizing Georgian Black Sea coastal zone.

In the process of European integration, the "Association Agreement between Georgia and the European Union" and its effective and efficient implementation is of great importance, we can consider this document as the legal basis for the introduction of the blue economy and to determine the urgency of this issue. At the same time, the topicality of this subject is conditioned through comprehending the

leading economic function of the business / entrepreneurial sector in the Black Sea coastal zone.

**Keywords:** Blue Economy, Business / Entrepreneurial Sector, Biodiversity, Natural Resources, Marine littering, Economics, Coastal Zone.

## **Teona Tabuashvili**

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### **Public Higher Education Institutions, as Developing Organizations: Students' Assessments**

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are one of the most important institutions of our society. Here are shaping the great concepts, ideas, knowledge, which ensure the development of the society. The area of universities action is quite wide thematically; They have many buildings, laboratories; Serve numerous students. Therefore, they are quite big organizations with rules, structure, employees and customers, which is very challenging for them. This study discusses the HEIs as developing organizations from the perspective of the students. It aims to present how students, which are customers of HEIs, perceive the administrative work and some rules in the universities. In the research participated the students of all stages of higher education: Bachelor, Master and PhD students. I conducted 3 focus groups and 7 in-depth interviews with the students of the public universities in Tbilisi. Many of them had the experience of studying in 2 or 3 universities, which makes their evaluations also comparing. I also interviewed 2 Austrian Experts, which have experience of working in East-European and Former Soviet Union countries. Some legal documents are also analyzed, e.g. the law of Georgia on higher education and different regulations in the universities.

The study showed, that the public universities are quite hierarchical structurally, which raises the level of the bureaucracy. Some important issues for the students are: The bad infrastructure, which influences their first impressions, but they do not consider this as a main criterion when evaluating the universities; The poor quality of service, the Students remember many cases of rudeness and redirection from the side of the administrative stuff; Less readiness for innovations, which especially is reflected in technological novelties; Different types of rules, which sometimes are seen as senseless from the side of the students. One unexpected finding for me was the satisfaction of the students with closed curricular. Despite of the less possibility of choosing the desirable subjects and lecturers, permanent groups make them feel much comfortable. Generally, the public universities make the impression of bureaucratic, obsolete systems on the students.

The experts see the influence of Georgia's soviet experience in the problems of the HEIs. They indicate lack of trusting in the employees. This raises the number of rules in the organization, which on the one hand makes it less flexible and on the other hand demotivates the employees and this reflects on the quality of service.

The study shows, that the public universities are on the lower stage of development of an organization, namely in the differentiation phase (Lievehoed & Glasl, 2011). This is expressed with the high level of bureaucracy, less orientation towards customers and the coordination types between different structural divisions.

**Keywords:** Higher education institution, Organizational development, Differentiation phase, Customer orientation, Bureaucracy.

**Inga Mikhanashvili**

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**The “4 + 1 Program” in Higher Education Institutions as a Strategy for the Integration of Ethnic Minorities**

One of the most important issues in contemporary Georgia is the protection of national minorities' rights and civic integration promotion. To increase access to higher education and therefore to promote civic integration of ethnic minorities, in 2009, by the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, based on amendments made to the Law on Higher Education, educational program in Georgian Language training was launched. The program aimed to let ethnic minorities to be enrolled in higher education institutions based on the results of the Azerbaijanian, Armenian, Ossetian and Abkhazian language tests of General skills and afterward, to study the Georgian language at the level which is necessary to continue studying under the bachelor's program. Based on the results of the general skill tests in Azerbaijanian, Armenian, Abkhazian and Ossetian languages, the rules for enrolling students in higher education institutions were defined as a temporary measure, the validity of which expired at the end of the 2018-2019 academic year.

Therefore, we think it is necessary to evaluate the results of the educational program in the Georgian language, to summarize the opinions and recommendations of the parties involved in the implementation of the program. The educational program presented by the Ministry of Education in 2004 aimed to create equal conditions for all entrants when applying to Georgian higher education institutions. Under this reform, unified national exams have been introduced since 2005, but in the first year of the reform, only twenty ethnic minority entrants became students, a much lower rate than in previous years. To eliminate this negative effect of the reform, the Ministry of Education has started implementing a "favorable policy" for ethnic minorities.

This study aims to assess students' perceptions and attitudes about the effectiveness of the Georgian language training program (4 + 1 program) initiated for ethnic minorities in 2009 and implemented within the framework of the National Civil Integration Action Plan; Also, to analyze the goals of the introduction of the 4 + 1

program in the education system. In the report, by using the integration theoretical framework and statistical data analysis method, I studied statistical data on the number of students representing ethnic minorities in Georgian universities; analyzed the goals and motives of the Ministry of Education while introducing "4 + 1 program"; also analyzed the official statistics provided by the National Center for Examinations and Assessment and the Center for Education Quality Development.

As a result of the study, after the launching of the program, an increase in the number of ethnic minority students in Georgian universities and an improvement in their knowledge of the Georgian language was revealed.

**Keywords:** Ethnic minorities, The "4 + 1 program", civic integration.

**Kiarim Gumbatov**

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### **The Features of the Democratic Nature of Local Self-Government in the Public Administration System**

Georgian society, as in the early 1990s, faces the problem of political modernization again, in the framework of which it is necessary to work with the institutions, structures and practices that were formed during the thirty-year modernization transformations after the collapse of the Soviet socio-political order. The analysis of the relationship between the elements of state and public in the structure of local government, the functional purpose of local self-government and also the establishment of the primary subject of socio-political relations at the local level allows us to conclude that the essence of local self-government consists in defining it as a public institution of society functioning as the mechanism of self-organization and coordination, the satisfaction of interests and needs of citizens united in a local community.

The weak local self-government, which has not taken its rightful place in the system of public authority, cannot play the role of a deterrent for statist and authoritarian tendencies. In this regard, it is extremely important to consider local self-government as a political institution embedded in the general system of political structures, relations and interrelationships. The transformation of the political system takes place controversially, in the struggle between liberal-democratic and statist tendencies, which cannot but affect the course of changes in local self-government. The protracted process of reforming local self-government is, on the one hand, the evidence of the ambiguity of the political elite's ideas about the place and role of this institution in public life, and on the other hand, it speaks of the difficulties of establishing a democratic political system in our country.

Thus, it can be noted that the feature of local self-government is reflected in the dual nature of this institution. On the one hand, this is a certain level of public authorities, on the other hand, it is the self-organization of the local community, which has developed and is developing within the municipality for independent and on its own responsibility to implement their own initiatives directly in matters of local importance. This duality means that the effectiveness of the functioning of local self-government depends both on the activities of civil society structures, public

associations, parties, other public organizations operating at the local level in the local community and on the support from the state.

Thus, the relevance of the research topic, firstly, lies in the further theoretical development of local self-government as a social institution, the transformation of the specifics of its development in Georgian society; Secondly, the necessity of determination of the regional and social consequences of local government reform; Thirdly, the disclosure of ways to optimize the interaction of municipal government with the population.

In spite of the constant search for their own path, the development of public administration at various stages in Georgia was associated with both the progressive experience of other states and the adaptation of local conditions. This explains the particular attention in recent years to the reform of the institution of local self-government.

The object of the research is the reform of local government. The process of forming a system of local government in the context of the modernization of Georgian society.

The purpose of the research is to determine the degree of effectiveness of the system performance of local government reform in Georgia and the main directions for its further improvement.

I consider that empirical studies will lead to the identification of the problems that directly affect the result of transformations, namely:

- is there an excessive centralization of reform management functions at the substantive level;
- is there a fragmented participation of civil society actors;
- what is the approach of the leading structures of the root link to the effective solution of socio-economic issues of local importance (due to insufficient resource provision and the lack of appropriate qualified personnel);
- what are the mechanisms for formulating public interest, which is associated not only with mental factors but also with difficult and complex problems of relations between local government and the population (presumably the low quality of municipal services, the insufficient disclosure of information about governance structures, such dysfunctional identifications in their activities, such as clannism, nepotism, corruption).

**Keywords:** Local community, local self-government, reform, authority, democracy, citizen participation in decision making, public administration, civil society.

**Tamar Orjonikidze**

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**Natia Zedginidze**

PhD Student

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

### **Issues of Election Finance and Political Ethics in the 2018 Presidential Elections in Georgia**

Georgia, in terms of democratic transition, currently fits one of the types of hybrid regime profile countries, which is known as competitive authoritarianism. Although according to the theory of authoritarianism such regime is authoritarian indeed, it is trying to imitate democracy to the fullest extent. Opposition, which is tolerated, can access mass media, freedom of speech and real competition during elections do exist and many democratic standards are being met, but by and large, elections are conducted unfairly and the ruling political party is making strong efforts aiming at flawing elections as soon as it feels the danger of losing the power, abusing the use of state resources to the benefit of the political force in power.

The nature of competitive authoritarian governance in the country was clearly revealed during 2018 Presidential elections, when it became necessary to hold the second round. The first (October 28) and the second rounds (November 28) of elections differed considerably. The first round, despite some violations, was conducted more fairly with regard to meeting democratic standards but as soon as the real threat of defeat of the government -supported candidate, Salome Zourabishvili became evident, the government resorted to various forms of electoral fraud.

There is discussed the results of Presidential elections of 2018 year in Georgia on the bases of Anatomy of Competitive Authoritarianism. In particular, there are shown two important aspects of the sense of competitive authoritarianism: Inequality of government and opposition in terms of attracting election finance and an unsuccessful attempt to develop a document reflecting the ethical principles of behavior of election subjects during the election campaign.

The article is prepared on the basis of electronic and printed media materials regarding the election campaign finances, as well as interviews with people involved in development of the ethical principles presidential candidates behavior.

**Keywords:** Georgia, Competitive Authoritarianism, Elections, Democratization.

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**Mikhako Tsereteli and the Conceptualization of Nation in Georgia in the Early 20th Century**

The beginning of the XX century is extremely difficult and interesting period for Georgia. Georgia faced the new challenges in this chronological distance of time.

The relevance of the research topic is determined by aggravated ideological confrontation between the political parties at the beginning of the 20th century, which was expressed clearly in their discussion about the national issue.

The polemic about the national issue continued in 1900- 1917, which had been started in the sixties. However, at that period it got more corrosive political character. The main participants of the discussion were the members and leaders of the political parties. Soon this polemic turned into the ideological confrontation between these parties. The inheritors of “Tergdaleulebi” (drinking Terek waters) were trying to propagandize nationalism, to foment the protection of national values. Parallely to this, capitalism was developing in Georgia as well, which promoted not only the change of the economic forms, but also the transformations happened in political life.

In the 20th century Georgia had to overcome the changes arisen as a result of collapsing of feudal system and locate itself in a new social-economic environment. On the other hand, it was to continue the struggle for the independence of Georgia in a different way, because the armed assaults were ineffective. One more way of struggling for independence was to carry out the policy oriented to Europe, which would result in bringing Georgia on the international arena and mobilize Georgian society against the conqueror. Perhaps it was the reason why the representatives of national forces found theoretical fulcrum mostly in the European thinkers’ views. The theories of nation by well-known European authors, which Georgian thinkers discussed so actively in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, are less likely to be studied in Georgia today. It is necessary to study their thoughts and influences once again in order to see a real picture of how the concept of nation formed in Georgia. A monograph,

“*Nation and Mankind*”, written by a famous Georgian scholar, publicist, philologist and political figure, Mikhako Tsereteli, allows us to analyze this aspect well.

The concept of nation by Mikhako Tsereteli is important for several reasons: 1) Anarchists represented extreme left-wing of Georgian society and political sphere. Certain anarchistic ideas as a form of socialist doctrines have begun to exist in Georgia since the 1860s. Mikhako Tsereteli belonged to the group of anarchists, who always considered the concept of nation as prime and prioritized in spite of ideological views. Mikhako Tsereteli was a clear and rare example of how a Georgian thinker preferred to deal with a national problem existing in Georgia rather than his political ideology; 2) Mikhako Tsereteli’s opinion about the concept of nation is extremely important, because he is the author of the first sociological research in Georgia – “*Nation and Mankind*” (1910), in which the author tries to analyze the categories of nation and mankind and it finally leads us to the fact, that Mikhako Tsereteli denies the phenomenon of man and admits original nature of the phenomenon of nation; 3) It is worth noting, that Mikhako Tsereteli was greatly influenced by his contemporary European thinkers, especially sociologists. While formulating the concept of nation, he scrutinizes the theories of nation existing in Europe and forms his own concept of nation on account of criticizing or partially agreeing with the different thinkers’ viewpoints such as Salomon Reinach, Ernest Nys, Pasquale Stanislao Mancini, Johann Kaspar Bluntschli, Ernest Renan, de Greef, René Worms, Tard, Otto Bauer, Rudolf Springer. There is no doubt, that Mikhako Tsereteli studied the European theories of nation and created “*Nation and Mankind*” based on them, which doubles the interest towards the author.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century both part of Georgian politicians and society thought, that restoration of state independence was futureless. A newly stated idea of cosmopolitanism was more acceptable for those people. The idea of one society was making the problem of nationality insignificant and thus, the interest of society and political parties towards the concept of nation was slowing. In order to change such attitude in society, Mikhako Tsereteli created “*Nation and Mankind*”, in which nation is considered to be ideal from society values against the concept of mankind.

**Keywords:** The concept of nation, the theories of nation; national issue, nationalism; Mikhako Tsereteli.

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### **United National Movement's Lobbying Campaign in the USA**

Hiring of American lobbyists has become a regular practice in the Georgian reality. The printed media and the society suspect to find traces of lobbying behind the success gained by the political figures in the West, especially when we speak about the assessment in Georgia of the positive responses from the media and the Congressmen in the USA. Both the presently acting in Georgia governing party and the former one that has already moved to the opposition are launching lobbying activities in the USA.

The study surveyes the lobbying activities carried out by United National Movement in the USA since 2012. We suppose that the higher the financial means of a political party, the larger the scope of the lobbying campaign performed by it in the USD. In the course of the study we reviewed the four documents that are uploaded on the American Department of Justice web-page [Fara.gov](http://Fara.gov). These four contracts provide the terms and conditions of the agreement between the parties thereto on the lobby services, as well as the list of the tasks to be performed, the term of the service delivery and the sum to be paid. The party United National Movement used to launch quite large scale and successful lobbyist activities during the nine years of its being the authority in Georgia. The lobby companies were paid their remuneration by National Safety Council. After the defeat in the Parliamentary elections of October, 2012 United National Movement has been carrying out its lobby campaign independently; Relevantly, they had to source the financial resources to pay to the lobbyists out of their own budget. Presently they have only two lobby companies hired, out of which they have executed an active contract with one company only: ORION STRATEGIES at this stage. United National Movement had contracts executed with both these American companies when being at the head of the country.

A new contract was concluded with the lobbying company Fianna Strategies in 2014. For the period from April first to September of the same year National Movement had to pay the mentioned company USD 42 000. In the same document, the letter written from the company to Mikheil Matchavariani mentions the list of

the services to be ensured by the company for the client. These services are as follows: getting the views, aims and position of United National Movement familiarized with the Congress Members, NGO Representatives and the media; organization of the party member meetings with the American high executive officers. Another contract is concluded in September, 2015 and the sum to be paid till October 28 of the same year constitutes USD 15 000.

The other company with which there is an acting up to date agreement concluded is Orion Strategies. United National Movement used to cooperate with this company since 2004 – in the years of its being in the authority when the mentioned company was paid the due sums out of the budget. The history of this cooperation counts 16 years by now. The present contract with them is valid till October 7, 2020 and the cost of their services makes up USD 250 000. The company has undertaken to ensure organization of meetings in the USA for the client, support democracy and safety in Georgia, integration with NATO and the Western institutions.

**Keywords:** Lobbying, Georgian lobby, United National Movement of Georgia, USA

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### **At the Origins of the Development of the Code of Parliamentary Ethics: Experience of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia (1919–1921)<sup>1</sup>**

In a modern democratic state, a moral understanding of legislation is essential to establish a fair environment. One of the most important ways to ensure this is professional codes of ethics. Code of ethics helps to increase the sense of responsibility of officials and politicians at all levels of government.

One of the most important ethical codes governing the field of politics is the Code of Ethics for Parliamentary Conduct. The Constituent Assembly (1919–1921) was the first democratically elected legislature in the history of Georgia. It is true that documents of ethical rules of conduct were not developed separately at that time, but in the legal acts adopted by the Constituent Assembly we meet moral-ethical provisions that are characteristic of modern codes of ethics. It should also be noted that in some cases it is difficult to find a dividing line between legal and ethical norms, as it is impossible to ensure justice without considering ethical principles in law.

The report discusses the issues of political ethics based on the stenographic reports of the Constituent Assembly (1919–1921), the legal acts of that time, and the analysis of the press.

On November 22, 1918, the National Council of Georgia and the Government of the Republic of Georgia approved the electoral regulations of the Constituent Assembly, which had to ensure democratic, fair and free elections. The Electoral Statute of the Constituent Assembly established both the necessary norms for free and fair conduct of the election campaign, also the mechanisms of appropriate punishment in case of

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their infringement - the deprivation of liberty or a fine (Collection of Legal Acts of the Democratic Republic of Georgia 1918–1921).

During the election process, it was not allowed to cover election calls, to threaten persons carrying out agitations, dissemination of false information about a candidate, electoral agitation in churches and other places of worship, both in the form of sermons and verbal or written appeals, violence against a person through fraud, intimidation, to obstruct the exercise of the right to vote freely through the abuse of power or the use of economic means against those with the right to vote, to win a voter with promises, by providing personal or property benefits to him/her or his/her family member, etc. (Electoral Statute of the Constituent Assembly).

It is noteworthy that the norms set out in the Electoral Regulations or other legal acts of the Constituent Assembly in modern democratic states are mainly regulated by the Code of Ethics. For example, neither the founders of the Democratic Republic of Georgia had stayed out of the spotlight the provisions prohibiting simultaneous holding two or more positions, which help the officer to understand and faithfully fulfill the obligations imposed by the mandate and as soon as the Constituent Assembly began its work, on March 29, 1919, the Bill on the incompatibility of membership in parliament and civil service was discussed.

The main basis of the submitted Bill was the protection of dignity of the Constituent Assembly; Moral freedom of legislators and ensuring their conscientious work in legislative, controlling or other activities (Minutes of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia, 2019).

The regulations of the Constituent Assembly also regulated the “Rules of Reasoning” and strictly required the “observance of decency”. The orator was obliged not to use insulting and generally derogatory words toward Constituent Assembly when discussing. In case of violation of these conditions, the Chairman would apply the measures specified by the regulations. This approach has helped to promote political culture and discussions on issues of vital importance for the country (Collection of Legal Acts of the Democratic Republic of Georgia 1918–1921).

Thus, the provisions adopted by the Constituent Assembly 100 years ago had uniquely progressive nature, and their analysis allows us to understand the scale of

political culture and state thinking of political parties and state figures during the First Democratic Republic. Against this background, to evaluate the current problems of the electoral process and political culture and consider the historical experience to recover the current political process.

**Keywords:** Georgia, Constituent Assembly of Georgia, Parliamentary Code of Ethics

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### **How media covers COVID-19 impact in the Occupied Territories of Georgia**

Due to the World pandemic, population living in the occupied territories of Georgia found themselves in a particularly difficult situation, where the lack of information led to their insecurity. Local authorities are trying to bring every piece of information spread by the Russian propaganda machine to the Ossetian population and to keep the region in the information bubble.

Georgian media tried to find reliable sources beyond the barbed wire to cover the current situation, which they were able to do effectively. The worst situation for people living outside the barbed wire (regardless of nationality) is often the subject of discussion by international organizations, but the Georgian side needs to do more to ensure that the international community cares about the vital rights of the people in the occupied territories.

The de facto government often manipulates the topic of pandemics. They used local media to accuse Georgia of exporting COVID-19 to the occupied territories. Dominant in the Ossetian government media, Russian propaganda has been circulating negative opinion about Lugar's laboratory and providing misinformation to the population about the center, which aims to instill mistrust in people towards Western technology.

Local media tried to use the support of the medical staff of the Russian Federation for propaganda purposes. Part of the powerful Russian propaganda mechanism is the local Russian and Ossetian media, which has widely covered the support of the medical staff of the Russian Federation in the fight against the pandemic. Meanwhile, a large part of the Ossetian population is secretly treated free of charge at the leading medical clinics in Tbilisi. This fact has been condemned by the local authorities and the media in the occupied territories are silent on this issue.

Georgian media meanwhile present the position of the Georgian government, which on equal terms discussed the poor condition existing behind the wires and the citizens living there. The pandemic has shown that Russian propaganda permanently

try to portray pro-Western Georgia in a negative light, which is being widely reported by the media in the occupied territories.

Media outlets operating in the occupied territories try to hide Georgia's readiness to help and assist with the high-quality medical service to the people living in the conditions of occupation to overcome the difficulties associated with COVID-19. This information was widely covered by the Georgian media, which probably extended to the occupied territories, despite numerous barriers.

**Keywords:** Occupation, Media, COVID-19, propaganda, information warfare.