

## Caucasus Studies 2

# LANGUAGE, HISTORY AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES IN THE CAUCASUS

Papers from the conference,  
June 17-19 2005, Malmö University

Edited by Karina Vamling



MALMÖ UNIVERSITY



## Caucasus Studies

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28-30 November 2008. Abstracts



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Department of International Migration  
and Ethnic Relations (IMER)  
Malmö University  
Sweden

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*Language, History and Cultural Identities in the Caucasus*  
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## Contributors

Nino Amiridze (Utrecht Institute of Linguistics OTS, The Netherlands)

Marine Beridze (Chikobava Institute of Linguistics, Georgian Academy of Sciences  
Tbilisi, Georgia)

Tinatin Bolkvadze (Dept. of General and Applied Linguistics, Tbilisi State University,  
Georgia)

Ib Faurby (Royal Danish Defence College, Copenhagen, Denmark)

Manana Kobaidze (IMER, Malmö University, Sweden)

Andrea Kuzmich (Toronto, Canada)

Märta-Lisa Magnusson (Dept. of Political Science, University of Copenhagen,  
Denmark)

Manana Tabidze (Chikobava Institute of Linguistics, Georgian Academy of Sciences,  
Georgia)

Revaz Tchantouria (IMER, Malmö University, Sweden)

Kevin Tuite (Dept. of Anthropology, University of Montreal, Canada)

Karina Vamling (IMER, Malmö University, Sweden)

Rune Westerlund (Department of Languages and Culture, Luleå University of  
Technology, Sweden)

Kojima Yasuhiro (Dept. of Linguistics, University of Tokyo, Japan)

## Preface

The international conference *Language, History and Cultural Identities in the Caucasus*, 17-20 June 2005, hosted by the School of International Migration and Ethnic Relations (IMER) at Malmö University (Sweden), brought together Caucasian and Western scholars with diverse disciplinary backgrounds – social anthropology, linguistics, literature, social psychology, political science – who focus on the Caucasus in their research. The present volume is based on papers from this conference.

Caucasus studies is an expanding multidisciplinary field of research. The Caucasus is a very complex region in many ways. It embraces four states (Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and parts of Southern Russia), a number of autonomous republics and approximately fifty different ethnolinguistic groups. Due to its strategic geopolitical location on the strip of land between Europe and Asia, the Black and Caspian Seas, the Caucasus has repeatedly during the course of history been invaded by great powers – Persians, Arabs, Mongols, Turks and Russians. Despite this foreign domination, the peoples of the Caucasus have managed to maintain specific cultural traits and identity. Increased Russian/Soviet control over the region during the last two centuries has led to deep political, social and cultural changes, including deportations of entire peoples and extensive migration.

The post-Soviet period has been characterized by ethno-political conflicts (for instance, in Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhazia, South Ossetia) and problems with refugees and IDPs and has in various ways affected all the states in the region. In building their national identities, language, religion and historical and cultural symbols have an important unifying function in the newly independent states. Several events during the last years have increased international interest for and presence in the region: the views on international terrorism following the events of September 11 (primarily in relation to the conflict in Chechnya), the ‘Rose’ revolution in Georgia and following westernization, the US involvement in neighbouring Iraq, and Turkey’s rapprochement to the EU.

The theme of the conference – Language, History and Cultural Identities – thus reflects important issues in the past and present situation in the Caucasus.

The conference was made possible thanks to funding from the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet). We would like to express our sincere gratitude for this support. We would also like to thank colleagues at the Department of International Migration and Ethnic Relations (IMER) – Jean Hudson, Damian Finnegan, Manana Kobaidze, Märta-Lisa Magnusson, Revaz Tchantouria – who have helped us in various ways and made it possible to publish this volume.

The editor and the Department of International Migration and Ethnic Relations (IMER) are not responsible for views expressed in the individual papers.

Malmö, 30 November 2010

Karina Vamling



# **The Autocrat of the Banquet Table: the political and social significance of the Georgian supra**

**Kevin Tuite**

0. Introduction. Ask any foreigner who has spent time in Georgia to describe his or her impressions of that country, and without fail the banquet (supra) will appear at or near the top of the list. Nearly twenty years ago, I spent nine months in what was then the Soviet Republic of Georgia, to gather linguistic data for my PhD thesis. The day after my arrival in Tbilisi, I went to the center of the city to have a look around. A man of about my age stopped and asked me (in Russian) where I was from. I answered him in the best Georgian I could muster at the time. Within minutes, or so it seemed, we were seated in a restaurant. The waiter came by, and my new acquaintance, and now my host, ordered three bottles of wine – for two people. When the wine arrived, he filled our glasses, and then made the first toast at my first supra on Georgian soil.

It was a captivating moment: The spontaneous generosity shown by someone I had met only minutes earlier, the abundance of food and wine on the table, the stylized eloquence of the toasts, the sense that I was participating in some sort of ancient ritual. The supra seemed all the more grandiose because it contrasted so dramatically with the “Soviet way of life” as it was represented at the time of Gorbachev and Reagan: the drinking (despite Gorbachev’s dry laws), the expenditure (despite Soviet salaries), the seeming absence of politics – to the point that, on the few occasions where a tipsy banqueter made disparaging remarks about Communists or Russians, he was reproved by the other guests.

Yet the Georgian banquet is heavily loaded with political implications, whether or not politics is spoken about at the table. Since the supra is such a prominent feature of social life, and furthermore, one that is frequently mentioned as a marker of Georgian or Caucasian identity, authors who write about this ritual necessarily engage with widespread notions of Georgianness, and find themselves – tacitly or explicitly – taking a stance with regard to such politically-loaded issues as gender, labor and consumption. Criticism of the supra can arouse passionate and angry responses, as occurred recently in reaction to an essay by the sociologist Emzar Jgerenaia, in which he claimed that sublimated homoeroticism underlies the typically all-male Georgian banquet, going so far as to label it “geipi” (a hybrid term of his own confection, combining “keipi” [party, feast] and the English word “gay”; Jgerenaia 2000: 38). But at the same time, Jgerenaia – once one reads past the deliberate provocation and pop-psychology – and several other recent commentators have raised important questions concerning the cultural, social and political implications of the supra. These are the issues I as well wish to discuss in the present paper, from the perspective of an outsider who has, nonetheless, spent countless hours at the banqueting table.

## **1 Literature on the Georgian banquet**

I begin with a very brief review of the literature on the supra, which I divide, for ease of exposition, into three rough-and-ready categories: descriptive, ethnological and

revisionist-iconoclastic. They could be said to correspond to chronologically distinct phases in the investigation of this phenomenon, at least with respect to the appearance of the initial works of each category.

(A) DESCRIPTIVE: This category is the oldest, going back to depictions of feasts and banquets in Georgian literature, from the Middle Ages onward, and accounts written by European travellers to Georgia, such as Ambrosio Contarini (who passed through Georgia in 1473), Archangelo Lamberti (Italian missionary in Mingrelia from 1633-1653), the French writer Alexandre Dumas (who visited the Caucasus in 1858-1859), and numerous 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century visitors. Leaving out, for the time being, accounts predating the incorporation of Georgia into the Russian Empire at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, writers describing the Georgian banquet have been impressed as much by its rule-governed homogeneity as by the abundance of wine and food displayed on the table. This has given rise to “how-to” guides, such as Holisky (1989) and, in part, Magarotto (2002), intended to inform readers about supra etiquette, the types of banquet, the sequence of toasts, etc. The chief features mentioned in descriptions of the contemporary Georgian banquet include the following:

(i). THE CENTRAL ROLE PLAYED BY THE TOASTMASTER (known in Georgian as *tamada*, or in some regions, *t'olumbaši*). In principle, at every occasion where wine is to be consumed, even if only two men are present, one of them is selected to be *tamada*. The ideal *tamada* should not only be knowledgeable, witty, and articulate, but also a good drinker, i.e. capable of ingesting inordinate amounts of wine (four or five litres is not unusual) without suffering a noticeable degradation of his faculties.

(ii). SUPRA ETIQUETTE. No wine is to be consumed unless a toast (*sadyegrdzelo*) has first been pronounced by the drinker. But that is far from all: Each round of drinking begins with a toast on a particular topic declaimed by the *tamada*, after which he – and only he – drinks. After the toastmaster finishes, the other guests, one after the other, give toasts of their own on the same theme, then each of them drinks. Furthermore, each drinker, ideally, should drink ALL of the wine in his drinking vessel (glass, horn, or whatever it might happen to be) in a single draught. In practice, only the *tamada* is obliged to adhere to this rule, but the other men strive to consume at least half of the wine in their glasses. Although the toastmaster chooses the subject of each round of toasts, his choice is by no means free. The order of toasts, especially in the opening phase of the banquet, follows a quite rigid sequence, although the exact order followed depends on the type of occasion, and also the region of Georgia where the banquet takes place. Anywhere from three (the absolute minimum, to my knowledge) to three dozen or more rounds of toasts may occur during a single banquet. A typical evening supra in a private home might go on for three or four hours, though banquets lasting from 7 or 8 pm until 3 o'clock or later at night are not at all rare. I once attended a portion of a Georgian wedding banquet held in a posh (by Soviet standards) Moscow hotel, which, I was told, was in its third day.

(iii). THE SPIRIT OF COMPETITION. At the banqueting table, guests often seek to demonstrate to the others their eloquence, knowledge of national history (drawn upon when pronouncing toasts to Georgia, to the ancestors, or on similar themes), their singing – and occasionally, dancing – ability, and also their capacity for maintaining

self-control despite the huge consumption of alcohol. As agonistic behavior within the parameters imposed by convention, the supra could be considered a kind of sport, but Georgians almost always downplay the nakedly competitive side of banqueting. They emphasize rather the cohesion and camaraderie generated by mutual appreciation of each other's abilities, as well as each other's faithfulness to the traditional values that are displayed in the performance of the supra.

(B) ETHNOLOGICAL: Not surprisingly, the ubiquity and rule-governed consistency of the Georgian supra has attracted the attention of foreign researchers, who detect in it the marks of ritual, in particular, a ritual enacting certain representations of Georgian identity. Examples of work in the field of "supralogy" include sociolinguist Helga Kotthoff's (1995, 1999) analyses of the Georgian banquet toast as speech genre, Florian Mühlfried's (2005a) cognitive-anthropological study of gender-linked attributes of the toastmaster (*tamada*), and Paul Manning's (2003) work on the supra as image of private consumption in Soviet discourse.

(C) REVISIONIST-ICONOCLASTIC: Georgians commonly hold up the supra as a showcase of their national character, as an essential component of social life, and even as an "academy", where the true history of the Georgian nation is transmitted and its fate discussed, however these might be represented in officially-sanctioned media and textbooks. Criticisms of the dominant view have also been voiced. In an unpublished paper, Manning (2003) examines the deployment of the supra as a symbol of unproductive private consumption in the Soviet Georgian satirical magazine *Niangi*.<sup>1</sup> In this context the supra is depicted as excessive, self-indulgent, wasteful, corrupt and counter-productive, in contrast to socially-useful labor (as symbolized by collective-farm workers, for example). Post-Soviet counterdiscourses concerning the supra, such as those to be discussed here, come from a different source and are couched in different language. Rather than invoking the decisions of the preceding Party Congress, the authors of revisionist treatments of the supra draw upon sociological, historical and psychological theories that were little-known or even taboo to Soviet researchers. Most of these writers are linked to the so-called "third sector": non-governmental organizations, many of them funded by European or American agencies. They tend to be relatively young, conversant in English and sometimes other West-European languages, and some travel abroad frequently. Because the activities and publications of many members of these group are funded by foreign grants, critics — representatives of the old intelligentsia, traditionalist and anti-Western activists — refer to them reproachfully as "granteaters".<sup>2</sup> I hasten to add that the label is unfair or in any case inaccurate, since a sizeable contingent of intellectuals who share the cosmopolitan and liberal attitudes of the NGO-affiliated grantivores work in more traditional institutions. Many of these are literary critics, translators and writers, generally — but not always —

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<sup>1</sup> The title of this periodical — *niangi* means "crocodile" in Georgian — mirrors that of the celebrated Soviet journal *Krokodil*. While the two publications shared a common format and reflected similar Kremlin-directed ideological objectives, the articles, jokes and cartoons in *Niangi* are geared to a specifically Georgian readership.

<sup>2</sup> Or "grantivores", if you prefer (cp. Russian *grantoedy* and its equivalents in the languages of the ex-Soviet republics: e.g. Geo. *grant'ič'amiebi* or *grant'ismč'amlebi*, Armenian *grantagerner*).

in their 40's or younger. Rather than perpetuate usage of the pejorative label "grant-eaters", I will designate this group as the "third sector". My choice of label captures both the distinction made between NGOs and the private and state sectors, as well as that between this group and two other loosely-defined cohorts within the Georgian elite. Mühlfried (2005b) contrasts the "grant-eaters" to the so-called "red intelligentsia",<sup>3</sup> academics esconced in the state university, the Academy of Sciences, the Writers' Union and similar institutions, especially those who rose to positions of authority during the Soviet period. I would add a third constituency to this portrait of the Georgian academic scene, whom I will call, for lack of a better term, the "white intelligentsia". Many individuals, often the descendents of old aristocratic families, found employment as professors, researchers, artists, musicians, and similar positions, without joining the Communist Party or actively collaborating with the regime. Georgians made the distinction between "red" and "white" intelligentsias (though not with those labels) in Soviet times, but the frontier between the two camps was not that easy to make out, and in any case, it was crisscrossed by numerous lines of friendship and cooperation. Many intellectuals were difficult or impossible to classify according to this binary scheme. The rapid changes of government since 1991, however, have made the frontier more evident and perhaps less porous. Many, but by no means all, members of the white intelligentsia supported Zviad Gamsaxurdia during his short-lived presidency, and continued to advocate his policies after he was deposed in 1992; some underwent persecution or were forced to emigrate as a consequence. The red intelligentsia opposed Gamsaxurdia, and, by and large, welcomed the return of Shevardnadze. Despite these differences in political orientation, representatives of both groups oppose the third sector's revisionist critiques of traditional practices, since the latter go against the grain of both Soviet-epoch historiography, and the vision of the Georgian past adhered to by nationalists aligned with the Zviadist movement.

Here in tabular format is my field-guide to the Georgian intellectual milieu. Needless to say, when classifying individuals, especially those with the dense and wide-ranging

|                              | "red intelligentsia"                                                                 | "white intelligentsia"                                                          | "third sector"                                                                                     |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>employment</i>            | traditional academic & artistic institutions (generally higher-ranked positions)     | traditional academic & artistic institutions (generally lower-ranked positions) | NGOs, visiting posts in Western universities; also includes literary critics, writers, translators |
| <i>background</i>            | older generation, of varied social origin (many from established Communist families) | older generation, often from aristocratic families                              | younger, many from white intelligentsia families                                                   |
| <i>political orientation</i> | opportunist-conservative; pro-Shevardnadze                                           | nationalist, religious conservative; pro-Gamsaxurdia                            | cosmopolitan, pro-Western; pro-Saakashvili or liberal opposition                                   |
| <i>gender attitudes</i>      | tend toward conservatism, but includes professional women                            | favor traditional gender roles                                                  | favor gender equality, liberal lifestyles                                                          |

<sup>3</sup> Zaza Shatirishvili (2003) calls these two groups the new and old intelligentsia, respectively.

social networks typical of the Georgian elite, this classification is simplistic to the point of caricature. It is based primarily on my own observations, and thus likely to reflect observer bias in some fashion.

I will focus on two contentious issues raised in the past few years with regard to the Georgian banquet. First to be discussed are the origins of the *supra*, of toasting as currently practiced, and of the role of the *tamada* as master of ceremonies at the banquet table. Next we will examine the social and political attitudes which the *supra* is believed to encapsulate: the relative significance of written and unwritten codes of behavior; and the *supra* and (or *versus*) civil society.

## 2 The evolution of the Georgian banquet: from *nadimi* to *supra*

Rituals, especially such ubiquitous ones as the Georgian banquet, are commonly imagined as coeval with the national or religious community itself. There is in fact just such a legend concerning the origin of the *supra*, which I have heard on several occasions, and which crops up on numerous web pages, travel guides and popular publications about the Georgians:

When God was distributing portions of the world to all the peoples of the earth, the Georgians were having a party and doing some serious drinking. As a result they arrived late and were told by God that all the land had already been distributed. When they replied that they were late only because they had been lifting their glasses in praise of Him, God was pleased and gave the Georgians that part of earth he had been reserving for himself. (from R. Rosen, *The Georgian Republic* [Hong Kong, 1991], cited by Braund 1994, p. 70)

In this tale, the Georgians are represented banqueting and drinking toasts in God's honor, presumably while other nations show up at the appointed time and place to receive their allotments of land. But is the Georgian *supra* as we now know it as old as this legend would lead one to believe? If we define the *supra* as a meal or banquet where the consumption of wine is regulated by a toastmaster (*tamada*) and a conventional toasting sequence, then it may not be as ancient as many think.

Although feasting and wine-drinking are mentioned in the masterworks of Georgian courtly literature (*Vepxist'q'aosani*, *Amiran-Darejaniani*, etc.) and early travellers' accounts, the institution of the toastmaster and, indeed, toast-making in anything akin to its contemporary form, are conspicuously absent. The Georgian words for "toastmaster" – *tamada* and *t'olumbaši*, both of non-Georgian origin – are not attested before the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> The word *supra* itself is likewise absent, at least as a term for the banquet; in the medieval Georgian translation of the *Shah-Nameh supra* refers only to the tablecloth or dining table, that is, with the same meaning as its Persian source *sufre* in the original text. The Georgian terms designating feasting in pre-Tsarist times are *nadimi* and *p'uroba* (< *p'uri* "bread", commonly used to denote all types of food served at a meal). I will present here the principal characteristics of the *nadimi* as described in

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<sup>4</sup> Of the two words for toastmaster, *t'olumbaši* (< Turkish *tulumbaş*, "head/chief of the wine-skin" [KEGL]) has been largely supplanted in standard Georgian by *tamada* (probably < Circassian [Kabardian] тхьэмэдэ, lit. "father of the gods"; Colarusso 2002: 45), which originally referred to leadership in general, not only at the banquet table ("უფროსობა ან თავობა, მაგლ. ღვინის სმამი" Chubinashvili 1887/1984: 516).

medieval Georgian courtly literature, and the writings of foreign visitors to Georgia (a handy overview of these materials is provided in the third chapter of Mühlfried 2005a). Among the latter, the Italian missionary Archangelo Lamberti is an especially valuable witness. He resided in the western province of Mingrelia for twenty years (1633-1653), learned the local language, and was instructed by Rome to supply detailed descriptions of local customs, practices and mores.

a. *Lavish display of food and drink.* At banquets, especially on special occasions, or when honored guests are present, the host lays out, if at all possible, far more food and drink than the guests could possibly consume. Lamberti (44) was amazed by the number of bulls, pigs, poultry and game animals slaughtered on the occasion of weddings or holidays in 17<sup>th</sup> century Mingrelia, despite the impoverished circumstances in which most people then lived. The banquets described in the 12<sup>th</sup> century *Amiran-Darejaniani* were praised not only for the abundance of wine and food, but also for the expensive gifts presented by the hosts (usually royalty) to their guests.

b. *Length of time spent at the banquet.* Lamberti expressed dismay at the inordinate amount of time his Mingrelian hosts spent at dinner: “it is unfortunate that, because of the insufficiency of food, they entertain themselves rather with talk and wine” (48). On holy-days, the faithful rushed out of the church to take their places at banquets that not infrequently lasted from midday to past midnight. The kings, ladies and cavaliers featured in the *Amiran-Darejaniani* would attend sequences of banquets going on for days, the guests periodically moving from one palace to another, with breaks to go hunting.

c. *Central importance of drinking.* While hosts are praised for the lavish quantities of food they lay before their guests, it is the consumption of alcohol (i.e. wine in the pre-Tsarist accounts) that occupies center stage. Men capable of drinking more wine than the others at the *nadimi*, without becoming incapacitated or drunk, were singled out for special praise. Lamberti (49-50) recounts the story of a certain “Scedan Cilazé” (Č’iladze?), whose reputation as a champion drinker was said to have drawn the attention of the Shah of Iran. Invited by the Shah to his capital, Č’iladze outdrank the best drinkers of Iran, and received rich prizes in recognition of his prowess. Finally, “the shah himself wished to compete against him in drinking, but he drank so much that he became ill and gave up the ghost. Č’iladze however, laden with gifts, returned to his homeland”.<sup>5</sup>

d. *Toasts.* “Mingrelians have the tradition of drinking toasts”, writes Lamberti (48)

but their toasts are not like ours. Who wishes to drink someone’s toast, must do as follows: When the wine-pourer brings him a cup of wine, the toast-drinker tells the wine-pourer, take this cup to so-and-so. This man takes the cup from the wine-pourer, first inclines his head to the one from whom the toast comes; he then slightly touches his lips (to the cup) and drinks a bit; then he cleans the place on the cup where his lips touched, inclines his head a second time, and send the cup back. When the toast-drinker receives the cup, he empties it

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<sup>5</sup> The tradition of champion drinkers was still alive when Dumas visited Georgia, and indeed he is reputed to have bested his hosts at their own game: *Oui, le gigantisme de notre Alexandre Dumas se (d) mesure autrement : dans les années soixante, quand, en Georgie, les meilleurs buveurs boivent directement à l’oultre vingt-cinq bouteilles de vin, il se voit décerner un certificat attestant qu’il a pris plus de vin que les Géorgiens*” (Mathieu 2002).

completely, and in the same manner sends the cup to the one whose toast he drank, and in that way pays his respects.

Toasts are described in medieval courtly literature also, and like the above, they are directed to fellow banqueters, rather than to the long-gone ancestors and abstract themes that appear on the list of obligatory toasting themes for the contemporary Georgian *supra*. There is also no mention of lengthy toasts, or of guests vying with each other in the eloquence of their toasts on a particular theme. Friedrich Bodenstedt, who lived in Tbilisi from 1843 to 1846, and the afore-mentioned Alexandre Dumas, who visited the Caucasus fifteen years later, mention the same brief exchange of Turkish phrases between the proposer and recipient of a toast:

Celui qui porte le toast dit ces paroles sacramentelles : « Allah verdi. » [“God gave”]

Celui qui accepte le toast répond : « Yack schioldi. » [= Azeri *Yaxşı ol(di)* “Be well”]

Recalling the banquets of his childhood, the poet Ak’ak’i C’ereteli (1840-1915) pointed to the absence of the newer style of toasting, especially thematic (*samizezo*) toasts, which “could not even be imagined” at the time (*ჩემი თავდასჯელი*, Pt I, ch. 1), but which became an inalienable attribute of the *supra* within his lifetime (Nik’oladze 2004).

When did the *supra*, with thematic toasts and a tamada, supplant the medieval *nadimi*? Levan Bregadze (2000) did some philological spadework, and traced the earliest appearance of the Georgian word for “toast” – *sadyegr dzelo*, lit. “for long life”<sup>6</sup> – to a mid-19<sup>th</sup> century poem by Grigol Orbeliani entitled “*sadyegr dzelo anu omis šemdgom yame lxini, erevnis siaxloves*” (“Toast, or night banquet after battle, in the vicinity of Erevan”). Orbeliani (1800-1883) was a Georgian nobleman who served in the Russian Imperial army in the 1820’s and 30’s, following the annexation of Georgia into the tsarist empire. His poem consists of a series of toasts pronounced during an all-night banquet by a group of soldiers seated around a campfire. After a brief introduction, the text shifts to direct address: A voice calls on the assembled brethren to drink a cup full of wine to those fallen that day in battle. There follow several lengthy toasts – to celebrated ancestors (especially royalty), to Tsar Nicholas I, to the Georgian homeland, to friendship in the face of death, and to love – each followed by a brief refrain, uttered in chorus by the soldiers. As Bregadze notes, an earlier version of Orbeliani’s poem had a different title — “*t’olubaši anu omis šemdeg lxini da sadyegr dzelo, 1827 c’elsa*” (“Toastmaster [*t’olu(m)baši*], or banquet after battle and toast, in the year 1827”) — and was described on its title page as an “imitation”

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<sup>6</sup> Although the derived word *sadyegr dzelo* can be traced back no further than two centuries, its compound root — *dye* (day) + *grdzel-* (long) — occurs in texts from the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, e.g. *cxovndi uk’unisamde dyegr dzelobita, mepeo!* “Live for ever, with length of days, O king!” (Amiran-Darejaniani); *ac’, švilo, ymertman tkven mogces atas c’el dyeta grdzeloba, sve-svianoba, didoba ...* “Now, my child, may God grant you length of days for a thousand years, good fortune, greatness” (*Veprxist’q’aosani* 1545). In modern Georgian usage, it is important to note, *sadyegr dzelo* denotes any kind of toast proposed at a banquet, not only those wishing health and long life to an individual.

(*mibadzva*) of a work by the Russian poet Vasily Zhukovsky. The model for Orbeliani's "Toast[master]" is Zhukovsky's celebrated *Pevec vo stane russkix voinov* ("The Bard in the Camp of the Russian Warriors") composed in the aftermath of the War of 1812. This poem likewise comprises a sequence of toast-like invocations, pronounced by a speaker holding a cup of wine, to forefathers and the homeland, the Tsar, living warriors, and those who had fallen in combat; to brotherhood, love, bards (*sotrudniki voždjam* "colleagues of commanders"), and lastly, to God.

On the evidence of this poem and several other literary sources mentioned in his essay, Bregadze concludes that "the supra, it would appear, received the form it has today at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and ... by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this form of banquet has spread everywhere" (12). I will get back to this assertion in a minute, but before I do, I would like to dwell a bit more on the parallel between Zhukovsky's *Pevec* and Orbeliani's imitation. The two texts are structured as long passages attributed to a single voice, followed by refrains, echoing portions of the preceding text, representing a kind of chorus. In Zhukovsky's poem, the principal voice is labeled *pevec* "bard". In Orbeliani's earlier imitations the equivalent part is assigned to a *t'olubaši* "toastmaster", and in the later ones the label is changed to *sadyegrdzelo* "toast".

|                     | LEAD PERFORMER                    | CHORUS                                   |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Zhukovsky 1812-1815 | <i>pevec</i> "bard"               | <i>voiny</i> "warriors"                  |
| Orbeliani 1827      | <i>t'olu(m)baši</i> "toastmaster" | <i>dast'aluyi</i> "refrain" <sup>7</sup> |
| Orbeliani 1870      | <i>sadyegrdzelo</i> "toast"       | <i>mxedarni</i> "warriors"               |

The equation made by Orbeliani between *pevec* and *t'olu(m)baši* merits closer study, certainly closer than I am capable of at present. Zhukovsky's bard gives every appearance of being a figure drawn from the Scottish ballads of Walter Scott or Macpherson, rather than from the banqueting practices of Russian officers at the time of the Napoleonic Wars (Catherine O'Neil, pers. comm.). Just such an occasion is depicted by Tolstoy in *War and Peace* (chapter 71), and it has little in common with Zhukovsky's campfire orations. The nobleman hosting the banquet signaled for the glasses to be filled with champagne, then rose to his feet and called out "To the health of our Sovereign, the Tsar". He emptied his glass and threw it to the floor. The others shouted "hurrah" and smashed their glasses in similar fashion, while the band played a patriotic song. After the servants swept up the shattered glass, another toast was proposed, to Prince Bagration, followed by shouting and the smashing of drinkware, and so on, as other guests, club members and the organizing committee were toasted in their turn, ending with a final salute to the host.

As far as the toasting is concerned, this is fundamentally the same structure as that noted in medieval Georgia (without the broken glass, of course), and for that matter, in the Western world since Roman times: personal toasts to sovereigns and fellow

<sup>7</sup> "სიმღერის დროს ყოველი ხანის შემდეგ გამეორებული კუპლეტი ან სტრიქონი, რომელიც ლექსის მთავარ მოტივს შეიცავს" (გრიშაშვილი, იოსებ. 1997. ქალაქური ლექსიკონი: 78-79.

banqueters, with little in the way of verbal elaboration. But whereas Zhukovsky's bardic feast is a fictional product, the insertion of names from the present and recent past into the frame of romanticized Celtic minstrelsy, that concocted by Orbeliani could pass for the transcript of an actual supra, albeit one with an uncommonly talented tamada capable of expressing his *sadyegrdzeloebi* in verse.<sup>8</sup> According to the textual evidence, the transition from medieval *nadimi* to modern supra followed on the heels of the incorporation of Georgia and the rest of Transcaucasia into the Russian Empire in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. *Post hoc, propter hoc*: in Bregadze's opinion, the new supra, with its *tamada* and sequence of toasts, came into being precisely as a means of symbolically compensating for lost sovereignty: "The Georgian supra, and in particular, its chief element, the toast, became a compensation for unfulfilled duties ... Real care for the homeland was replaced by the toast to the homeland; the real doing of good, by the toast to goodness".<sup>9</sup>

"Old-intelligentsia" critics of Bregadze, such as Gociridze (2001), denounced his apparent unfamiliarity with Georgian ethnography; had Bregadze done his homework, he would not have overlooked the evidence of tamada-like practices in traditional folkways, or in peripheral, culturally-conservative regions of Georgia. Without endorsing Gociridze's traditionalist, and not especially convincing, critique of Bregadze's thesis, I will briefly present some widespread elements of Georgian (and, in general, Caucasian) belief and practice which, as it were, fertilized the soil from which both the earlier *nadimi* and the contemporary supra sprouted.

(i). THE RITUAL USE OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES. The traditional religious practices of Georgians and their neighbors – either those described by ethnographers, or those still practiced today – invariably are marked by the use of wine, vodka or beer (depending on what is available locally) as an offering to the divine patrons of the community, or poured out as a libation to the deceased. (Libations – usually reduced to the pouring of a few drops of wine onto a piece of bread – are commonly performed even at contemporary urban supras). Among the Pshavs and Xevsurs of the northeastern Georgian highlands, offerings are presented at shrines under four species: alcohol, bread, sacrificial animals and beeswax candles. After receiving the offerings from each petitioner, the *xavisberi* or *xucesi* (priest-like celebrants of traditional highland ceremonies) makes an invocation to the patron saint or deity while holding up a glass of wine or other alcoholic drink, which he then drinks. The petitioner and other men near the shrine precincts then do likewise. After the meat from the sacrificed cattle and sheep has been boiled or roasted, the *xavisberi* goes to each banquet and consecrates it, once again by holding up and then drinking a glass of wine.

<sup>8</sup> Although rare, such toastmasters do exist! See the collection of versified toasts created by Vano Xaraišvili (1997), a celebrated rhyming *tamada* from Xašuri in central Georgia.

<sup>9</sup> მოიშალა ქართული სახელმწიფოებრიობა, ჩაკვდა ქართული საზოგადოებრივ-პოლიტიკური ცხოვრება — აყვავდა ქართული სუფრა! ... ქართული სუფრა, კერძოდ, მისი უმთავრესი ელემენტი — საღვებრძელო — იქცა შეუსრულებელ მოვალეობათა კომპენსაციად. ... სამშობლოზე რეალურად ზრუნვა სამშობლოს საღვ-გრძელოთი იცვლება, სიკეთის რეალურად კეთება — სიკეთის საღვებრძელოთი (Bregadze 2000: 13-14).

(ii). POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE AGONISM. As I mentioned earlier, the Georgian banquet is an arena of competition among the men at the table. Descriptions of the supra tend to foreground what I will call “positive agonism”, that is, the competitive display of quantity. This is most notoriously expressed through the amount and quality of the food and drink laid out before the guests (cp. “four-story banquets”, with trays of food piled so high on the table that the guests cannot see the fellow partiers seated across from them, lampooned in one of the *Niangi* cartoons exhibited by Manning 2003);<sup>10</sup> the dozen or more glassfuls, hornfuls — and even flower-vase-fuls<sup>11</sup> — of wine chugged down by each drinker in the course of an evening. Positive agonism is also expressed verbally, in the form of lengthy, elaborate toasts, sometimes accompanied by the recitation of poetry or quotations from Georgian literature. Less often remarked upon, but of equal importance if one is to understand many otherwise puzzling aspects of traditional Caucasian behavior, is “negative agonism”, by which I mean the competitive display of restraint and self-control. If one is to believe the accounts of ethnographers, seconded by the vivid descriptions of highland morality contained in Grigol Robakidze’s short story *Engadi*, the Xevsur mountaineers made selfcontrol (*tavšek’aveba*) into something of a cult. True self-mastery was manifested by controlling your sword strokes in a duel so as to only lightly wound your opponent; to control your passions so as to pass the night caressing a friend of the opposite sex (*sc’orperi*) without consummating the relationship; to bear the excruciating pain of traditional surgical interventions (including trepanation), or the agony of a difficult childbirth, without crying out.<sup>12</sup> At the banquet, negative agonism is directly joined to the excessive consumption just described. The ideal drinker not only ingests as much or more than his fellow banqueters, but at the same time he manifests no significant impairment of his alertness, eloquence, singing or dancing ability. The fame of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century champion drinker Č’iladze depended as much on the latter as on the former talent. In at least some regions of the Caucasus, there was a negative counterpart to the positive-agonistic display of hostly generosity as well: Seated at a table piled high with food, the ideal guest, according to an Ossetian proverb, eats little of it “even though wolves be gnawing at his stomach”.

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<sup>10</sup> In Tbilisi in 1986 I witnessed a table literally crack asunder from the weight of the food piled atop it for a supra, sending dishes, plates and wine-pitchers crashing to floor. Rather than express dismay at the damage to the table and the spoilage of food, the hosts laughed and pointed with evident pleasure to this emphatic display of Georgian generosity.

<sup>11</sup> This is as well is something I saw with my own eyes, at a supra honoring the baptism of the daughter of a close friend of mine. After several rounds of toasts drunk from ordinary glasses, the tamada looked around the room for more challenging drinkware. His gaze settled on a vase of flowers. With evident glee he poured out the water and flowers, and filled the vase with a pitcher of wine (a litre at least). The tamada slurped down most of the contents — the rest spilling over his shirt — then filled the vase and handed it to the next drinker. As is the custom with toasts drunk from horns or other unusual drinking vessels, all men at the table were obliged to follow suit, to the best of their ability.

<sup>12</sup> My summary of Xevsur negative agonism is based on Tedoradze 1930, Baliauri 1991, Tuite 2000, among others; I also draw upon interviews with the ethnographer Tinatin Ochauri (July 2001) and her brother Giorgi (March 2005).

(iii). THE GUEST-HOST RELATION. For the peoples of the Caucasus, whether from the north or the south, Christian or Muslim, hospitality is a central component of their self-image. For Georgians, “a guest is of God” (*st’umari yvtisaa*). Traditional Daghestanian and Circassian homes always included a finely-furnished guest room or guest-house. According to Hewitt and Watson (1994: 6) “Abkhazians considered it rude to close the kitchen door because that implied that the family was not willing to offer hospitality to any passing guests”. The banquet table, needless to say, is a privileged venue for displaying hospitality. But traditional Caucasian conceptions of the guesthost relation (Georgian *st’umarmasp’indzloba*) imply obligations for both parties, guest as well as host, and are situated in the larger context of mutual ties and responsibilities traversing the potentially dangerous outside world, a topic to be discussed in the following section of the paper.

### 3 The supra as socio-political model

After citing the popular myth about Georgians feasting while God apportioned land to the peoples of the world, Braund noticed something else in the legend that merited comment:

The Georgians were late: they had broken the rules. The model appeals to one contemporary Georgian self-image: Georgians are seen to be clever and resourceful, properly concerned with pleasures. They are seen not to be concerned with punctuality, for Georgians often pride themselves explicitly on their disregard for the constraints of time as for other rules and limitations. Georgians often speak of themselves as clever rule-benders, cunning and intelligent. Such a self-image had particular appeal for a people who lived in a land closely regulated by an alien authority (Braund 1994, p. 70).

The legend also illustrates the curious fact that, whereas Georgians vaunt their insouciance toward the written rules upheld by the State, the Church, the traffic police or even God Himself,<sup>13</sup> they adhere with remarkable tenacity to the unwritten conventions of the supra, and its code of hospitality, honor, and gender-appropriate behavior. In the view of some recent commentators of the “third-sector” camp, behind this seeming paradox lurks a major obstacle to the evolution of the sort of civic order characteristic of West-European societies. Since long before the incorporation of Georgia into the Soviet or even Tsarist empires,

those laws into lawlessness, the removal of the idea of order from their content, their poetization, mythification, verbalization, “putting-into-words”, “re-canonizing”, “reconception”, their mythopoetic transfer into such a format that formal laws no longer have a decisive meaning, and disputes are settled “by relationship with some people, by friendship with others, by deference with

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<sup>13</sup> Cp. W. E. D. Allen’s remarkable characterization of the “aesthetic irresponsibility” and “amoral and untrammelled mind” of the Georgians: “The sense of nation is in itself a kind of aestheticism – a form of sensual taste – a preference for one’s kind in contrast to other kind. On the other hand no man – or no people – of essential aestheticism, of taste, can conceive a fixed preference for a certain religious or political conception” (*History of the Georgian People*, 71-2).

some, by divine bluntness with others, by bribery with yet others” (Berdzenishvili 2004: 170).

Look at our streets, Berdzenishvili laments,

the country is full of drivers that know nothing at all of traffic rules ... Corruption has reached such uncontrollable dimensions that even in cases of total ignorance of the rules of the road, drivers’ licenses are freely given out ... It would appear that people are willing to pay money under the table in order to put their own lives, and those of others, in danger (2004:168-9).

According to Jgerenaia (2000: 33), it is because Georgian society never underwent anything comparable to the Reformation that “a Western concept of citizenship and civil (social) philosophy” never developed there. As a consequence, official, codified models of society — represented by the Orthodox church in Jgerenaia’s essay, but one could just as well replace it with Tsarist, socialist, Soviet or Western-liberal ideology — never penetrated the “village”, i.e. society itself, where unwritten conventions hold sway, and where the arena of social and political action is the supra.

In the final analysis, the law (holy writ) did not participate in the process of upbringing and socializing each new generation, in that it was successfully supplanted by the unwritten tradition of the supra ... One fundamental trait of Georgian culture is the priority of the unwritten over the written (Jgerenaia 2000: 34)

The collection containing the above article and the one by Bregadze discussed earlier is entitled “The Georgian banquet and civil society” (*ქართული სუფრა და სამოქალაქო საზოგადოება*), though the statements just quoted might give one reason to suppose that the title ought to have been “The Georgian banquet *versus* civil society”. The term “civil society” has been a staple of politological discourse since Hegel’s time, and numerous definitions are in circulation (Kaldor (2003: 6-10) identified no less than five). Georgian third-sector intellectuals tend to equate civil society with the institutions in which they operate, but in this paper I will adopt a more tradition definition of civil society as the zone of activity between the household and the State, the functioning of which is assured by the absence of coercion and common ground roles of interaction and sociality.

It has become a commonplace to contrast the rule- and convention-bound supra, under the “dictatorship” of the tamada, with “democratic” gatherings (Manning 2003), where guests – young elite urbanites or “third-sector” intellectuals – drink, eat, dance, socialize and move about in relative freedom. Among the latter type of social event, the buffet-reception known to Georgians and Russians under the French expression “à la fourchette” (а-ля-фуршет, ლავურშეტი) has become the paradigmatic example of the intrusion of Western forms of sociality into Georgian public space. The supra-versus-buffet dichotomy has become a trope of much ethnological and revisionist writing about the Georgian banquet, so I will follow in this vein by sketching out two prototypes of sociopolitical space, the one modeled on the “à la fourchette” buffet, the other on the traditional supra.

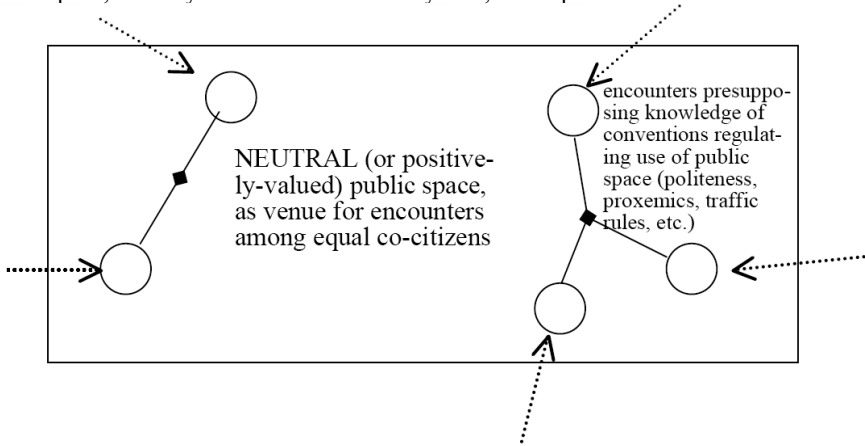
## TWO MODELS OF SOCIOPOLITICAL SPACE

|                               | <i>supra</i>                                                               | <i>à la fourchette</i>                         |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| <i>interactional paradigm</i> | GUEST-HOST RELATION                                                        | CIVIL SOCIETY                                  |
|                               | centralized, focused<br>immobile<br>asymmetric<br>selective, by invitation | decentralized<br>mobile<br>symmetric<br>open   |
| <i>regulatory code</i>        | UNWRITTEN TRADITION                                                        | WRITTEN LAW                                    |
|                               | highly ritualized, less creative<br>gender-marked                          | less ritualized, more creative<br>gender-equal |
| <i>discourse paradigm</i>     | MONOLOGIC                                                                  | DIALOGIC                                       |
|                               | rhetoric, oratory<br>agonistic-epideictic                                  | (Habermasian) conversation<br>cooperative      |

I. À LA FOURCHETTE MODEL. The first type of sociopolitical space presupposes an arena of interaction — “civil society” – which exists outside the individual household, but which is also free of state control other than that required to maintain it in state of security, accessibility, cleanliness and working order. At the same time, the citizens as a whole cooperate toward achieving the above-mentioned goals. A crucial correlate of this kind of civil society is not only respect of written laws, but also the equal treatment – and if possible, consideration and courtesy – toward the frequently anonymous others who share one’s public space. Investigators of the microsocial, such as E. T. Hall and Erving Goffmann, have revealed the extent to which behavior in public spaces – service interactions, random encounters, traffic and queuing rules – depends on communally-shared codes of behavior, as well as conventions guiding the interpretation of and accommodation to social actions that do not fit the habitual script. The communicative counterpart to equal treatment is dialogue, in which each participant, presupposing that the other adheres to certain interactional ground rules, attempts in good faith to understand his or her interlocutor – the Habermasian conversational ideal often mentioned by writers on civil-society-related questions (cp. Manning 2005).

Here is a diagram of civil society as an à-la-fourchette buffet. Clumsily represented as circles are citizens entering public space from the private domains of their households. Each citizen has equal rights of access to public space, but also equal responsibility for its upkeep and proper exploitation. The participants circulate freely, encountering other co-citizens, with whom they may engage in dialogues or conversations (these are the solid lines meeting at diamond-shaped intersections). Their interactions are regulated by the presupposable ground rules for the use of public space, proxemics, speech-genre norms, and the like. Some types of encounters and conversations modeled here are relatively routine or ritualized (instances of Malinowskian “phatic communion”, employee-client service encounters), but each interaction has the potential for creativity, for elaboration in unexpected directions. It is important to note the absence of a hegemonic center-of-attention in à-la-fourchette civil

society. One may have, of course, participants seeking to draw attention to themselves in public space, but they are not built into the system, so to speak.



It must, of course, not be forgotten that the à-la-fourchette buffet is still a highly marked social ritual in today's Georgia. It is almost exclusively practiced by younger, educated, more or less cosmopolitan Georgians – or by those who wish to be seen as such – and thus those who encounter each other at an event of this type simultaneously signal their equality with their peers (contrasted with the asymmetrical relation to be discussed in the next paragraph), and their distinctiveness vis-à-vis the vast majority of Georgian society.<sup>14</sup>

II. SUPRA MODEL. In my view, the foundation of the Georgian banquet – both the earlier *nadimi*, and the present-day supra – is the guest-host relationship, a complementary pair of roles, with their respective duties and obligations, known in approximately the same form throughout the Caucasus. Foreign visitors to the region report their astonishment at the generosity of their hosts, the quantities of food, drink and gifts with which they are received. (In another *Niangi* cartoon collected by Manning (2003), Georgians are shown bearing gifts of food to an alien spacecraft “so that the extraterrestrials do not say that Georgians are inhospitable”). Even as they marvel at the lavishness of the hospitality, however, visitors not infrequently grumble and chafe at the restrictions guesthood imposes on them – the long hours spent at the banquet table, when they would rather be sight-seeing, sleeping, or doing anything beside eat, drink and listen to toasts. There is a wonderful Georgian saying, quoted to me a few years ago by my friend and colleague Mirian Xucishvili, that sums up the role of the guest with far greater wit and concision than the writings of any ethnographer: “the guest is the host’s donkey; he can hitch him wherever he wants” (*st’umari masp’indzlis viriao; sadac unda, ik daabamso*). But what such visitors fail to understand, as they return to their home country (or planet) with stuffed bellies, aching heads and suitcases full of gifts, is

<sup>14</sup> My thanks to Florian Mühlfried for bringing this point home after an oral presentation of this paper.

how the host-guest relation (*st'umarmasp'indzloba*) came to take on the dimensions lampooned in Soviet films and cartoons, and celebrated in travel guides.

Civil society, defined as an arena of social and economic activity outside the private and government sectors, but maintained by the combined efforts of both citizens and State, was unknown in the premodern Caucasus, and can scarcely be said to exist today in some political units of the region. Depending on the epoch and the locality, the space beyond the domesticated realm of the homestead and the village was either conceived as a savage no-man's-land, or an alien, hostile domain controlled by an intrusive State. Traversing the wild, potentially dangerous exterior, however, are bonds between individuals, households and communities, traditionally expressed in the language of kinship (sworn brotherhood, milk siblinghood, fictive adoption, godparenthood) and the guest-host relationship (Tuite 1998).<sup>15</sup>

The guest-host relationship is asymmetric, and highly ritualized (or “highly presupposing”, in Silverstein’s sense). Host and guest play their respective roles, as dictated by tradition.<sup>16</sup> The host kills the fatted calf, provides for all the guest’s needs – as these are defined by custom, *nota bene*, rather than the guest’s actual wishes. (*st'umari masp'indzlis viria*, after all). The relationship thus initiated is intended to be long-lasting, to be reciprocated and renewed by further acts of hospitality, and even to be continued by the descendants and relatives of the original host and guest. Most forms of Caucasian hospitality are gender-marked, being either restricted to men, or foregrounding men as the principal actors. At the same time, hospitality depends heavily on the “shadow work” of women, who prepare the food, serve the guests, and clean up afterwards, even if they are invisible, or nearly so, at the banquet.<sup>17</sup>

There is also a degree of exclusivity to the guest-host relation, since it presumes that both parties understand their respective roles and responsibilities, and that the host’s generosity is met by the guest’s trust and submission. (It is this latter condition, I am convinced, that is the chief source of confusion for uninitiated foreign guests). To illustrate Caucasian beliefs concerning the investments entailed by hospitality, I will draw upon a celebrated poem by Vazha-Pshavela, which, significantly, bears the title “Guest and Host” (*st'umar-masp'indzeli*). Zviadauri, a Georgian from Xevsureti, strays into Chechen territory while hunting, and meets Joq’ola, who invites him home as his guest. Zviadauri has in fact raided this very village on numerous occasions, stealing livestock and killing many Chechen warriors. Nonetheless, he accepts the offer of hospitality, and as he enters the house he hands his weapons and armor to his host’s wife, yielding himself totally to Joq’ola’s protection. Joq’ola’s neighbors discover the identity of their Georgian visitor, and come to seize him. Rather than surrender the man

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<sup>15</sup> Cp. Parkes 2004 on fictive kinship as a mechanism for creating “alternative social structures” in regions lacking strong political centralization, such as the premodern Balkans and Caucasus. I would add that overly strong centralization, in the form of an intrusive state apparatus that insinuates itself into not only the public, but also the private spheres, likewise favors the maintenance of alternative networking mechanisms.

<sup>16</sup> See the detailed study of Xevsur *st'umarmasp'indzloba* by Ochauri 1980, who describes local hospitality etiquette for various types of occasion, various categories of kin, even the correct manner for visiting a woman confined to the menstruation hut.

<sup>17</sup> This past winter I visited the former mosque (*jame*) in Chxut’uneti, an Acharian village near the Turkish border. The mullah’s residence on the lower floor included a guest room with a small window in the wall adjoining the kitchen, through which the womenfolk could pass food to the mullah and his guests without being seen.

who slew so many of his kinsmen – including his own brother — Joq’ola defends him with drawn dagger:

Today he is my guest;  
Though he be responsible for a sea of blood,  
I cannot betray him,  
I swear by God ...

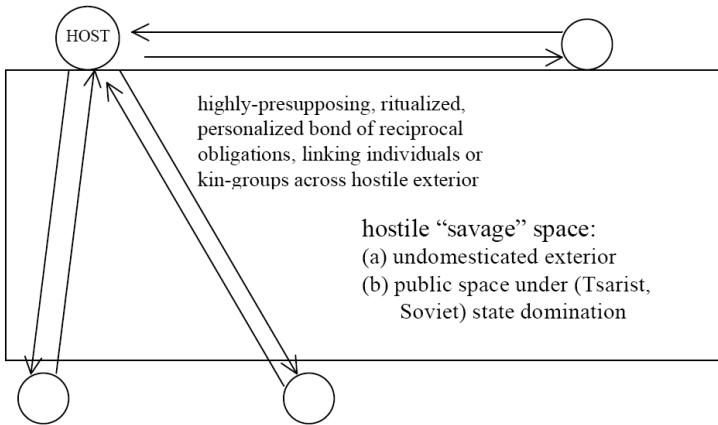
The words Vazha put in the mouth of the Chechen Joq’ola still resonate with Caucasians. Yet this astonishing, and ultimately tragic, illustration of hospitality presupposes that host and guest play by the same rules, with the same intensity of commitment. The same can be said with regard to the *supra*. The guest-host relation receives its most condensed manifestation at the banquet table, in the agonistic display of generosity (enabled by female shadow-workers), in the guests’ submission to the will of the *tamada*, and in the investment all participants are expected to make toward the successful performance of the *supra*. Furthermore, a great deal of talk around the banquet table, and especially that framed in toasts, has a markedly self-referential component (Manning 2003).<sup>18</sup> Not only are hospitality, positive and negative agonism, and Georgian (or Caucasian) values on display at the *supra*, they are explicitly mentioned and singled out for praise and reinforcement.

In the above diagram the agonistic, monologic oratory of the *supra* is contrasted to the cooperative conversation among citizens favored by Habermas. It should be noted that the sense of agonism appropriate to the *supra* is not the same as that employed in most analyses of political rhetoric. According to Gary Remer, “while the conversational ideal is cooperative, oratory is agonistic. The orator’s goal, particularly in deliberative and judicial oratory, is to defeat his opponent” (1999). The Georgian toast (*sadyegr dzelo*), however, is an instance of the third rhetorical type recognized by Aristotle, *epideictic*, defined as ‘the ceremonial oratory of display’ (*Rhetoric*, Book 1, Chapter 3). Performances of this third type – e.g. speeches delivered at the Olympic games, funerary orations praising the deceased – are to be evaluated aesthetically, on the basis of style and eloquence, rather than the persuasive merits of their content. The succession of *sadyegr dzeloebi* at the *supra* are agonistic in this latter sense: they manifest a competitiveness grounded in shared beliefs, and therefore fulfill a cohesive rather than deliberative function. The speaker seeks to demonstrate eloquence and virtuosity while saying something he presumes his listeners already assent to. The *supra* may be a kind of academy, but it is rarely an agora.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Self-referentiality seems to be another feature of the *supra* which was absent in the pre-modern *nadimi*.

<sup>19</sup> For this reason, toasts on genuinely controversial themes, on which at least some of those present at the *supra* have opinions strongly divergent from those of the *tamada*, tend to provoke discomfort and even conflict, rather than debate. The cases most often cited involve the notorious toasts to Stalin, which are still a not-uncommon phenomenon over a decade after the restoration of Georgian independence (Nodia 2000; Manning 2003). Dissident banqueters find themselves confronted with the difficult choice between compliance (e.g. toasting Stalin’s leadership of the USSR to victory over Nazi Germany, while passing over the rest of his career in silence) or blatant refusal, at the risk of provoking a violent response. By contrast, refusal to drink a personal toast appears to have been a legitimate option at the medieval *nadimi*, if we accept as evidence the following exchange from chapter 9 of the *Amiran-Darejaniani*:



In the above diagram, unlike the previous one, the circles (representing participants) do not meet in exterior space, which is conceived as undomesticated and dangerous, but rather within the homestead of the one among them who serves as host. These encounters, unlike the ones modeled in the à-la-fourchette scenario above, presuppose a much richer fund of shared knowledge, and a higher degree of investment by participants in the relationship. Traversing the exterior is a network of bonds established through hospitality — or artificial kinship, which could be conceived as an enhanced guest-host commitment solemnized through fictive adoption or siblinghood — which enable the movement of people and goods, and mutual aid and defense, across clan, ethnic or religious frontiers.<sup>20</sup> If the traditional perception of external space is a negative one, that of the communities situated beyond that space is more ambiguous: the people living there are a potential source of danger, but also potential allies. Hence the importance placed by communities throughout the Caucasus region on network-establishing and network-reinforcing practices such as hospitality, fictive kinship, and the banquet. If one stretches the definition of civil society a bit to accommodate any non-governmental institution which permits the free association between people from different households (cp. Nodia 2000: 6), then traditional Caucasian hospitality could be said to fulfill this role; according to some Georgian analysts, it may have been the only

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We ate food and drank wine. Then one of them filled his cup, stood up, and said thus: May God magnify Sepadavle son of Darisp'an, who has no equal on the face of the earth. He drank the wine and sat down. Then he filled the cup again, gave it to me and said: You too must call a blessing upon Sepadavle son of Darisp'an, and then drink. I told him: I have come to do battle with him, and until either he bests me or I best him, I will not invoke a blessing on his sun.

<sup>20</sup> Marriage, which in Georgia and much of the North Caucasus is forbidden between people known to be related, serves a similar network-expanding function, in that it forges a bond between otherwise unaffiliated kingroups.

functioning “civil-society” institution during the Soviet period (Gurgenidze 2000: 56; cp. Xaindrava 2000: 54).

The correlate of the negative conception of external space, alas, is a tendency toward predatory, exploitative or neglectful behavior in areas beyond the borders of the homestead and village. The traditional belief system of the highlanders of northeastern Georgia even included a divine patron — invoked under the name of St. George — of men as exploiters, for the profit of their communities, of the undomesticated space outside of the village and its adjacent fields. The Transcaucasian St. George is the protector of shepherds, hunters, travelers, and men raiding cattle from their neighbors on the other side of the mountains [Charachidzé 1968: 620; Tuite 1998]. Echoes of ancient divisions of space into the domesticated, private interior and the savage, exploitable but dangerous, exterior still emerge in contemporary Georgian daily life. During my first visit to Tbilisi in 1985, I was continually amazed, and baffled, by the abrupt transition from filthy, litter-strewn entry-ways into sumptuously-furnished apartments, once my host opened the door: the outer, public space was the domain of the intrusive, hostile State, whereas the domain across the threshold was private, one’s own, and looked after accordingly.<sup>21</sup> More recent manifestations of this sharply binary spatial distinction are not pleasant to recount: the pollution and littering of public spaces — including ecologically-delicate rivers and forests — and the pillage and vandalism of utilities, public buildings and parks during the 1990’s (e.g. telephone wires torn down and sold for scrap; the destruction of the central water-heating boilers in Tbilisi). It appears as well that anonymous others (i.e. non-guests, non-kin) encountered in public space are equally liable to be treated with neglect or worse; as a case in point I submit the near-total disregard for traffic courtesy and the safety of pedestrians manifest by Tbilisi drivers.

#### 4 Civil society and its discontents

If, as many fervently hope, independent, post-Soviet Georgia will witness, sooner or later, the reconfiguration of public space in the image of Western-style civil society, what impact will this have on the guest-host relation and, more specifically, on the supra? Put another way, is the disappearance of drinking horns, four-story banquets and displays of epideictic oratory the price Georgian society must eventually pay for clean parks and courteous drivers? Rather than engage in a pretentious and pointless stab at crystal-ball gazing, I will conclude by presenting three case studies, based on my own observations over the past ten years.

I. In the summer of 1995 I returned to Tbilisi for the first time since 1991. In the interim

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<sup>21</sup> A similar opposition, although it manifests itself in quite different ways, is expressed through the contrastive Russian modifiers *svoj* “one’s own” and *čужoj* “other, foreign, strange”, which occur frequently in the narratives of Russian villagers collected by Margaret Paxson: “Being *svoi* can mean being a member of one’s immediate or extended family, a co-villager, a dear friend, a compatriot. The term *svoi* is a marker for belongingness of a wide range of types. *Chuzhoi*, the second term, is the opposite of *svoi*. Related to the same word that means “wonder,” or “miracle” (*chudo*), and other words which denote dangerous beings (such as *chudovishche*, monster), *chuzhoi* refers to being a stranger — one who is a foreigner or outsider. It can be a person from another family or village or region or country” (Paxson 1999: 71)

Georgia's first post-Soviet president had been deposed in a coup d'état that left much of the downtown in shambles. Shevardnadze was back in power. In the aftermath of a senseless civil war, Abkhazia was de-facto independent and Tbilisi's finest hotels packed with refugees. The economy was a mess, wages were not being paid, crime and drug abuse had spiraled out of control. I was staying in the apartment of my ex-wife's family. A couple days after my arrival a neighbor came by, a woman in her late 50's or early 60's. "Manana" (not her real name) was grumpy and very unhappy. The previous day, she told me, she boarded one of the minibuses (marshrutkas) that had become an increasingly popular means of transport in the city. The fare was the equivalent of 15 or 20 cents, more expensive than the archaic, painfully-slow streetcars, but much cheaper than a cab. A woman she knew came aboard a short while later, and sat not far from her. Ordinarily, the appearance of an acquaintance in any kind of public transportation, and even more so in the cramped quarters of a minibus, was met with an exchange of greetings and small talk, and an offer to pay for his or her ticket. Manana, however, had been reduced to such poverty in the years following the collapse of the USSR, that she could barely muster up the change for her own fare, much less someone else's. Her friend was clearly in the same situation. But rather than carry on their conversation and then go their separate ways, each paying for her ticket, the two women avoided acknowledging each other's presence, silently kept their gazes fixed in the opposite direction, until my neighbor, now even more depressed than she had been before she boarded the marshrutka, got off at her stop.

The 40 kopecks that Manana would have spent on her friend's minibus fare in 1985, but no longer had in 1995, is a droplet of the grease that enabled the machinery of hospitality to function. In order for Georgians to maintain their social networks the traditional way, a certain amount of excess wealth has to be available. Even those who were not especially well-off could summon the necessary resources to play host when the occasion demanded, whether it be a few extra rubles to invite an acquaintance for beer and khinkali, or the equivalent of several months' salary for a full-blown supra to celebrate a birthday, a wedding or the return of a son from military service. As Tamara Dragadze (1988) observed in a Rachan village in the late 1970's, and I witnessed on several occasions in the late 80's, Georgians could marshal considerable sums of money surprisingly fast, by drawing upon family savings and the excess funds provided by relatives, neighbors and friends.

In a sense, the *Niangi* cartoonists had a point: Hosting a supra required excess resources; the amassing of such resources presupposed a network of kin, friends and clients; and the maintenance of the network required ... more supras. The endless cycle of banquets, of *don* and *contre-don*, worked as long it was oiled by surplus wealth and fuelled by the unremunerated labor of women. Surplus wealth was obtained from a variety of sources, many of them grouped under the heading of "corruption", or in any case, of undeclared revenue (e.g. private tutoring of students preparing for university entrance exams, from which faculty members could earn double or more than their official salaries).

When the economy collapsed in the early 90's, the host-guest cycle ground to a halt for many Georgians, in particular, those who had no links to the Shevardnadze machine. Supras became rarer and sparser. But to grasp the poignancy of Manana's story, one must consider the social as well as the economic context. Rather than a neutral zone of encounter between co-citizens, public space remained for Manana both a negatively-charged field traversed by the lifelines of her social network, and a stage upon which

she performs before others, even in the tiny 12-seat theatre of a Tbilisi marshrutka. Beyond the purely pragmatic issue of network maintenance, hosting affords the pleasure of generosity, and an opportunity to display the disregard for money that appears to be a common feature of Georgian presentation-of-self.<sup>22</sup> Unable to afford the small sum needed to “host” her acquaintance in the marshrutka, Manana averted her gaze, and glumly pretended not to notice the other’s presence. To have done otherwise, to have chatted with her without offering to pay her fare, would have been tantamount to calling into question the foundations of her social network. To someone accustomed to relationships maintained by repeated acts of hosting, in the context of which each such act demonstrates the investment and commitment made by both parties, the abrupt shift to a pay-your-own-way symmetrical interaction would have seemed either to signal a chilly downgrading of the relationship, or an admission of failure.

The depression and isolation that Manana experienced because she could not, or would not, extract her relationships from the old, familiar system of prestations and interdependencies, brings home one crucial component of the psychological cost of sudden poverty for a significant segment of Georgian society — a cost that Western economic and political analysts overlooked. Ten years later, among some of my “white intelligentsia” friends, who had suffered a dramatic loss of income in the 1990’s, the *supra*, and the host-guest relation in general, have by no means disappeared, but they have been scaled back. Georgians have told me of trimming *supra* expenditures, limiting guest lists to close friends, and entertaining less frequently.

II. The essay by Jgerenaia mentioned at the beginning of this paper ends, rather surprisingly, with a declaration of fidelity to the *supra*, and outrage at its supplanting by the buffet-reception (*gaalapurset’eba*). Indeed, he calls on his readers to actively resist such innovations, by “transforming any type of *à la fourchette* into a *supra*”. In the summer of 2001 I may well have witnessed an instance of what Jgerenaia had in mind. At the invitation of a friend of mine, I attended the presentation of a new edition of the poetry of his grandfather, the celebrated writer Giorgi Leonidze. Despite the boiling July heat and lack of electricity, a standing-room-only crowd filled the lecture hall of the Writers’ Union, for an afternoon of readings from Leonidze’s poetry, reminiscences by friends, and appreciations of his work by literary critics. Afterwards, we were invited into an adjoining room for an *à la fourchette* reception. As the guests circulated with small plates of food and plastic glasses containing white wine or soft drinks, two men in their 60’s or 70’s stood by the bottles of wine at one end of the buffet table. Suddenly one of them declared, for all to hear, that this was an insult to the memory of a great poet and a great Georgian. He filled a glass, pronounced a *sadyegrdzelo* in commemoration of Leonidze, and drank his wine to the bottom. The man standing beside him followed suit, and soon a half-dozen or so men were clustered about the self-proclaimed tamada. A *supra* bubble had emerged, one could say, within the context of

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<sup>22</sup> Once in the late 1980’s, after arriving by marshrutka at our destination, a friend pulled out a handful of change to pay his fare and mine. A 15-kopeck coin fell to the floor. *Iq’os!*, he called out, “let it be”, and we exited the conveyance without retrieving the coin. A Russian would have picked it up without hesitation, another friend claimed, but not a Georgian. The rarity of 1- and 2-kopeck coins in late-Soviet-period Tbilisi – to the extent that people often substituted the 10-k piece (which had the same diameter as the 2-k) when calling from payphones – probably derives from a similarly-motivated disdain for small change.

an *à la fourchette*. It was to be continued later the same day at the home of Leonidze's grandson, with the same person as tamada.

The case of the "supra bubble" at the Writers' Union indicates, first of all, that wine continues to have special meaning compared to other beverages, and that its consumption requires some sort of ritual framing. I personally doubt that this framing will wither away to the vestigial "cheers" or "tchin-tchin" uttered by Westerns before their first sip of predinner drinks, at least not in my lifetime. At the same time, the noticeable rise in popularity (and quality) of Georgian beer is at least in part attributable to its exceptional status as the only alcohol-containing beverage which does not require ritual framing (Xaindrava 2000: 53-54; Mühlfried 2005a: 62-64).<sup>23</sup>

Second point: As I recall, only men participated in the impromptu supra at the Writers' Union, even though a large number of women attended the reception. It is not surprising, of course, that Georgian women continue to regard the supra as a guy thing, but the co-existence of the two forms – and especially the potential for the kind of simultaneous occurrence described here – presents an interesting new social choice for men: the relatively unconstrained *à-la-fourchette*, where women and men meet on an equal footing, or the rule-bound gender-segregated supra. Presented with options unavailable to their fathers and grandfathers, will young men vote with their feet, so to speak, against the supra?

Finally, one more point that I sense was made by the dissident tamada and his cohort is that there is, frankly, something a bit cold about the *à-la-fourchette*. The supra requires the guests to sit together and not move about – except for the poor women going to and from the kitchen, of course – but the loss of freedom to wander about the room, plate and glass in hand, can contribute to the generation of warmth and camaraderie. The conventions of toast-making and *tamadoba* are certainly confining, and no one denies that they have generated countless hours of uninspired verbiage and insincere praise. But every now and then, an exceptional supra orator reminds one of Goethe's words: *In der Beschränkung zeigt sich erst der Meister*. K'ot'e Čoloq'ašvili, to mention just one illustrious example, is a witty and charming conversationalist under any circumstances, but when he is seated at the head of the table with a glass of wine in his hand, his verbal artistry somehow rises to a higher level. Friends who have shared this experience with me consider a supra with a tamada of this calibre as an "academy" in the truest sense. That may be so, but it is also the stage for the performance of an indigenous art form – even if it is only two centuries old! – that the *à-la-fourchette* could never supplant.

III. The last instance to be discussed happened just two months ago. My friends "Mzia" and "Givi" have three young children, two boys and a girl. After toasting me on the occasion of my birthday, Givi sat his younger boy (5 years old) on his lap, gave him a glass of wine, and directed him to do likewise. He told the child what words to say, and admonished him for holding the glass in his left hand instead of the right, as custom dictates. Then Givi passed the wine-glass to his 8-year-old son, who formulated his own *sadyegrdzelo*. It was brief, just two sentences, but contained some of the habitual formulas, made use of the optative mood, and even referred to me in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person, as

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<sup>23</sup> Among the Georgians of the highland districts of Pshavi and Xevsureti, homemade beer is consumed at shrine festivals, but the bottled beer drunk by city-dwellers inherits none of its ritual significance.

sometimes occurs in formal greetings (but is rare in toasts). The daughter, who was standing just behind her father, was not invited to pronounce a toast.

Several authors in the *Georgian Feast and Civic Society* collection refer to the supra as a special context for the transmission of values, rhetorical skills and behavioral norms to young people, for better or for ill. P'at'a Gurgeniძე makes the remarkable assertion that, whereas Georgians are baptized as Christians in church, "we are baptized as Georgians specifically at the supra" (2000: 56), since it is at the banquet table that values and a sense of ethnic cohesion are instilled. Since the Georgian language does not have a category of grammatical gender, it is not made explicit whether ALL Georgians, or only boys, are "baptized" at the supra. Whatever Gurgeniძე may have had in mind, I would claim that both sexes undergo a sort of baptism, if by that is meant their initiation into certain gender-appropriate ways of speaking, behaving, and even thinking. In the cases of girls, their baptism is one of exclusion from the main events at the supra, to eventually join their mothers, aunts and older sisters in the kitchen.

Of Givi's two sons, the older boy already had some mastery of the language of the *sadygrdzelo*; the younger one still needed coaching. On other occasions as well I have seen boys of similar age rehearsing the spoken formulas and even gestural movements (e.g. raising the right hand with extended index finger, then making a slight twirling motion to punctuate the key word in the phrase) appropriate to supra discourse. In Nodia's view, the oratorical training received by young Georgian males at the supra "academy" finds application well beyond the walls of the dining room or banquet hall. "In large part, the style of public (*sajaro*) discourse is the style of the *sadygrdzelo*" (Nodia 2000: 5). This is a startling assertion, and one that confirms my own impressions of the sort of speech heard at protest rallies and "meetings" (*mit'ingebi*). Like the epideictic oratory of the banquet toast, these monologues aim to reinforce beliefs already held by the audience, rather than convince or convert. Should partisans of an opposing opinion be present, one is far more likely to witness a shouting match than a debate.<sup>24</sup>

Kept out of the spotlight of the banquet table, like Givi's daughter, girls acquire different, less formalized, ways of socializing, and different speech habits from boys, employing discursive styles less marked by the epideictic oratory of the *sadygrdzelo* (cp. Kotthoff 1995: 376-7). In today's Georgia, women are becoming increasingly prominent in the political, media and intellectual arenas, and – as in some Western countries – their academic performance is catching up with and even surpassing that of the males in their cohort. I strongly believe that the daughters and granddaughters of yesterday's shadow-workers will have much to say about how future generations of Georgians socialize, build and maintain networks, speak, and behave, in public.

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<sup>24</sup> One wonders if the influence of the *sadygrdzelo* genre extends even further into the public domain. The case could be made that too much post-Soviet historiography reads like patriotic toasts – accompanied by specious etymologies and the tendentious attribution of toponyms and tribal names – rather than a methodologically respectable reconstruction of the past. See Shnirelman 2001 for some cautionary tales.

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## APPENDIX. Banquet and tamada outside of Georgia

Just how “Georgian” is the supra? Here are four texts which I recently found on the Internet by searching with the keywords “tamada” and “toast”, that is, the two features of the supra of interest to Bregadze (2000) in his paper on the origins of the supra. The passages are quoted verbatim (except for the removal of ethnic identifiers). Can you identify the ethnic group(s) whose banqueting behavior is being described?

Text A. Some strictly observed customs have come down through the ages, and meals may seem somewhat prolonged to Europeans. Before sitting down to the feast, the most respected, experienced and witty of the guests is chosen to be the tamada, who presides over the table. As a rule, he raises the first glass to the person being feted or the guest of honor. Then toasts are drunk to each of the guests in turn, the *tamada* ensuring that seniority is observed, and that none of those present are neglected. It is customary for the person being toasted to thank all those who have complimented him and to drain his glass last. Toasts are drunk to all kinds of things and people: to parents, children, friendship, happiness. A resourceful *tamada*, or any of the guests with his permission, can think up all manner of toasts. The last glass is always drained to the hosts and their home. Toasts are pronounced standing, and every speaker seems to try to outdo the preceding one, although not in the amount of drink. Xs generally drink a lot, but they know when to stop, and it is considered quite disgraceful to be unsteady on one's feet. (Anonymous 2005)

Text B. It's a rare party in X that has no toastmaster – whether it be a dinner party, wedding, birthday party or Jubilee. In the West, people clink glasses of champagne, wine and vodka, wishing each other good health, "Cheers" or "Ciao." It's as simple as that. Not so in X, where a specific person is designated or, sometimes, just assumes, the role of toastmaster. Think of him more like an "emcee," orchestrating and improvising what, in essence, is a dramatic social performance. In the X language, he's called "tamada," (ta-ma-DA) which is derived from two words – "tam" (all, everybody) and "ata" (father), as in "father of all." In essence, that's his assigned responsibility – to connect people with each other, guide them, and provide for their well-being. It's his job to know who all the guests are, at least, all of the important ones, and to introduce them formally by lavishing praise upon them. These speeches are entertaining, informative and spontaneous in nature, and may last up to 10-15 minutes (though it sometimes seems like an eternity). (Garibova 1996)

Text C. Vodka, cognac and champagne are only drunk (ad fundum!) after a toast. The ‘Toast Master’ or ‘Tamada’ will decide on the order of speeches, usually in order of seniority, although foreigners may be given preference. A toast will usually include words of thanks for the hospitality, and generous wishes for the well-being and good health of the host and his family, or any other words appropriate to the occasion. (Wilson 2001)

Text D. Food forms the social fabric of this country, both warp and woof. X people are always looking for an excuse to either host a guest or be one. There's even a name for the man or woman in charge of keeping the evening's food and drink flowing: the tamad or tamada. I don't possess the physical capacity to eat every time I'm asked. My first week here, I was so constantly full, my stomach hurt. (Fearnside 2002)

If you guessed Armenia for A and Azerbaijan for B, your familiarity with Transcaucasian customs is far greater than mine. Special credit goes to those who identified the sources of C and D: Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan, respectively. Whatever its ultimate origins might turn out to be, the institution of the toastmaster, and even the lexeme designating it — tamada — has planted its roots throughout the former Russian Empire.<sup>25</sup> If Bregadze is right, and the Georgian banquet evolved into a compensatory theatre where words replaced actions, and a private sociopolitical microcosm – with the tamada as sovereign – was created in the image of a glorified past, how well does his hypothesis account for the success of the toastmaster outside Georgia? I hope some day someone more qualified than I will give this fascinating problem the attention it deserves.

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<sup>25</sup> The word *tamada* (тамада) in Unicode Cyrillic script garnered 71,700 “hits” on Google.com, mostly from Russian web pages, but also from sites registered in 13 of the 15 former Soviet republics. In Russia, Ukraine and elsewhere, professional *tamady* advertise their services as masters of ceremony for wedding receptions, birthdays and jubilees, where they not only propose toasts, but also entertain the guests with jokes, amusing anecdotes and party games.

# Continuity of a Tradition: A Survey of the Performance Practices of Traditional Polyphonic Songs in Tbilisi<sup>1</sup>

Andrea Kuzmich

## Introduction

Georgian traditional polyphonic singing is thought to be a very old tradition and unique in the world's cultures. Of particular interest is the extraordinary variety of polyphonic music offered by such a small country situated in a part of the world normally associated with monophonic musical practices. Georgian traditional singers and ethnomusicologists, however, fear for the continuity of the tradition (Tchokhonelidze 2003b; Tsursumia 2003; Shugliashvili 2004; Erkomaishvili 2005). The original context of most of the traditional songs has been lost. Singing songs, which was once a part of daily activity, is currently non-existent in many villages. Many of the ensembles that do exist in the rural setting have adopted Soviet-style performing practices which standardize the songs to the detriment of particular regional characteristics. Virtuoso singers have not passed on their techniques and Georgian ethnomusicologists fear the loss of variants, the ability to improvise, and the traditional tuning systems.

In comparison, there has been a recent surge of traditional polyphonic activity in Tbilisi, the capital city. Because this surge primarily manifests itself through the ensemble unit, this survey will focus on the activities of ensembles.<sup>2</sup> In the face of modernity, Tbilisi has become a hub of traditional Georgian polyphonic singing through a younger generation of ensembles. These ensembles, from Tbilisi and neighbouring regions, are resisting musical standardizations, whether it be in structure and form or in intonation.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, their involvement in field and archival

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<sup>1</sup> This is a revised and expanded version of my original paper for the conference Language, History and Cultural Identities in the Caucasus at The School of International Migration and Ethnic Relations, Malmö University. Malmö, Sweden, 17-20 June 2005. I would like to acknowledge grants received from the Social Sciences and Human Research Council of Canada, the Canada Council For the Arts, and York University, which enabled me to continue my research on Georgian polyphony. I am also very grateful to the many Georgians, Canadians, and Americans who helped me in the process, including my research companions Shalva and Nona Makharashvili, the ensemble leader Malkhaz Erkvanidze, and my academic advisor Louise Wrazen. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the Georgians whose words and opinions helped enrich this paper.

<sup>2</sup> This paper is based on research conducted for my Master's Thesis *Issues of Variability and Non-Change in the Polyphonic Songs of Tbilisi Ensembles* (2007). Since 1997, over the course of five visits to Georgia, I have observed and recorded many ensembles; as a singer with two ensembles, Darbazi and Zari, I have participated in many Georgian festivals. More recent trips have also involved interviews with ensemble leaders, ethnomusicologists, and historians.

<sup>3</sup> Intonation in music refers to how notes in a scale are tuned. Modern Western music uses an equal tempered intonation, also known as equal or western temperament, where a scale is divided into twelve equal steps.

research has lead to a conscious decision to present the music in a way that they feel reflects the unique heritage of Georgian polyphony.

In order to understand this heritage and its continuity, this paper begins with an overview of Georgian polyphony contextualizing it musically, historically, and socially. In particular, I concentrate on two enduring social contexts of Georgian polyphony – the *supra* (a Georgian feast) and sacred songs – and reflect on their currency today. I then briefly examine the history of the ensemble before addressing the current tradition in Tbilisi, which involves a discussion of six choirs, Rustavi, Mtiebi, Anchiskhati, Basiani, Lashari and Zedashe.

## Georgian polyphony

Georgian polyphony, which comes in a plethora of regional forms and inexplicably ceases at Georgia's borders, reflects a unity in a historically fragmented land. Georgia is a small Orthodox Christian country with a population of approximately 4.7 million. Its strategic location between the Black Sea and Caspian Sea, coupled with its wealth of natural resources, made it the envy of many more able people, like the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs, the Turks and the Persians. For most of Georgia's history, the play of power between these major forces and the internal competing powers (between the Georgian monarchs and nobles) often resulted in a fragmented country.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps this, and Georgia's mountainous topography, can account for the fifteen different cultural units or provinces which exist in Georgia today (see figure 1). While some of these provinces have a far less developed polyphony (like the northeastern mountains), the fact remains that part singing plays a defining role in the singing traditions of Georgia. In general, if there is more than one singer, there is more than one part. Furthermore, the resulting polyphony often does not allow for a singable melody line. Many Georgian folk songs cannot be hummed. All three parts are equally necessary to hear the song. The harmony, not the melody, defines the song.



Figure 1. The fifteen different provinces of Georgia.

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<sup>4</sup> A simple way of viewing Georgia's historical fragmentation is through a division which splits the country in half (along the Likhi mountain range) with the west historically occupied by the Romans and then the Turks, and the east by the Persians. In actual fact, the play for power in the Caucasus and the resulting Transcaucasian alliances resulted in a much more complicated history of fragmentation. The theme of fragmentation is continuously restated

## Musical Qualities Of Georgian Polyphony

Typically, Georgian polyphony consists of three vocal parts, though there are also two-part and occasionally four-part songs. The three voices of Georgian polyphony are made up of two individual tenor voices – in the sense that there is only one person singing the top voice, and one singing the middle voice – and an accompanying bass section.<sup>5</sup> Having two soloists allows for improvisation and variation in songs, the governing aesthetics in Georgian music.<sup>6</sup> The scalar range of the polyphony is not great. There are, however many dissonant chords. For those in the West accustomed to functional harmony, such dissonance, combined with a missing fourth note, often creates a suspended, poly-tonal feeling with unexpected resolutions.<sup>7</sup> Musical rhythm tends to prevail over textual rhythm, and in some songs from Western Georgia lyrics may be completely omitted.<sup>8</sup>

Georgian polyphony is defined by four types: a drone (either as a held note or a rhythmically repeated note); an *ostinato* (a repeated phrase usually sung to nonsense syllables like “he da va la!”); the parallel movement of parts; or the contrasting movement of parts. Significantly, there is no use of imitative polyphony (Chkhikvadze and Jordania 2005). While a common musical paradigm of intonation and melodic phrasing stretches across the country, each province boasts its own distinct musical dialect. These four types of polyphony are present in almost every region of Georgia; however, specific types of polyphony are more prevalent in certain areas, defining regional characteristics (Chkhikvadze and Jordania 2005). For example, the western lowlands of Guria, Achara and Samegrelo use more contrasting polyphony and the eastern provinces display more parallel harmonies. Similarly, types of polyphony can also be associated with a type of song; for instance, round dances would make use of *ostinati* while a sustained drone-style base is a defining characteristic of a type of celebratory song from the provinces of Kartli and Kakheti.

Traditionally, the performance context of songs are rurally defined and can be categorized by their function in village life: there are work and worship songs, travel songs, round dances, lullabies, and table or drinking songs, among others. But the function of most of these songs began to lose their relevance around the 1930s when technological and administrative changes occurred in the country, then under the Soviet regime; however, they regained purpose and practice in concert settings and around the Georgian table at a traditional feast called the *supra*.

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and discussed in Grigol Sunny's *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (1999). Also see Tourmanoff's differentiation between feudalism and dynasticism (1963).

<sup>5</sup> *Bani*, the Georgian word for bass, “occurs in almost the very first Georgian literary texts, where significantly it means not ‘low voice’ but accompaniment to the leading tune” (Zhordania 1984, 543).

<sup>6</sup> There is a trio tradition in the western provinces of Guria and Samegrelo where the bass can be just as active, if not more active, than the top voices. Improvisation and variation in the bass line would naturally result.

<sup>7</sup> In musical terms, the range of Georgian polyphony is within a tenth and the dissonance is created by three-note chords that are formed with fifths and seconds, or inversions thereof. Inner cadences generally consist of major or minor triads, open thirds or fifths. Ending cadences involve fifths or unisons.

<sup>8</sup> Text tends to be more important in the Eastern mountains, where a solo singing tradition prevails.

## Polyphony and the Supra

Singing songs at a *supra*, a traditional Georgian feast, represents a historical association of singing with feasting and possibly the longest surviving original context for performing Georgian songs. The *supra* is a secular celebration with religious overtones.<sup>9</sup> *Supras* tend to be massive feasts and can last for days; but if there is a need to celebrate and no means, a *supra* may also consist of a single bottle of vodka and some salty fish. In either case, a series of elaborate and meaningful toasts, somewhat like an extended form of grace, accompanies the *supra*. Songs, in turn, accompany the toasts.<sup>10</sup> After the finale of the Festival of Gurian Song in 2004, John Graham, an American Fulbright scholar studying chant in Tbilisi, observed the following on his December 14, 2004 blog: “One wonders if the concert were just an excuse for the party, [the *supra*,] where three times more singing happens than in the concert.” As suggested by Graham and others,<sup>11</sup> the nature of the *supra* – a table where everyone is seated together, and everyone is acknowledged and honoured by each other through toasts – forms a social cohesion non-existent in other forms of social gatherings. Arguably, this cohesion is similar to the social cohesion one experiences when singing Georgian folk songs. For many Georgians, their traditional polyphonic songs act as a metaphor for love.<sup>12</sup>

The *supra*’s lengthy association with hospitality, collectivity, and Christianity continues to represent the best way to experience Georgian songs. At the Second International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony in 2004, a performing group from the Netherlands, Schola Cantorum Brabantiae, had never heard Georgian polyphony but became very interested during the course of the festival. Their leader, Dr. Rebecca Stewart, a specialist in medieval music, asked whether a workshop could be set up for their choir members before their return home. Rather than teach songs and lyrics in a semi-formalized setting, members of the Anchiskhati and Zedashe ensembles organized a small *supra*, believing this was the best way to introduce Georgian polyphony.

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<sup>9</sup> It is questionable how long the current form of the *supra* has been active in Georgia. A recently published article, from January 2005, alarmed many Georgian scholars with the suggestion that this tradition is a nineteenth-century “invented tradition” to fulfill “the function of creating and reinforcing national identity” (Muhlfried, 2005, 17).

<sup>10</sup> For a historical analysis of the *supra* and songs see Gotsiridze et al (2006).

<sup>11</sup> See JohninGeorgia blogspot, December 24, 2004. Also See Tuite’s “Autocrat of the Banquet Table” (2005).

<sup>12</sup> In an interview with singer and ethnomusicologist Nato Zumbadze in the fall of 2004, she continuously stressed that singing Georgian polyphonic songs is not just an act of singing: “It is friendship as well because you can feel these harmonies.”



Figure 2a-c. Members of Anchiskhati and Zedashe host a supra for Netherlands's Schola Cantorum Brabantiae after the Second International Symposium for Traditional Polyphony.

## Georgian Chants – Religious Contexts

Sacred singing represents another enduring context for Georgian polyphony.<sup>13</sup> A separate term *galoba* differentiates sacred songs (or chants) from secular songs, marking a clear distinction in the musical form as well as its function. This separation is significant in establishing a deeply held cultural appreciation for music through the role chant played within the Georgian Church, as chanters were professional musicians and highly esteemed. There are even historical records of social mobility granted to those blessed with good voices who could teach chanting to the children of royalty (Karbelashvili 1898, 61-7). In comparison to folk songs, chants are more reserved. They use no *ostinati*, fast tempos, elaborate ornamentation, or impressive improvisation. Despite their separate function and stylistic distinctions, chants and

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<sup>13</sup> Rayfield dedicates the first three chapters of his book *The Literature of Georgia* to the historical importance of Georgian hymns and observes that they were sung “to a complex polyphonic music that pre-dates, perhaps by centuries, the development of polyphony in the Mediterranean” (2000, 28). Collections of chants date to the tenth century and historical documentation from the eleventh century demonstrates an already established neumatic system of notation with unique indigenous terms for each of the three voices of Georgian sacred polyphony (Pirtskhalava 2003, 120-2). See also *Sacred Polyphony* page on the website of the Research Centre for Traditional Polyphony <http://www.polyphony.ge> (1 February 2007).

folk songs are thought to be very closely related and share the same three-voice format which spiritually represents the holy trinity.<sup>14</sup>

Georgian musicologists tend to theorize that the sacred and secular polyphony originate from the same source.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, they both developed together,<sup>16</sup> as there was never a differentiation between the secular and sacred languages which existed in Western Europe. While there was a system of notation that accompanied the professional chanting tradition, recent studies have revealed that the notation was referential and not fixed (Ositashvili 2003, 478). Thus, chanting reflected characteristics of collective music making, anonymity, and variety. It was an oral tradition, and for a millennium it coexisted with, influenced and was influenced by the folk tradition, resulting in regional schools of chant paralleling the different dialect regions (ibid, 479).

The chanting tradition was threatened numerous times throughout Georgia's war-torn past. Chant revivals were not uncommon after wars that resulted in serious destruction.<sup>17</sup> But the most recent occupations – starting with the Russians and their displacement of Georgian Orthodoxy in favour of Russian Orthodoxy, followed by the Soviets with their programmed atheism and religious intolerance – had dire consequences for the chant tradition. Despite a short-lived revival movement at the end of the nineteenth century, by the middle of the twentieth century, the chanting tradition was lost.<sup>18</sup>

In post-Soviet Georgia, however, there appears an earnest religious revival where Christian Orthodoxy is deeply connected to the Georgian identity and experienced

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<sup>14</sup> The holy trinity represents the three forms of God in the father, the son, and the holy spirit. "The God who reveals Himself to humanity is one God equally in three distinct modes of existence, yet remains one through all eternity" (Livingstone 2006).

<sup>15</sup> It is suggested that soon after the sacred texts were translated to Georgian (something forbidden in European Christianity), the new Georgian 'edition' of Christianity formed in the sixth century, with secular music deeply influencing the chanting system through its common scales, intonational vocabulary, cadence construction and polyphonic form (Ositashvili, 2003, 476). Drawing a literary analogy, Rayfield reflects on the use of pagan-folk poetry in Georgian hymnography (2000, 28).

<sup>16</sup> Tchokhonelidze speculates that the Christian Church's introduction to the concept of an individual creator developed a qualitative shift in Georgian musical-aesthetic thinking. "The new type of thinking enhanced in people the feeling of their own individuality and perception which in its turn led to the desire to artistically express their emotions and feelings." In folk music, this expression resulted in an increase in melody, plasticity and musical lexical stock (Tchokhonelidze, 2003a, 107).

<sup>17</sup> See Shugliashvili (2003).

<sup>18</sup> Towards the end of the nineteenth century, a nationalistic intelligentsia movement arose in response to the disappearance of folk and nationalistic culture. Chanting, the sacred singing practice which was a professional oral tradition, was recognized as an endangered heritage in the late nineteenth century and a few committed intellectuals, such as Pilimon Koridze and Maxime Sharadze, made great strides to record the sacred songs in Western notation. What survives of the chant tradition today primarily consists of these manuscripts, which endured the Soviet cultural policy only under the guise of a national cultural heritage (interview with Graham and Togonidze, 2005). The link between the Russian occupation of the nineteenth century, the nationalist movement that resulted, and the survival of Georgian culture in the Soviet and post-Soviet time is an interesting area of study. I have explored some of these ideas in chapter three of my Master's thesis, while Manana Tabidze (1999) discusses this link with respect to the Georgian language in a paper called "Sociolinguistic Aspects of the Development of Georgian."

through all walks of life. In Tbilisi, churches are filled with old and young, and chanting accompanies the numerous bi-weekly services. While the tradition no longer exists in its oral form, as chanters rely on western notation to perform, the fact that the vespers and liturgy can once more be sung, by both men and women, has warmed the hearts of many Georgians. Interestingly, the singing practice rarely stops at the church doors with church repertoire. Often chanters will gather to sing through folk repertoire as well – even if its just outside in the courtyard, at an impromptu *supra*, or as part of an ensemble based in the church (Graham 2005b). Out of the five young Tbilisi ensembles I am about to discuss, three are associated with a specific church and chant for weekly services.

## Historical aspects of the ensemble

In Georgia, the concert stage and ensemble format was often associated with foreign influences that were believed to be detrimental to traditional polyphony. But this view overlooks historical information that points to an indigenous ensemble practice. While the first ethnographic choir organized in Tbilisi in 1885 was hailed at the time as a remarkable historical move for the preservation of national Georgian culture (Chavchavadze 2005 English translation of 1886), the concertization process has been repeatedly criticized for imposing Western-European aesthetics on traditional Georgian music.<sup>19</sup> The origins of the Georgian ensemble, however, trace back further than that initial 1886 Tbilisi performance. At the end of the nineteenth century there was already an established village-based practice where ensembles would perform at community functions, most likely in the context of a *supra*.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, historical descriptions of the secular ensemble are found in an early-nineteenth-century encyclopedia called *Kalmasoba*.<sup>21</sup> The early appearance of organized choirs in a village setting suggest that songs not only functioned outside of the typical calendric or life cycle rituals but were developed for their aesthetic values. Incorporate the relationship between the folk practice and professional chant, as reviewed in the previous section, and it seems highly plausible that the ensemble practice played a significant role in the development and maintenance of traditional polyphony.

In an attempt to “revitalize” traditional polyphony in its secular and sacred forms, state- and NGO-funded organizations and independent ensembles have released an unprecedented number of publications (CDs and books) over the past few years. All of these publications have been exceptional for nationals and foreigners alike to better understand the heritage of Georgian polyphony. In particular there have been a series of books documenting the musical lives of master singers – singers who know all three parts to hundreds of songs – from Guria and Samegrelo. The series is entitled *kartuli khalkhuri simgheris ost’at’ebi*, [Masters of Georgian Folk Song] (Ch’okhnelidze and Rodonaia 2004a; 2004b; 2004c; Rodonaia 2005a; 2005b; 20005c) and proves an excellent source on the ensemble tradition at the turn of the twentieth century. Two important points arise from these publications. The first deals with how these master singers, who were also the leaders of popular village-based

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<sup>19</sup> For an example, see Araqishvili (2005 reprint of 1925, 30).

<sup>20</sup> Published recordings of these popular village-based ensembles can be found on a 2001 CD called *Drinking Horns and Gramophones*, which features performances from 1907-1914. For more detailed descriptions of these ensembles see Linich (2001) and Erkomaishvili (1987).

<sup>21</sup> I have not seen the encyclopedia myself, but it was referenced through the Research Centre for Traditional Polyphony website <http://www.polyphony.ge/en/natpolyphony/history.php> (1 February 2007).

ensembles, were highly religious and well versed in chant. The second is the how these masters would search for lost variants and try to preserve their unique regional style. Interestingly, the same two points can be applied to the members of today's Tbilisi ensembles.<sup>22</sup>

## Tbilisi ensembles

The current musical situation in Tbilisi reflects an interesting dynamic between tradition and modernity. While the practice of Georgian polyphony in the rural regions is threatened by migration to the capital and the infiltration of pop culture, according to musician-scholar-teacher Nato Zumbadze, there is a growing interest in traditional polyphony in Tbilisi, especially among the youth (interview 2004).<sup>23</sup> Today, a number of young Tbilisi ensembles are following the practices of the village-based ethnographic ensembles of the first half of the twentieth century. The following examines five of these ensembles, Mtiebi, Anchiskhati, Basiani, Lashari, and Zedashe. In order to contextualize the changes of the young groups, I begin with an overview of the most internationally successful folk group, Rustavi. As a state-funded choir of only twelve people, Rustavi represents something of a cross-over between the mass choirs of the Soviet era and the young Tbilisi choirs of contemporary Georgia.

Led by Anzor Erkomaishvili, Rustavi was founded in 1968 and acquired State status in 1972.<sup>24</sup> Rustavi once set a precedent for its small membership of only twelve talented male singers and its repertoire, which included original variants and some chants. But whether it is because of their official state status, their partnership with a large dance troupe, or their international success, Rustavi now embodies something of a double vision, where it represents the polished generic "classical-academic" ensemble that replaced the role of the mass ensemble in the late-Soviet period,<sup>25</sup> as well as the diversity of a living tradition by embracing variation and improvisation. Rustavi is labelled a classical-academic ensemble for its use of Western-art classical tone and intonation, its doubling of top voices (thereby preventing any possibility of improvisation), and its repetition of the same variants. Conversely, it also performs

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<sup>22</sup> While Tbilisi ensembles reflect a more varied repertoire in terms of the regions they represent, often ensembles specialize in a particular regions. For example, Anchiskhati (whose director is from Imereti) is praised more for its renditions of Imeretian, Megrelian and Gurian songs. On the other hand, there is much enthusiasm for the Kakhetian songs that Lashari sings, whose leader is incidentally from Kakheti.

<sup>23</sup> It should be noted that Zumbadze is not talking of Tbilisi in general, but of the musical and academic environment that encompass her own life. Even with this qualification, her observations point to some trends within the practices in Tbilisi.

<sup>24</sup> Anzor comes from a lineage of master singers. Rustavi's prototype was Gordela, a student ensemble based out of the Tbilisi conservatory. Anzor was a founding member of Gordela, which defied the practice of mass ensembles in the Soviet era, studied from archived recordings and master singers, conducted field trips, and introduced chants to the Soviet-Georgian public. Chants were strictly forbidden during the Soviet era, but in the early 60s, when Gordela formed, the Khrushchev thaw allowed some leeway (interview with Erkomaishvili, 2005). It seems these chants were not part of the oral heritage but were compositions which were based on the oral heritage (ongoing conversation with Graham). Later when Rustavi was performing and recording these chants, the situation was not as lax and Rustavi had to camouflage the chants by mislabeling them (interview with Erkomaishvili, 2005).

<sup>25</sup> To contextualize the role of the mass ensemble see Buchanan (2005) and Noll (1997).

some numbers with fine regional definition, featuring non-western temperament and tone, improvisation, and unique variants. Such cases occur when soloists can be heard – almost always in a Gurian trio,<sup>26</sup> sometimes in a Kakhetian song, or any other arrangement of a song that uses just single voices on the top two parts – but in these cases, it is entirely dependant on the soloists.<sup>27</sup> Rustavi's success led to the creation of Rustavi-like ensembles. In Tbilisi, some of these choirs include Kolkheti, Ensemble Tbilisi, Pazisi, and Pesvebi among many others.

In the 1980s, the aesthetic began to change. Authentic representation of the different regions became more important, as is demonstrated by Ensemble Mtiebi. Formed in 1980, single musician/folklorist Edisher Garaqanidze,<sup>28</sup> leading a group of non-musicians, proposed to bring to the stage "the genuine 'peasant' form of the music." With the idea that the peasant is also a singer, poet, dancer and instrumentalist, the ensemble takes a more theatrical approach, employing colourful costumes, unusual stage blockings, and numerous dance numbers. Originally composed of all men, the group's recent performances also included women, and used different configurations for different songs, sometimes featuring only women, only men, or a combination of the two.

While Mtiebi's performances are exciting for their theatrical approach, their lack of musicianship is unable to represent the diversity of complex musical forms scattered throughout the country. The group, however, is highly respected by Georgian musicians and ethnomusicologists for their work, as they come to the stage with an openness of heart and a spirit that reflects their love for their heritage. Their performances thus appear "alive" as the audience feels the sweetness, the playfulness, the solemnity, or other aspects of different ritual enactments on the stage.

Mtiebi also has a unique and active relationship with the regions. The group not only studies village music through field expeditions, but it also presents concerts in the villages, giving a theatrical presentation of Georgia's national heritage back to the folk.<sup>29</sup> Exploring this reciprocal relationship sheds light on the nature of the ensemble and Georgian traditional music.

The rural regions of Georgia have not been isolated from the effects of the global economy. Resulting market shifts have affected livelihoods and villagers have had to leave their homes in order to find work, the bulk of them heading to Tbilisi. Bearers of traditional culture were not exempt from this migration, and there now appears to

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<sup>26</sup> According to Tristan Sikharulidze, a master singer from Guria, Rustavi sings Gurian songs the best among the Tbilisi ensembles. This is because the members of Rustavi are from Guria (interview, 2005). This is not true of all the members in the ensemble, but when Rustavi records a Gurian song, it features Gurians, and often Tristan Sikharulidze and his cousin Guri are invited as guests to record with them. This brings to light a more recent musical development with Basiani. Giorgi Donadze, Basiani's leader, had the foresight in 2005 to invite Sergo Urushadze, the grandson of the master singer Carlo Urushadze, into his ensemble, which has made their performances sound far more Gurian.

<sup>27</sup> While I was always thrilled to hear these variants on recordings of Rustavi, over the course of four major festivals, I have rarely heard Rustavi perform these unique variants live.

<sup>28</sup> Edisher Garaqanidze and almost all his family died in a tragic car crash in 1998. His son Giorgi, a survivor of the crash, has since taken over leadership of the ensemble.

<sup>29</sup> Giorgi described how one year Mtiebi went to a village at Christmas time and sung Alilo (Christmas carols) house to house, as the regional tradition had dictated in the past. Apparently, young members of the village followed Mtiebi around and learned the Alilo so that the following year, these village youth renewed the Christmas carolling tradition themselves (interview with Garaqanidze, 2005).

be a growing number of singers and musicians in Tbilisi, as can be surmised from the increased level of musical activity in the capital over the past six years. Occurring at the same time as this cultural vacuum, freedom from the Soviet regime has breathed a new life and understanding into the search for Georgia's historical heritage. The model of the classical-academic ensemble, as exemplified by Rustavi, which also penetrated and left its mark on the village ensembles, is being rejected in Tbilisi but not yet in the villages. As such, there seems to be a backward cultural exchange, where Tbilisi appears to be hosting the more authentic ensembles while rural regions of Georgia have ensembles that are more Rustavi-like. In an interview with the prominent ethnomusicologist and singer Nato Zumbadze, she reflects on this and the "rules" of traditional singing. It appears to her that life is *pirikit* (reversed) as "the rules are coming from the villages, normally, but now maybe rules – even rules of performance are coming from Tbilisi"<sup>30</sup> (interview 2004).

There are still certain regions which embody the more traditional "rules". These tend to be areas where master singers or singing families have survived, such as the Sikharulidzes in Makvaneti, Guria; the Urushadzes in Likhauri, Guria; or Andro Simashvili in Aratana, Kakheti. Unfortunately, these singers are few and far between. Their scarcity and the age of the master singers is what drives Georgian ethnomusicologists to record their histories and the numerous song variants and singing techniques they have retained. But, as is obvious from Zumbadze's statement on the village tradition, she has thought considerably and formed definite opinions about ensembles and what their 'traditional' practice should be. Moreover, her views are shared by other Georgian ethnomusicologists and musicians. This stresses not only an interesting dynamic of the ensemble tradition but also the significant role of Tbilisi ensembles.

As mentioned, Mtiebi has a unique relationship with the villages because of their involvement in the rural regions. But what Zumbadze speaks of does not apply only to Mtiebi. It applies to all of the young ensembles I reference in this study.

Formed in 1987, the choir of the Anchiskhati Church is the most experienced of these ensembles.<sup>31</sup> The aim of these twelve musicians is to "restore" the specific performance manners and styles of the different regions in Georgia. Sonically, they are very different from Rustavi. They are not professionally trained singers, although each has formal training in music. One might describe their vocal production as using the natural or village voice. Their blended tone is not as round, contains more audible overtones, and sometimes has a nasal quality. Individual timbres also vary considerably. This, however, is in keeping with the spirituality of the music. In my 2004 interview with the leader of Anchiskhati, Malkhaz Erkvandze (who also happens to be a highly respected chant specialist) said "real Georgian folk music comes from happiness... from the soul." He continued to explain that the voice, however it sounds, will sound beautiful as long as one can hear the spirit of the singer;

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<sup>30</sup> Zumbadze's use of the word 'rules' is a reflection of her struggle with speaking in English rather than an authoritarian approach to music. It should be noted that Zumbadze is possibly one of Tbilisi's busiest ethnomusicologist. She leads numerous expeditions into the villages every year; she heads the ethnographic classes in the Tbilisi Conservatory, she publishes prolifically and she is a founding member of the women's ensemble Mzetamze.

<sup>31</sup> There is a little confusion around the Anchiskhati name. It appears that under the same membership, the choir has assumed the name Dzveli Kiloebi Folk Choir for performing folk songs. The two names are almost always tied together and among the Georgians and Georgian music listeners the choir is simply referred to as Anchiskhati.

then the music will be alive and not dead (interview, 2004). One of the most significant aspects of Anchiskhati is their dual role as chanters for the Anchiskhati church, the oldest surviving church in Tbilisi.<sup>32</sup> After three generations of silent churches and religious intolerance during the Soviet regime, Anchiskhati were instrumental in the chant revival.

Anchiskhati's emphasis from the beginning has been to learn the music in its social context. According to Erkvanidze, "You have to touch the people who keep these traditions and to [not] know this [it] is impossible; you cannot understand the soul of this music". In differentiating Anchiskhati from Mtiebi, Erkvanidze continues to explain: "We approached it [traditional Georgian polyphony] from a somewhat different angle. We returned Georgian church chants to our people and in addition, professionalism in performance came from us, which Mtiebi did not have" (interview, 2005). This professionalism, which possibly may be inspired by the history of professional sacred music, results in some very complex and sophisticated pieces sung with remarkable skill and versatility.

By studying archived recordings in conjunction with field expedition, Anchiskhati places emphasis on studying the intonation, the tone, the dialect and inflections that define their ancestor's singing style. The group may add some embellishments but do not veer outside of traditional frameworks. That being said, Erkvanidze, in his scholarly and practical work on chants and their modes recognizes that once a certain level of revival has been established, a certain amount of improvisation is required so that the tradition can stay alive and new modes can develop (Erkvanidze 2006). Despite the fact that Erkvanidze feels Anchiskhati is far from renewing Georgian traditional polyphony, their approach and philosophy has provided inspiration and direction to the numerous other choirs in Tbilisi, such as Basiani, Lashari, and Zedashe.

Basiani is the most impressive. Their unique sound and the changes they made since their inception in 2000 make them an interesting study. Originally, they were comparable to Rustavi (interview with Erkvanidze, 2004) but at a festival in 2002, they impressed the national and international audience through their genuine performance of some diverse regional styles. They do not sound like professional Europeans yet have a tightness in performance. They do not use an operatic-styled vocal production, a complaint often directed towards the Rustavi-modeled choirs. Their tone is natural and distinct but not as piercing as Anchiskhati. In 2004, they lived up to the expectation they made in 2002, even though this time they seemed to perform less musically impressive songs. Still, they maintained a level of intensity in their singing. They also incorporated some traditional movement, a round dance, into their stage performance. They continued to grow and in 2006, they again set a precedent at an international festival, performing songs which featured subtle development, complex rhythm, and unusual intonation.<sup>33</sup> Along with studying from

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<sup>32</sup> It is reported that in 1987 Anchiskhati was secretly studying the chants of the liturgy in a secluded monastery for fear of the KGB. In a dramatic turn of events, a year later they received the blessing from Georgia's Patriarch to openly chant for the services at the sixteenth-century Anchiskhati Church in Tbilisi (Graham 2005a, vii).

<sup>33</sup> As part of my M.A. thesis, I performed a comparative analysis of contemporary and archived performances of the same song. I was trying to determine stylistic changes over time, and intonation was one of these stylistic elements. In the performances I observed, contemporary intonation was closer to the Western standard equal temperament. For more information consult Chapters 4 and 5 of my M.A. thesis.

archived recordings and from Malkhaz Erkvanidze, they dedicate themselves to studying from the great master singers scattered throughout the country; however, not all the members are included in these meetings. Moreover, they do not conduct field expeditions, although the leader, Giorgi Donadze, has collected some unique songs from his parent's village in Racha.

The reason for these downfalls in accessing the roots of the singing tradition stems from the difficulties in managing an independent choir in an unprosperous post-Soviet reality. There is no support from the Georgian government as there once was. Putting on performances requires finding a hall, which may very well incur rental costs not necessarily recouped from the admission sales. The impoverished Georgian economy, with an average monthly salary of \$58.50 US in the summer of 2004 (lower than its neighbours Azerbaijan's and Armenia's of \$98.7US and \$78.7 US respectively) (Fuller 2005), has been hit even harder with recent Russian sanctions over spy allegations. Yet somehow, amid all this difficulty, there is a growing number of these youths collectively finding the means to participate in such choirs. Basiani is better off than most, as their official status as the choir of Georgia's Patriarch not only provides the group a regular place to rehearse but also employs a number of the singers as chanters in the services at Sameba Cathedral, the largest church in all of the South Caucasus.

Lashari is another of these very accomplished young ensembles whose success can be attributed not only to the talent and dedication of its members, but also to a benefactor who funded the choir for two years. The choir first formed in 1994, but according to the group's leader Giorgi Ushikishvili, the most recent inception took root in 2002. Ushikishvili – also the director of the Folklore State Centre of Georgia – is a young, confident orator who has formed many opinions about traditional music. He truly fears for the loss of the tradition in the rural regions and complains that too many ensembles, the ones which follow a classical-academic model, are not thinking. He respects groups that try to introduce certain elements of improvisation into their performance and that work to popularize unique or forgotten variants. And like Malkhaz, he values the ability to touch the people who own the tradition. Reflecting on a month-long field expedition which involved the entire choir, Ushikishvili affirms that “studying in such a way – in the environment where the song was born – is very important” (2005). Unfortunately, funding did not last for Lashari, and when I last spoke to the leader in 2005, the ensemble had not conducted any more field expeditions or made any new recordings, although they do continue to perform.

Zedashe is not really a Tbilisi-based ensemble, but its close proximity and ability to add to this account of the ensemble tradition makes its mention worthwhile. Zedashe, officially established in 2000, is a group of seven women and men from the town of Signaghi in the neighbouring province of Kakheti about an hour and a half drive east of Tbilisi. This mixed gender ensemble – which involves highland specialization (e.g. songs from the upper parts of Kakheti, Svaneti, Tusheti, Khevsureti), different configurations within the group, and dance movement<sup>34</sup> – is lead by an impressive young Kakhetian woman, Ketevan Mindorashvili. The

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<sup>34</sup> The incorporation of dance in particular is quite popular among these Tbilisi ensembles, as is demonstrated by both Basiani and Anchiskhati who have placed more emphasis on this on recent years. This presentation of dance is different than the Rustavi model, where a dance troupe is a separate professional affiliated organization. Instead, all the singers take part in the dance, most often being a round dance which adds subtle if not complex layers of syncopation to the performance.

ensemble's roots can be traced back to 1994, when Ketevan, who was fifteen years old at the time, organized a group of singers to chant at St Nino's Monastery in Signaghi. Before long, folk songs and their history started to intrigue members of the group. When I interviewed her in the summer of 2005, she took a moment to sing a style of ornamentation which comes from Kiziqi. For her, singing this style is most significant, as Kiziqi is a region of Kakheti where people were free of the feudal system. According to her, Upper Svaneti is another region in Georgia which remained free, and three other members of Zedashe are from this region. Hence their speciality in these songs has a deeper meaning, a meaning which is further enhanced by the emphasis on lyrical development from the regions and the epic poems they bear.

One of the interesting aspects surrounding the success of this group is their association with a Vermont-based folk singing organization called Village Harmony. The organization has managed American and European tours for the ensemble as well as summer singing workshops in Signaghi (Zedashe's home town) for foreigners. In this respect they have affiliated themselves with an international community that indirectly acts as their patrons.



*Figure 3. Anchiskhati incorporating dance into their singing performances at the Third International Symposium of Traditional Polyphony, 24-29 September, at the Tbilisi Vano Saradjishvili State Conservatoire. (photograph by Ray Kinoshita)*

## Conclusion

The above survey is by no means complete. There are numerous ensembles in Tbilisi and the surrounding areas which I have not discussed, though most have not had the success or profile of the ones I just reviewed. I have focused on some young ensembles that appear to be defining a new direction for Tbilisi. But they are part of a long history of ensembles which needs to be further explored. To better contextualize the Tbilisi ensemble practice in Georgia's unique musical heritage, research should also consider the nature of the ensembles' repertoire (which types of polyphonic songs are included and which are not). Future study could also involve musicological comparisons of performances between contemporary ensembles, archived recordings, and field recordings. And of course there is the most obvious concern for how the Tbilisi ensembles will continue to function in economically-challenged post-Soviet Georgia.

Thus I come to the end of my survey with a number of new insights not just on the performance practice in Tbilisi, but on the state of Georgian traditional polyphony. Because the recent increase in traditional music activity in Tbilisi can be witnessed

through ensembles, my study has had to focus on the ensemble format in its review of traditional polyphonic practices. This is different from the usual analyses, which recognize the context of the songs as defined by their performance and function within traditional village life. As observed, the ensemble practice has not been limited to the concert stage, where it became stigmatized as a Western European infringement on the musical development of traditional Georgian polyphony. More likely, an early established ensemble practice, influenced by the professional chant tradition, had an instrumental role in the development and maintenance of traditional music. The series of books on master singers from Guria and Samegrelo and other publications on archived material demonstrate comparable practices between the master singers from the past and the young Tbilisi ensembles discussed in this paper. Except for Rustavi, these ensembles are formed out of an independent group of enthusiasts committed to spending time researching and recovering unique variants of songs. They are resisting musical standardization, study with master singers and run their own field expeditions. Particularly interesting is the sense of preservation in both contemporary Georgia as well as the Georgia from 100 years ago. This leads to a number of question: is this a reaction to Georgia's history of invasions and occupations? Are the singers adopting survival practices learned from their history of chant revivals? And were there any other preservation movements of secular polyphony in Georgia's past?

Part of the answer to these questions probably lies in how the Georgian Orthodox version of Christianity continues to play a defining role in the ensemble members' lives and national heritage. It appears that this freedom to express their spirituality has given individuals the strength and energy to move forward with their traditional music. It is also significant that this impetus comes at a time when the economic means have left a cultural vacuum in the villages. With a significant population emigrating from the village to the capital, the young Tbilisi ensembles have become the main bearers of the tradition. There is a saying in Georgia that the best chanters were the best folk singers. That the two could share such a relationship paved a different path for the folk songs of Georgia, one where highly skilled singers who were also deeply spiritual individuals would foster the development of the folk heritage. Where this relationship was historically established in the village setting, today it is also found in Tbilisi.

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# **An Attempt to Create an Ethnic Group: Identity Change Dynamics of Muslimized Meskhetians**

**Marine Beridze and Manana Kobaidze**

This paper presents a history of the process of identity formation of the population who lived in the territory of historical Meskheta,<sup>1</sup> in which the inhabitants were subject to political experiments over several centuries. These experiments, aimed at changing the ethnic identity of the inhabitants, were conducted by various political groups and for a variety of reasons. This population, which has regularly been subjected to violence as well as political and economic pressure, has twice been deported: first from Georgia in 1944 and then from Uzbekistan in 1991. Nowadays they are spread in Uzbekistan, Russia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Turkey and the USA. They are either referred to as “Turkish Meskhetians” or as “Meskhetian Turks.”

We focus on the history of those deportees who are faced with what can be described as an identity crisis. The paper is based on historical and oral sources, that is to say, the data on deported persons presented in publications and narratives as well as the account of persons still living in Samtskhe-Javakheti who witnessed the deportation in 1944. We do not aim to conduct a quantitative investigation.

The basic issues briefly examined in the paper are as follows:

- Identity as a complex of intertwined and mutually determined features;
- Language shift and identity change through religious conversion that in turn was enforced by economic and other means;
- Self-appraisal of the mother tongue as a reflection of embedded consciousness of the correlation between the mother tongue on the one hand and ethnic and national identity on the other.

## **Identity as a complex of intertwined and mutually determined features**

It has often been stated that ethnic identity may be maintained even if some of its features are lost: “Just as ethnicity does not inevitably require language (or any other specific feature) as a component, nor does nationalism” (Edwards 1994, 132). This statement implies the assumption that the core essence of ethnic identity is the memory and the awareness of one’s own ethnic belonging. Such important features of ethnic or national identity as territory and language may be lost, while the memory of ethnic belonging is retained, and adherence to the ancestral ethnic group is preserved. Some well-known examples of this include Irish identity, which has been preserved without retaining Irish as a mother tongue (Myhill 2006, 186); and Jewish identity, preserved without retaining any territorial attachment and without maintaining Hebrew as the mother tongue (Myhill 2006, 101). On the other hand, in cases where the development

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<sup>1</sup> S Southwestern Georgia, including an area known as Samtskhe-Javakheti

of ethnic identity is undertaken, we can clearly assume the revival of features that are lacking or, at least, the attempt to revive such features. Language planning in Ireland and in the EU for the revitalisation of Irish (Craith 2003, 74-81; Chriost 2005, 257-308; Chriost 2005, 309-312) as well as the creation of Israel and the revival of Hebrew in Israel (Craith 2003, 74; Myhill 2004, 73-97) is an obvious instance of such a development.

Incomplete, erratic identity status may cause instability in the group situation and in that of adjacent groups, while the desire to restore an entire complex of identity features on the collective level is a sign of group vitality. Often territorial and political claims comprise an essential part of the revival, sometimes at the expense of the rights of other groups. A traditionally formed cluster of features may be a determining factor for a group's political orientation in different situations.

Another counter method of achieving a stable balanced identity may be to accept (or in some cases even to strive towards) the loss of the remaining features of the previous identity and, by merging into another *ethnos*, to obtain a new identity. Such a shift often starts with a change in one of the features, which usually induces a change in other features, and, in appropriate demographic and political circumstances, leads to a change of ethnic affiliation. Change of civic and national identities may occur within one generation, while change of ethnic belonging requires several hundreds of years of cultural and demographic interference. The Muslimized Meskhetians represent a clear case of such interference. That different political groups may strive towards a balanced identity in order to attain various goals is, however, another matter.

### **Varieties of linguistic and religious divergence of ethnic groups**

It is well documented that the correlation between ethnic identity, religion, and mother tongue is not always simple (Fishman 1972; Fishman 2000, 1-22; Smith 1998, 112-115; 129-131). Various cases of divergent groups already formed as linguistic, confessional or political societies are attested:

- One language, different confessions - preserved consciousness of one ethnic belonging (Ossetians - Christians and Muslims). The lack of a state may be the reason for preserving a shared ethnic identity, uniting those strongly associated to either Christianity or Islam. The separatist struggle for territorial secession from Georgia and attachment to Russia also makes the religious aspect less important.
- One language, different confessions - consciousness of partially different ethnic belonging (Kurds and Yezids). The history and the context of the split played a role in the partial ethnic divergence between these two groups.
- Different languages, one confession - preserved consciousness of one ethnic belonging (Greek-speaking Greeks and Turkish-speaking Greeks in Georgia)
- Different languages, one confession - consciousness of different ethnic belonging - individual cases of Russified Georgians in Georgia.

There is one more explanation of group divergence: When a split is caused for non-linguistic reasons within linguistically closely related groups that are striving to break up and form their own national identities, it may subsequently be claimed that these groups are also linguistically discrete. Recently, this phenomenon has been observed concerning the Bosnian, Serbian and Croatian languages (Busch 2004, 7-11). For this reason, with regard to the definition of regional or minority languages, the Explanatory

Report to the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages states the following:

This question depends not only on strictly linguistic considerations, but also on psycho-sociological and political phenomena which may produce a different answer in each case. Accordingly, it will be left to the authorities concerned within each state, in accordance with its own democratic processes, to determine at what point a form of expression constitutes a separate language. (Explanatory Report, p. 32)

As Fishman noted, “To abandon the language may be viewed as an abandonment not only of the traditional doings and knowings, but as an abandonment of personal ancestral kin and cultural ancestral heroes per se” (Fishman 2000, 5). Furthermore, when the division into two groups has reached the stage where they differ in language, faith, and ethnic consciousness, to allude to the shared ethnic origin of these groups and attempts to “restore the historical truth” and “convert” the whole group to their “original abandoned” identity would be to fly in the face of reality. Such an expectation would be an illusion based on belief in ethnicity as a purely primordial and static phenomenon. The historical lesson of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia should be a sufficient warning against such beliefs:

Serbian and Croatian reactions to the Bosnian Moslems presented clear examples of how a cyclical view of time was represented... According to Serbians and Croatians, “Moslems had abandoned their “true” identity; they represented the historic Fall of both the Serb and Croat nations. Now, with the disintegration of Yugoslavia, both groups had a golden opportunity to right the wrongs of history, to join former national lands and people to an enlarged national state... Bosnian Moslems did consider themselves to be a defined national group. While they were willing to share power with Serbs and Croats within the country, they had no intention of being incorporated into an expanded Serbian or Croatian state. (Macdonald 2003, 223)

Along with other factors, this contradiction, emphasized by politicians as well as by academics and novelists, led the former Yugoslavia to war (Macdonald 2003, 233-244).

The core issue examined in our paper is the perception of the correlation between religion, mother tongue and ethnic identity by one group, namely, the Muslimized Meskhetians. We will now give a brief historical overview of this group.

### **Enforced confessional conversion by economic means**

The fate of the Muslimized Meskhetians is a clear case of an experiment designed to construct a shared identity for different ethnic groups gathered in the border region of states competing for territory. The Muslimization of Meskhetians started in the 16-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, when this region of Georgia was under the control of the Ottoman Empire. This process may be seen as a next step following the dechristianization of Anatolia between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Ottoman Turks expanded their borders to the north and aimed to form a politically loyal population out of the local population (Georgians and, in particular, Meskhetians, who were Christians) and the immigrant Muslim population (Sunni Muslim Turks, Shia Muslim Kurds, and Shia Muslim

Tarakamas) which immigrated to the territory of Meskheta from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries: "Ottomans pursued policies of imperial nationalism in the same manner ... as other late European empires" (Meeker 2002, xv).

Confessional assimilation was considered to be the best instrument for achieving the aforementioned aim. The best tool for Islamization was economic measures, which Turkey used successfully. Only Muslims were allowed to serve in the army, and only those who served in the army were allowed to bear arms and own land. In addition, Muslims would pay lower payments than Christians (Lomsadze 1975, 293). Conversion to Islam was mainly brought about for practical reasons, and the Muslimized inhabitants of the region retained their old traditions; that is, they remained covert Christians. Nevertheless, the process had begun. The aristocracy became Muslim, at least officially. The Turkish and Georgian language domains were also clearly defined. According to historical sources, "Nobles spoke Georgian to their friends, while Turkish was spoken at the official banquets and meetings" (Vakhushti 1941, 12; Lomsadze 1975, 295-296). This was the first crack on the way to the final break.

Historical sources document the gradual development of the features unifying the Georgians and other groups in the Meskheta region: 1. Change of confession (encouraged by economic and other means); 2. Language shift (first within some domains and within high social classes and later in all domains and even among lower classes of the population); 3. Change of surnames; 4. New perception of individual identity (Lomsadze, 1975, 284-317; Beridze 2005, 18-26, 506-507). All these changes occurred as a protracted process over several centuries.

## **Name of the group**

The name of a group as well as the name and surname of individuals has always been a powerful tool, not only for expressing an identity, but also for the creation or manipulation of that identity.

The name change of the Muslimized Meskhetaians has reflected the dynamics relating to the development of that group's identity: Georgians who remained Christians retained their name, Kartveli (*Georgian* in Georgian); Georgians who became Muslims in the 17-18<sup>th</sup> centuries were called Yerli or Binali (*local* in Turkish); and immigrant Muslims were called Tatars (Turks), Tarakamas or Kurds according to their ethnicity. Thus Muslimized Georgians distinguished themselves from Christian Georgians on the one hand, and from immigrant Muslims on the other. The use of the group name *local* reflected social status and the path of the Muslimization: One who was local had the right to own land.

Conversion entailed other linguistic markers as well, in the form of alteration of proper names and surnames, which in turn strengthened the new identity. In a demographic and political situation in which surnames functioned as markers for ethnic and religious belonging, change of names and surnames implied an expectation (even a demand) of acquiring a new language associated with a certain *ethnos* and a certain religion. The reverse was also true: Conversion and language shift was followed by change of names and surnames. Georgians with "Muslim names" were marked as "others", different from their Christian Georgian neighbours, and this different group had its own name: "local Muslims who own land." Even brothers might have different surnames.

The next step was a unification of the Yerli (Muslimized Georgians) and Turks (immigrant Muslims) on confessional grounds, which led to these two groups being

termed Tatars (or Muslim). Thus a name expressing a *confession* replaced a name expressing a *social status*. Georgia became a part of the Russian Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. From the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the unifying name of these groups indicating confession (Tatars) was replaced in the Russian censuses by the unifying name indicating ethnicity (Turk), regardless of the fact that the ethnical composition of the "Turks" was diverse. In the 1870s the famous traveller and researcher Zagurski wrote, "It is difficult to say who gave them this name (Turk) attested in the accounts of the villages already in the 1830s" (qtd. in Lomsadze 1975, 309). To consider the population of Muslim faith, regardless of the ethnic origin, as ethnic Turks was in accordance with Pan-Turkish ideology.

## Confession and ethnic identity

Intertwined and indivisible perception of religious and ethnic belonging was characteristic in regions where each ethnic group was associated with a specific confession. Under such circumstances, the change of religion (or ideology) was a first step on the way to a change of ethnic identity.

This concurrence of religious and ethnic identity was observable in Samtskhe-Javakheti as well. Among the common people, all Muslims were designated by the general name Tatar, which did not imply any other sense than Muslim, and first and foremost Sunni Muslim; furthermore, the term Christian was equated with "Georgian," "Gregorian" with "Armenian," and "Catholic" with "Western European" or "French." The Russian Empire retained this tradition in its census in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At that time, Muslimized Georgians had partly preserved the memory of their ethnic origin, but this memory was considered to be an undesirable burden, being a reminder of ethnic belonging that was interpreted as mixed and impure.

In the 1870s, Zagurski wrote, "They dislike questions regarding their origin, they find especially insufferable any note indicating that their ancestors were Christians. I became convinced myself that in order to avoid conversation on these themes they accuse of ignorance of Georgian" (Lomsadze 1975, 306). Thus the step taken for practical purposes (to retain a right to own land) led to further consequences.

However, their transitional identity made its impact on the group: "They were always sad, gloomy and cheerless. They did not sing and dance... They were anguished for having abandoned their ancestors' faith. They tried to avoid discussions on these themes, they tried to stay away from Christianity and Christian neighbours" (Kazbeki 1876, 33; Lomsadze 1975, 305). It is remarkable that some features of this portrayal, such as sadness and unwillingness to consider identity problems, coincide with the characteristics of immigrants in modern Europe described by European researchers. The trait of sadness is explained by the ambivalence regarding identity (Kristal-Andersson 2001, 214-227). It seems that transitional identity gives rise to similar features, irrespective of whether the distancing from inherited identity and cultural environment is caused by change of place, change of residence, change of confession, or loyalty to the ancestral community. Inner conflict in a person with a newly obtained identity who also bears the memory of a former identity can result in the desire to accomplish separation from the former identity by cutting all ties and by changing his or her name and surname, especially if these two identities are incompatible. In turn, perception of converts by others and by group members themselves affects the naming of proselytes as an entire group and works for the split and in favour of strengthening and redrawing

the border within a divergent group. Extreme situations such as conflicts between adjacent states also worsen the polarisation within a split group.

## Confession and language

It is noteworthy that when language-based identity is put to the test by a religious split, an ethnic break may occur. Incompatible relations of historical origin between the neighbouring national states associated with the religions concerned may be the decisive factor for such a break. At the same time, religious-based identity may be intertwined with linguistic identity. This phenomenon is especially characteristic for those areas where almost every ethnically (and linguistically) different group also differs in confession. Even the names of the confessions, such as Armenian Gregorian or Greek Orthodox, partially reflect the established connotations.

Religious conversion may imply the demand for linguistic unification in the name of religious unity; this actually promotes unification of an ethnically diverse population within a national or supra-national state. At the same time, this phenomenon indicates that ethnic (and national) identity is often seen as an entire complex of features. Lack of any feature historically associated with a certain identity can engender striving to “restore” the full complex of features. Such an attempt may arise either at the individual or the collective level. It may also take the form of a demand from “above,” that is to say in the shape of state political ambition. The “wrong” combination of the features within a certain national identity can cause conflicts at both collective and individual levels.

Groups resisting cultural integration also resist linguistic integration, and vice versa. It should also be noted that “the effect of religion on the language maintenance is clearly a highly complex one depending not only issues of language use specific to religion, but also on other factors such as cultural distance” (Klipp & Clyne 2003, 41).

The connection between ideology and a language has often been explicitly stated in both official sources and narratives. (Russian was often officially referred to as “the language of the Great October Revolution” or “the language of Lenin,” Arabic as “the language of the Koran,” etc.)

In certain circumstances even languages themselves associated to a certain nation and culture were considered as “Christian” or “Muslim” languages. Therefore, in Samtskhe-Javakheti, with the statehood weakened and intensive migration processes taking place, a change of confession led to the language shift essential to the conversion to the Muslim faith.

The reciprocally determined character of language and confession is indubitably confirmed by both historians and individual respondents. According to Dubois (1859, II, 300), one mullah managed to convert the inhabitants of Aspindza to Islam, taught them Turkish and forbade them to speak Georgian. A network of Islamic schools and houses for reading the *Koran* were of special importance for spreading Islam and the Turkish language in the area. It was forbidden to speak Georgian, a “Christian language,” in mosques and in Islamic schools in Samtskhe-Javakheti (Lomsadze 1975, 309-310; 312). To speak Georgian was considered an act of treachery towards the newly adopted Muslim faith. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, according to the German traveller Karl Koch, Muslimized Georgians apologized for having Georgian as their spoken language. Koch’s informant in Klarjeti told him, “My grandfather was Christian. My father and I have been enlightened by Mohammed’s light; however, we still speak ancestors’

language. It is truth that it is a sin to speak the language of infidels, but what can we do, God gave us this language” (Lomsadze 1995, 82).

It is noteworthy that the term Muslim language (*mahmadianuri ena*) indicating the Turkish speech of Muslimized Meskhetians is attested in the relevant materials by Tchitchinadze too (Tchitchinadze 2004, 36)<sup>2</sup>.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Muslimized Meskhetians still identified themselves as Yerli and distinguished themselves from the immigrant Muslim groups – Turks, Tarakamas, and Kurds. “By this time they did not identify themselves any more as Georgians. A large number of Muslim Georgians knew the Georgian language; however, their native language was Turkish. Inhabitants of the region communicated with one another in Turkish, among them Armenians who had been resettled from Erzurum and knew the language” (Beridze 2005, 504-506).

### Language name as an identity marker

As was mentioned above, a group may preserve its confession and be split linguistically, but maintain its ethnic identity and sense of belonging to its original *ethnos*. In such a case, the group members may claim that their mother tongue is the language spoken by their titular *ethnos* even when they do not speak it themselves. A certain number of respondents who do not speak Greek, Georgian, Armenian, or Ukrainian etc. but are of the respective ethnic origin declare that their mother tongue is the respective language: Greek, Armenian, Georgian, Ukrainian.... (Mikhailov 1994, Sikharulidze 1999, 6; Kobaidze 2001, 155). Reference to the mother tongue is equated with reference to one's own ethnic/national belonging. The case of the Megrelians and

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<sup>2</sup> Georgians who adopted Catholicism also faced the problem of the divergence between their spoken language and the liturgical language. This population was accustomed to the eastern Christian tradition, where the language of the Church and the mother tongue coincided and was a strong marker of national identity. Now these two elements appeared to be different: From the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Georgian language was not approved as a language of liturgy by the Vatican. Therefore, the Armenian and Latin languages were employed in the Georgian Catholic churches. With a background of insufficient knowledge of Latin and a neighbouring Armenian population, the Armenian language gradually became the dominant language in the Georgian Catholic churches in Samtkhe-Javakheti. At baptisms, Armenian names and surnames were given to Georgian Catholics. The parish members with Armenian given names and surnames, belonging to the Armenian Catholic church, yet speaking Georgian and having a memory of their Georgian origin, could not be sure about their identity. In the end, Georgian Catholics themselves opposed this ambiguity (Lomsadze 1975, 501-502). However, in one village, Veli, the process resulted in a confusing situation: In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, they still used Georgian as a liturgical language in their Catholic church. At the same time, the Turkish influence was strong: A typical picture of subtractive bilingualism was attested in the village. Inhabitants used Turkish when they did not manage to express themselves in Georgian, and switched to Georgian when they did not find the word in Turkish. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when whole Armenian villages were brought from Turkey and settled around the village of Veli, the Armenian liturgy was canonised. Thus inhabitants had connections with the Georgian, Turkish, and Armenian languages and communities. In 1883-85 special committees were created in order to investigate and establish the ethnic identity of the inhabitants. The committees concluded that the inhabitants of Veli were Georgians by their ethnic origin and behaviour (Lomsadze 1975, 363-365). This story is characteristic of the situation in Smatskhe-Javakheti, with its colourful ethnic, confessional and linguistic structure.

Svans as well as the Tsova-Tush is a clear case of this phenomenon (Kobaidze 1997, 153-154). Attachment to the national mother tongue and ethnic identity may result in further consequences. The history of migration and language of the Greeks is particularly significant in this respect. After the Turkisation of Anatolia, some groups of Greeks preserved Christianity, but not the Greek language. Certain groups of Turkish speaking Greeks emigrated from Turkey to Georgia in the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Along with Christianity they had preserved the consciousness of national belonging and considered Greek as their mother tongue even if they did not speak it (Mikhailov 1994, 3). This is a case when abandonment of the language occurred in reality, not on a symbolic level. That is why it did not imply abandonment of kinship. It is noteworthy that nowadays Turkish speaking Greeks study Greek and not Turkish and move from Georgia to Greece and not to Turkey; this indicates they prefer to return to the people to whom they belong according to their ethnic consciousness and not to the places where they lived before emigration.

The mother tongue of Muslimized Meskhetians has been renamed several times: Tatar, Turkish, and Azerbaijani. It is noteworthy that nowadays Muslim Meskhetians try to avoid the term Turkish to refer to the Turkish language they speak, regularly referring to it as "our language" instead. This choice of term seems to be a way of differentiating "our language," on the one hand, as a language obtained through the new confession and indicating confessional loyalty, and on the other hand the Turkish language that is spoken by Turks in Turkey as a part of their ethnic and national belonging. At the same time the term is a means of strengthening group identity and emphasises "our language" as a feature distinguishing this group from the Georgian speaking Georgians and Turkish speaking Turks. Recorded materials reveal the fact that respondents, when they are talking about everyday matters and need to refer to the language they speak, usually try to avoid the term Turkish and instead use other terms such as "our language," "the Muslim language," "our dialect" or "Meskhetian."

It seems that the group which detached itself from other Georgians because of its confession and use of the Turkish language is nowadays striving to distinguish itself from Turks by avoiding the term Turkish to refer to the mother tongue. Therefore, interesting and characteristic terms such as "our language" and "our dialect" have arisen (Comp. naming of Irish as "our own language," Maguire 1991).

We cite some similar examples here:

Marta Kindiev, 61 years: "Inhabitants of Indusa spoke a mixed language. A half of it was Georgian and another half was our language... The little girl sitting there told her mother in our language" (Baratashvili 1997, 57).

Pazliat Janaeva, 56 years: "All the inhabitants in Indusa and Qamza spoke in Georgian. It was mostly men who spoke our dialect because the men had to go out and work; thus they learned it" (Baratashvili 1997, 57).

The same situation is attested in the memoirs of Nazira Vachnadze who was repatriated in 1956:

"In all villages where we lived (The villages in Adigeni district) people spoke in the same language that we spoke. Nobody has ever called it Turkish. It was called Muslim language as one can hear among any other people -- when you are explaining something to anybody and you are saying for example: Don't you understand, I am talking in Russian to you; or: Don't you understand Georgian? And we say: "Ben sene mislimandzha ainadierim" - I am talking to you in Muslim". (Vachnadze 2004, 29).

This short piece shows how difficult it is for the author to refer to her own language. First, she identifies it as “the language that we spoke” (cf., “our language”, “our dialect”); then, when she has to mention its name, she introduces a new term, Muslim language, and explicitly points out that this is not the same as Turkish (“Nobody has ever called it Turkish”).

The same author writes that both Muslims and Catholics lived in the village called Bolajuri, as well as in Ude. “Muslims spoke both in their language and in Georgian. Thus, they had not forgotten their language. Georgians also spoke the Muslim language, a new language, because the inhabitants communicated to each other... There were some villages where only Muslims lived and just surnames were Georgian and non-Georgian. In these villages people spoke in our language, although some Georgian words were also used, for instance, *kliavi* (plum), *ak’vani* (cradle).... the population of these villages did not have to speak any other language in order to communicate to others because everybody could speak our Yerli language” (Vachnadze 2004, 130).

It is obvious that “our language” (the Yerli language) is being used here to refer to a language of the group which is Muslim and lives as one community. Some members of the community have Georgian surnames and some have non-Georgian surnames. Even in this case, the author did avoid the term Turkish as a definition for surnames that were not Georgian and identified them as “non-Georgian surnames.”

The authors of a study conducted among a repatriated population also mention that respondents use the term Anatolian, “which should be interpreted as the Anatolian dialect of Turkish, but the latter term is rather avoided” (Sumbadze & Tarkhan-Mouravi).

The term Muslim language is attested in other materials too (Tchitchinadze 2004, 36).

Two further studies have been conducted among deported and repatriated persons, and they show that although the respondents claim that Georgian is their native language, the control questions reveal that actually it is Turkish. The respondents try to avoid this term and tend to refer to the language they speak as the “Meskhetian language” (Janiashvili 2006, 85). “Mekhetian language” as a term indicating the mother tongue of Muslimized Meskhetians also occurs in a study conducted in the village of Ianeti among repatriated persons (Putkaradze 2005, 19). Thus the group that was trying to merge into the Turkish identity and separate themselves from the Georgian identity experiences a new stage of identity development: They are trying to distinguish themselves both from Georgians and from Turks. The evidence of their group identification is the use of the terms “our people” and “our language,” as well as the Muslim language and non-Georgian surnames.

In some cases reference to the spoken language as Meskhetian/our language/our dialect or any other term instead of Turkish may be the result of a desire to avoid an expression that might be disadvantageous to the repatriation of these groups. Even if this is the case, it shows an understanding of the importance of the mother tongue for ethnic and national identity and political loyalty. It is another matter that usage of the simple term Meskhetian for the version of Turkish spoken by the deported population can create further confusion, since this term has ordinarily indicated a dialect of the Georgian language spoken in this area by the local Meskhetian Christian population. A suggestion by the deported population that they should be referred to merely as “Meskhetians” also implies the same possibility of confusion because this denomination belongs to the local Georgian population as well, who have remained Christian.

The identity search of the deported population described above is reflected in the search for a group name and language name. Turkish is not a desired term because of the group's endeavour to distinguish itself from Turks (for whatever reason). "Georgian" is not acceptable because it is associated with a language and culture that differs from that of the deported population. It is noteworthy that regardless of these steps, which indicate development towards the formation of a new "Meskhetian" identity, divergence among deportees according to the ethnic origin (Yerli, Kurd, Tatar...) is still preserved (Peuch 2001).

## **Religious faith and political orientation**

The paradox is that Turkisation of this population, comprising Georgians, Turks, and Kurds was started by Turkey, continued by Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and successfully accomplished by the Soviet Union in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Russia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was interested in obtaining new free lands in Georgia. During and after the Russo-Turkish war in 1828-29, the local Muslimized population was encouraged to leave for Turkey. Christian Armenians and Greeks from Turkey as well as Russian Duhobors from Russia were brought in and installed in the villages (Lomsadze 1975, 332-334, 336-341, 345-362).

From the 19<sup>th</sup> century, choosing between the Christian and Muslim confessions also became a matter of political orientation between Russia and Turkey. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the element of a choice between two socio-economic systems was added: the right to retain private property or the right to join the new system where no religious faith and no private property was allowed to exist.

In 1917-19, Islamic rebels in Smtskhe-Javakheti sharpened the division between Christian Meskhetians and Muslim Meskhetians. Muslim Meskhetians fought for the expansion of Turkey into Georgian territory, while the Georgian army fought to retain this territory and, at the same time, to spread the new power in the state. The ex-Georgian designers of Osmanic globalisation fought with the same fanaticism and neglect for their homeland as did their equally ex-Georgian brothers under the flag of Russian internationalism: "If during the first rebellion (1917) the main slogan was cleansing the region from Armenians while staying loyal to the local (autochthonous) population of historic Meskheta, i.e. to Christian Georgians, this time (1919) another slogan was openly announced - either we or the Georgians should exist up to the south of Atsquri" (Beridze 2005, 510). After the disaster for both sides that accompanies any war, the Muslim rebels were defeated and a new power was established. Antagonism between Christian and Muslim inhabitants was preserved, but good relations on the individual level were also attested (Beridze 2005, 40-62, 507-513).

Political power changed one more time in Georgia in 1921 when the Russian Red Army entered Georgia; Soviet policy did not officially take into account problems of religious confession. Religious confession was replaced by political confession, and no diversity in ideology was accepted or allowed. Confessional differences were considered to have been eradicated since only one shared and sanctioned atheistic ideology - communism - enjoyed legal right in the state (even if the constitution of the state guaranteed freedom of faith). On the other hand, linguistic diversity within the Soviet republics was greatly encouraged; this deliberate attempt at fragmentation was designed to promote the Russian language as the sole means of interethnic communication in the entire territory of the Soviet Union. At the same time, this policy was used to demonstrate the democratic linguistic policy of the new Soviet power as

opposed to the strictly monolingual policy of the Russian empire (Lewis 1972, 66-71). In Samtskhe-Javakheti, the Muslimized population was encouraged to maintain Turkish as their language. At the same time, Soviet policy implied the removal of all connections to the outside world.

As a result of this twofold policy of the Soviet state, the term Turkish language was replaced with the term Azerbaijani. Schools with instruction in Azerbaijani were opened in Samtskhe-Javakheti, and teachers from Azerbaijan were invited to teach at schools in the area (Beridze 2005, 102). Representatives of the region applied to Tbilisi to retain Georgian schools, but their request was rejected. All these measures were aimed at cutting the ties connecting the local population to Turkey and, at the same time, at maintaining groups in the area that were as linguistically distinct as possible.

However, those inhabitants of Samtskhe-Javakheti whose spoken language (Turkish) had been renamed Azerbaijani continued to identify themselves as ethnically Turkish. The Soviet passport included two different categories: nationality in the sense of civil nationality or citizenship (thus, everybody who lived in the Soviet Union had Soviet citizenship) and ethnicity, which was a purely genetic (or primordial) term. "In the census carried out at the end of the 1930s, the population was specifically asked about their identity, and according to respondents, Muslim Meskhetians were offered the opportunity to register as Georgians. In fact this census did not examine ethnic identity but rather political orientation. At that time, the Muslims categorically refused to be designated as Georgians, which resulted in their subsequent terrible fate" (Beridze 2005, 116, 513). In 1939, a new census was conducted and they were named Azerbaijanis, along with all others who were designated as Turks in the 1926 and 1937 censuses.

During the Second World War, the Muslim population of Smatskhe-Javakheti was considered as "unreliable" by the same state that had done everything to maintain and encourage this group as a separate community. In November 1944, army units simultaneously entered all the villages. Several thousand families in the region were ordered to leave their houses within a few hours. They were brought to Borjomi, where special trains were waiting to bring them to remote Central Asia. Those deported from Georgia in 1944 had one shared feature: they were Muslims. They had "Turkish" as a category indicating ethnicity in their passports, regardless of their ethnic origin. Along with them, Shia Muslims - Kurds and Tarakamas - were also deported.

The deportation in 1944 was crucially significant. It gave a shared history to this heterogeneous group, consisting of ethnic Georgians, Turks, Kurds, etc., in that each constituent element was isolated from any other originally related element. This situation was advantageous for strengthening intra-group ties and revealed this group to in fact be a homogeneous group known by different names (even if differences within the group are still preserved). That is why those who try to represent this population as an entire ethnic group usually take 1944 as their starting point, while any attempt to explore their history before the deportation is perceived as a sign of hostility. Nonetheless, different groups and different tendencies within this heterogeneous group are preserved.

A significant share of this population identifies itself as Turks and Kurds, while there remains one group who cannot define its own identity and is still undergoing an identity crisis: "We knew that we were Turks. Now we are being told that we are Georgians. Who are we actually?" (Baratashvili 1997, 4).

## Group identity and future perspectives

As usual, supporters of different suggestions and recommendations concerning the Muslimized Meskhetians argue their position with reference to the different versions of the history of this group. The recommendations are often aimed at “rectifying history” instead of focusing on the real needs and desires of this population.

Some groups insist that these people have always been Turks and have lived in Meskheta since the 6<sup>th</sup> century (Chervonnaya 1998). According to another view, supported by historical sources and the narratives of witnesses, a large portion of deportees are Muslimized individuals who consider themselves as Turks and whose ancestors were Georgians. It would be a mistake to draw the conclusion on this basis that the reverse process on the collective level would be a simple process. However, individual cases of linguistic integration of repatriated persons in Georgia should not be ignored. There is a third position concerning the identity of the deportees: the group consists of Muslimized Georgians, Kurds, and other ethnic groups, but they have formed a new ethnic grouping, Meskhetian Turks. According to supporters of this idea, this newly formed group is striving to obtain a territorial home. However, a closer scrutiny reveals no evidence that the deportees are striving for repatriation. Even supporters of repatriation mention that “obscurity of national identification can be seen as a major hindrance to the formation of a potent organisation and movement for repatriation, leaving Meskhetians at the mercy of politicians.” (Sumbadze & Tarkhan-Mouravi).

The lack of desire for a cohesive settlement has been observed by other researchers as well. The concept of home among deported Meskhetians has been studied by Kakoli Ray in her PhD thesis “Displaced Populations: Re-shaping International Planning,” which was partly based on comprehensive fieldwork among Muslimised Meskhetians settled in Azerbaijan. Ray questions repatriation as the optimal solution for refugees” (Pentikainen & Trier 2004, 45). In another article, “Repatriation and De-territorialization: Meskhetian Turks’ conception of Home,” she concludes that traditional understanding and theories of the idea of home and the Muslimised Meskhetians’ own perceptions of this idea are quite different: “Ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Azerbaijan presents evidence of the disjuncture between Meskhetian Turk refugees’ idea of home as they articulate it, and the conventional understanding of the idea of home in much of the theory and policy about place, belonging and the nation. It is concluded that the Meskhetian Turk refugees possess an account of community that runs against the grain of the meta-narrative of nation which remains geographically bound’ ” (Ray 2000, 391-414).

Other fieldwork has shown that “the debate over possible repatriation is to a large extent promoted by unrepresentative leaders of the community and the international community”. The author of the research points to the need for considering the concept of homeland and the perceptions of Meskhetian Turks of a territorialized homeland (Tomlinson 2002). In another paper, she writes the following:

Meskhetian Turks present an interesting case of a group perceiving itself in terms of location-based metaphors with little relationship to the landscape from which these are derived. While their rightful place is seen – by national governments and international actors – to be Meskheta in post-Soviet Georgia, I argue that the Meskhetian Turks ‘displaced’ across the former Soviet Union conceive of their homeland as a landless state rather than a geographical place.

Moreover, although their key social groupings draw their names and members from villages in Meskhetia, Meskhetian Turks show little interest in the physicalities in question, and do not, as land-labourers, draw meaning from their relationship with the land. Political tensions have left many Meskhetian Turks in southern Russia stateless and landless, but most do not use metaphors of place or land to attempt to resolve this plight. (Tomlinson 2004)

It seems that the idea to resettle in Georgia is promoted by various organisations, but it is not popular among the deported population:

One crucial question pertains to the likelihood of a large-scale repatriation. According to the most vocal Meskhetian Turk organizations, the majority of the Meskhetian Turkish population would resettle in Georgia, should a legislative framework without hindering bureaucratic obstacles come into being in the future. However, other actors, including some international experts, suggest that most Meskhetian Turks, e.g. in Russia's troubled Krasnodar Krai, may wish to remain there, should the political and legislative conditions become more accommodating. Even more so, this may be the case for Meskhetian Turks settled in countries in Central Asia and Azerbaijan, where the Meskhetian Turks appear to enjoy a much higher degree of socio-economic and cultural integration. (Pentikainen & Trier 2004, 49)

Panjikidze (2003, chapter VIII) examines Islam in Georgia and the problems of repatriation of Muslimized Meskhetians in the context of Islamic revival in the Caucasus. He points out that a cultural gap occurred between Muslimized Meskhetians and local Christian Meskhetians. He also states that Muslimized Georgians in Atchara preserved Georgian nationality and Georgian as a mother tongue. The problems of Vahabism in the Caucasus are also touched upon (Panjikidze 2003).

An attempt at a cohesive settlement of dispersed Meskhetian deportees in Samtskhe-Javakheti would contribute to a strengthening of group identity rather than national identity and thus deepen the identity crisis of this population. It would hardly contribute to an improvement in socio-economic conditions either. In this context, it would be reasonable to bear in mind all the possibilities for further development. Cultural and ethnic distancing, which started some hundred years ago, has been increased with distancing in space and time more than sixty years ago.

A more realistic approach would reveal different routes for different groups and individuals. A study of the needs and wishes of this population should be conducted before taking any measures. Otherwise, the repatriation of the descendants of deportees to an (for them) unknown country and culture may turn out to be a process similar to a new deportation.

Neither Muslimized Meskhetians nor any other ethnic group should be categorised by a single label or assigned one shared fate. A collective and imposed re-settlement would hardly represent a resolution of the Meskhetian problem. Opportunities and measures for integration should be explored both among host communities and among those who would be willing to settle in Georgia.

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# **The Georgian Language and Cultural Identity in Old Georgia: An Examination of Some Conceptual Foundations**

**Tinatini Bolkvadze**

## **The theoretical and empirical basis**

The nature of the sociolinguistic data found in old Georgian written sources makes it reasonable that there existed a highly structured theory regarding the Georgian language, its history and its cultural identity. When I refer to the “old Georgia,” I imply the conditions at the end of the 18th century.

The American scholar Joshua A. Fishman introduced the term “the Great Tradition” into sociolinguistics. In his opinion, the language, religion, history, state system and government of a state formed the Great Tradition; these features all condition the integration of the population within the state. Of all the factors which form the Great Tradition, language is the most fundamental phenomenon. It unites society and becomes a national symbol; it is the language that the national values, national heroes and, generally, the national mission is identified with (Fishman 1972). Language forms a kind of paradigm of values; it conditions people's spiritual activity and their place in the historical context. A people's first, original and truly natural borders are, undoubtedly, the inner borders formed by the language; these are only later complemented by outer, geographical boundaries.

The strength of a tradition leads to the formation of an exoglossal community whose members are convinced that their language reflects their exceptional genius, and it is, certainly, linked to their spiritual and life experience. Language communities always try to find a “respectable” provenance for their language, creating myths and genealogies for this purpose and cultivating them (Fishman 1972). It is the cultivated myths and traditions that provide valuable data for studying the attitude of people to their national and cultural identity. The Great Tradition conditions the perception of the sociocultural integration of society.

## **The growing national consciousness of Georgians, and cultivated myth**

A definite time and local conditions determine the sociolinguistic attributes of every language. The growing national consciousness of Georgians, who followed the road of political, economic and cultural florescence, persistently demands historical comprehension of the antique period of our past. In J. Fishman's words, “The Life of Kings” by Leonti Mroveli, an 11th-century ecclesiastical figure and bishop of the Ruisi eparchy, attests to the quest for the “respectable” past. This historic work contains an andresic story with a complete plot narrating a strange adventure of Parnavaz, the founder of the Georgian State. According to this story, Parnavaz was anointed by the sun's royal glory, i.e., parna, or hvarna (“brilliance”, “halo”) descended on him, giving him his name (Kiknadze 1984:115-117; Andronikashvili 1966:498-499).

In spite of adopting Christianity, Georgians are proud of the pagan king Parnavaz, whose name is associated with the foundation of the first Georgian state, the declaration of Georgian as the state language and the creation of the Georgian alphabet. (These exploits would comply with J. Fishman's definition of respectable.) It is difficult to say whether the 11th-century historian referred to a written source or an oral tradition when he wrote about Parnavaz; however, this issue is not of decisive importance for the Great Tradition.

The choice of the official language in a multilingual country is a political decision conditioned by many external factors: first of all by the number of people speaking this language (it is not necessary that it should be the native language for everybody who speaks it) and also by its degree of use. King Parnavaz's decision "to expand" the Georgian language was, of course, political, and it was conditioned by extralinguistic factors, namely, the number of people who spoke the language in Kartli and the integration of those speaking other languages with the national (Georgian) culture. It may be presumed that in Kartli there was every condition to enable Parnavaz to use the Georgian language as a bridge to facilitate the communication of the multilingual population and not turn it into a barrier.

The Georgian Great Tradition handed down from generation to generation was statehood based on the Georgian language. We must bear in mind this background when studying the definition of Kartli's political frontiers, their modifications, and the localization and interchange of the urban centres; furthermore, the movement of the Georgian tribes and their mutual infiltration must be studied against the same background. It is these factors that conditioned the changing of "Kartli" into "Sakartvelo" (Georgia) and modified the meaning of "Kartveli" (Georgian). It should be noted that "the language centre" has a decisive significance in terms of territory, economy, religion and political structure. If the people are language-conscious, even if the centre were "mobile," it would still have a constant power of radiation and a powerful quality of uniting the nation, no matter from where the rays were emitted.

By the time the Georgian language had to compete with Greek, it had already gained a significant social function: it was the main means of national identification and cultural self-consolidation of Kartli. The date found in old Georgian hagiographic stories is very interesting. For example, four themes revealing national values are presented in Ioane Sabanisdze's "The Martyrdom of Abo Tpileli," from the period of Arab rule (7th-8th centuries AD): defending Christianity at the outskirts of the cultured world, the honour of the ancient Christian country, being equal to Greece, and the homeland of saints. These are the merits of Kartli, the foundation of national consciousness (Siradze 1987:46-54).

It should be remembered that Sabanisdze expressed these ideas at the time of Arab domination, a time when Georgians were threatened by the catastrophe of denationalization. Thus the author was fully conscious that Georgia could save herself only by reviving the national-Christian culture under the aegis of her own church. It is also noteworthy that Sabanisdze wrote "The Martyrdom of Abo Tpileli" at the request of Samoel, the Cathalicos of Kartli. This shows that those ideas were not only patriotic rhetoric; they fed the Christian elite of Kartli.

The process of development of Georgian national consciousness finally ends with the information given by Giorgi Merchule in "The life of Grigol Khandzteli," which defines the borders of Kartli with precision: "Kartli is reckoned to consist of those spacious lands wherein the church services are celebrated and all prayers are said in [the] Georgian tongue." That is, Kartli embraces the territory where liturgy and divine services, in general, are performed in Georgian. This statement accords well with the

Eastern Christian tradition, and also with the cultural and political ideal of 9th-10th century Georgia.

## **The principle of language equality**

The Georgian literary language attained greater perfection by competing for equality with Greek. Old Georgian literary schools aimed at deeper integration into the Eastern-Christian world and, therefore, thought it expedient to emulate the Greeks' cultural achievements as far as possible. These processes were mostly revealed in translation.

In spite of the fact that the Greeks thought themselves to be superior to other Christian peoples of their time, for the Athonite monks, as Winfried Boeder points out, being bilingual by no means meant diglossia. In other words, Georgian and Greek are not two functionally differentiated languages, but languages with equal rights. The term diglossia denotes the situation in which there is a public agreement concerning the status of a certain language, i.e. which of the two languages by their social and cultural significance has an "upper" and a "lower" status between functionally differentiated codes. Of course, Greek was the language with "upper" status, but Georgian did not have a "lower" status, for it assumed the function of defending itself from the aliens in the alien surroundings (Boeder 1983: 86).

In determining language status, we depend on the principles defined by Paul Garvin: a) the internal qualities of the language, b) its functions, and c) the attitude of the speaking community to the given language (Garvin 1959). The internal qualities of the Georgian language strengthened its wish to be the equal of Greek. These are the flexible stability that allows the modification equal to cultural changes in the language and intellectualization, as a codified version of the Georgian language into which the Holy Scripture and theological literature are translated and in which original works are written, differs from everyday Georgian because the former is very artificial.

The Gospels and other parts of the Bible translated into Georgian guaranteed a normative stability of the Old Georgian language by virtue of its constant ecclesiastical use in church services and in other forms of spiritual life. The native language was a cognized norm offering standardisation for the Georgian scholars working in cultural centres abroad. Besides that, the Georgian language acquired the functions of uniting the language community, and, at the same time, of separating it from the communities speaking different languages (Boeder 1998). It had also long before acquired the function of self-protection, which increased both national pride and the prestige of the language.

## **The priority and qualitative excellence of the national language**

The principle of the equality of the languages of newly converted nations with Greek and other official languages of the Church was gradually replaced by the priority of national languages and their qualitative excellence (Gamkrelidze 1990). From this point of view, "Praise and Glorification of the Georgian Language" is an extremely noteworthy work. (It is also known under different titles, such as "Praise of the Georgian Language," "On the Georgian language," etc.). Its author or copier is Ioane-Zosime (Kiknadze 1990).

"Praise" contains many interesting issues from a sociolinguistic point of view. The author stresses that Georgian is being "humbled and rejected" at present, and he is pessimistic regarding the condition of the Georgian language. The situation referred to

could have been caused by the rivalry between the Georgians and Greeks mentioned above; consequently, it was difficult for Georgian to rid itself of the Greek label of a “barbarian language”. According to “Praise,” the humbling and rejection of this language is a sign of future glory. Here we can see the eschatological meaning of consecration and adornment (Gamsakhurdia 1991): “It will be cursed at birth and rise in glory”. The Georgian language which is to perform a mystery is buried, and this is its consecration and adornment.

Thus the Georgian language adopts a specific religious consecration: it becomes the language of the Judgement Day and the carrier of divine mysteries, a function which, in Ioane-Zosime’s opinion, was imposed upon Georgian by biblical prophecy. The declaration of Georgian as the last language runs contrary to the frequently expressed idea about the priority of a language – the attribute by means of which Ioane-Zosime placed Georgian in a fiercely competitive situation with the sacred languages of Hebrew, Greek and Latin. But it is not an insurmountable contest, for “Praise” declares Georgian and Greek to be sisters: “These are two sisters like Mary and Martha, and he said friendship because all mysteries are hidden this language” (Boeder 1998). This is the beginning of the period when Georgians became equal to their opponents; they assumed the function of Greeks in the East and tried to assimilate and to protect the Greeks’ inheritance.

This is the main background for the purity of the Georgian language. It was the first anonymous grammarians (i. e. translator-commentators) who created the first scholarly language (*tsignuri ena*) which was an ideal for the medieval religious authors. This scholarly language was the old Georgian ecclesiastical language, whose conservative character was conditioned by its constant usage and high prestige. The scholarly-literary language and the rural non-literary language were first attested in the lexicographic footnotes to the texts translated by Ephrem Mtsire, who created his own translating method; of these footnotes the most important are the explanatory ones, in which the “scholarly” and “rural” units denoting the same notion are given.

## **On the purity of the Georgian language**

If we follow the history of the confrontation of the “scholarly” and the “rural” languages, we will come to the conclusion that in the 11th - 13th centuries scholarly Georgian represented the conservative current in the Georgian literary language. It was the time when the “rustic” written language was emancipated from the old tradition. The “rural” language already included both the non-ecclesiastical written language and the “simple” spoken language; in other words, it denoted the degree to which the language had a democratic character. The democratic character of the language is defined by how close the spoken language and the literary language are to each other.

After the 13th century, the country, which had disintegrated into small kingdoms and principalities, was united only by the language. In order to avoid the disastrous influence of foreign languages, the problem of the standardization of the state language had to be solved, which means the creation of the normative orthography, grammar and dictionary.

Wherever language problems crop up or wherever the language situation is in some way unsatisfactory, it is necessary to resort to language planning, which is carried out by individuals, government committees and academies. In 17th-18th - century Georgia, the language situation was far from perfect: the disintegration of the country into small kingdoms and principalities threatened the very existence of the

Georgian language with its century-old literary traditions. On the other hand, the absence of a definite political centre might have proved to be disastrous as well.

One of the aims of codifying the language is to enhance the self-assertion and stability of the language community. This was the motivation that prompted Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani to write a dictionary. In Sulkhan-Saba's "Sitqvis kona" many foreign lexical units are interpreted. Special attention should be paid to the foreign words termed not usable (*ukhmari*) by Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani. Most of these words were introduced into the Georgian language "due to the changes of time"; consequently, their use should be avoided. The reason Sulkhan-Saba included these words in the dictionary is that "a student should recognize what is to be used and what is not, which [are] suitable and which [are] not". He employed special symbols to denote the "unusable" words.

The evaluation of a word as "*ukhmari*" shows the opinion of the interpretator [in our case the codifier] Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani towards lexical units of the Georgian language (Haugen 1972). For Sulkhan-Saba the lexical sign is by no means arbitrary; it is always conditioned. For him the Georgian language and the outer world are entirely adequate.

Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani's dictionary, published in 1884, was edited by Raphael Eristavi. The latter supplied the book with a preface in which the necessity of publishing Orbeliani's dictionary was underlined. One of the reasons was the fact that "in their works some authors use foreign words whose substituted words, and correct ones at that, can be found in Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani's dictionary. Thus if this dictionary had been published and spread before, the foreign words would not have contaminated the Georgian language."

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# **The Modern Language Situation in Georgia: Issues Regarding the Linguistic Affiliation of the Population**

**Manana Tabidze**

Demographic variations in the Georgian population have been one reason for changes in the language situation in the country. During its historical development, the Georgian linguistic world has demonstrated a standardized variant and various geographical dialects. Much has been said about the organization and high stability of the standard language. The "modest" compromise of superiority for the literary language over the territorial dialects is of great interest if we remember that the political and cultural center of the county changed periodically and that several cultural centers arose as a result of dissolution into kingdoms and principalities. Despite this, the attitude towards the literary language was unchanging. The priority of the literary language could not be shaken either by foreign expansion or by waves of migration which sometimes changed the demographic situation and resulted in greater numbers of the population either not knowing Georgian at all or only having a sparse knowledge of it. In order to understand this issue, consideration must be given to so-called demographic problems. As one example of the impact of demographic circumstances on the linguistic situation, we could mention the settlement of Azerbaijanis and Armenians in Georgia.

Movement of a population entails the transfer of one cultural (and social) model into different cultural (and social) surroundings. However, this movement is not mechanical when two independent cultures occur side by side in the new homeland. The immigrants store experience acquired during the process of assimilation to the new surroundings and add this to the experience they brought with them.

These issues and the deficient language competence of migrants have been discussed extensively in the scientific literature. Institutions of migration and social services consider the relation between newcomers and the receiving country from two standpoints: 1. What measures must be taken in the receiving surrounding to improve the integration of newcomers? 2. What measures must be taken to preserve the connection of immigrants with their country of origin and for the stimulation of a return to the homeland?

Both these approaches are dictated by humane and practical considerations. In the first case, the discussion centres around a population who has chosen a new homeland and finds rapid and rational ways of integration into it; the other case concerns people who have left their homeland temporarily for whatever reason (economic, political, ecological, etc.) and plan to return at some indefinite future time. In the latter case, it is important that these people maintain contact with their roots. In both cases, the interests of a receiving country must also be taken into consideration, something which already occurs in progressive countries. This brings to the fore issues such as how many immigrants a receiver country is able to accept and how often, how suitable accommodation may be arranged, how employment will be provided, and how cultural assimilation can be facilitated. The receiver country in this case is faced with the issue of how to preserve its own political, economic, social and cultural balance, and must also address the question of what opportunities an independent country (in the modern

global legislative system) has to fulfil international laws on human rights regarding the provision of settlement, linguistic rights and social activities for the immigrant population. These are extremely difficult problems characteristic of the modern world, and they cannot only be answered on the basis of past experience.

In present-day Georgia there are representatives of ethnic and linguistic diasporas whose quality of integration must be defined, and their state of orientation clarified, in relation to the two above-mentioned standpoints. Because of the peculiar Georgian geopolitics, we can assume that immigration processes will commence in the very near future, and the country must be ready to respond to these. The problem of language competence is one leading question in the problem of immigration.

From this viewpoint, the 20th century is divided into two periods: a) a mass movement of population in the first half of the century which provided more material for researching cultural spread and contacts, and b) an intensification in the second half of the 20th century of socially motivated population movement and a reduction in the cultural individuality of that population. The latter explains why the contacts between "comers" and "receiver" are more social and less cultural, thus facilitating cultural assimilation. Language choice for the ethnos in foreign surroundings is the first and most important step on the way to the formation of new cultural perceptions of this ethnos. Migration has always taken place in the world, but in the 20th century it has a specific character.

Defining to which category the different linguistic groups living in Georgia belong is of great interest to us. In this regard, the following questions arise: when the arrival of a particular ethnos to the country takes place; what the reason for this arrival is; whether integration of these ethnic groups (collectives) with a "receiver" ethnos takes place or not; their fluency in the state language how well the "comer" integrates socially into a new homeland; to what degree the social activity of a "comer" is conditioned by the level of knowledge of the state language; what the reasons are for a representative of a linguistic minority not knowing the state language; how close the contact is between representatives of a linguistic minority and the local population; by what signs representatives of a linguistic minority preserve contact with a place of origin and by what signs he/she can be judged to be integrated into the "receiver" country; by what characteristics a representative of a concrete linguistic minority is similar to or different from another minority (or other minorities) living in this country; what percentage of the population the linguistic minority must represent and in what specific surroundings it must be present in order for special state policies to be initiated; and how the activation of measures for teaching the state language to the linguistic minority must be evaluated in terms of cultural assimilation and integration.

We will now go on to discuss reasons for the change in demographic conditions of non-autochthonous linguistic groups living in Georgia and the resultant effect on linguistic orientation.

Members of other nationalities have settled side by side with Georgians in the territory of Georgia at different times and for different reasons, but never in sufficient numbers to create a cultural challenge to the ethnos and unity of the country. The reasons for this seem to be the peculiarities of Georgian social life, linguistic consolidation, the different religious persuasion of the "comers," and continuous and systematic inner-migration, which preserved the numerical balance of ethnic Georgians and their isolation from the foreigners.

A certain number of "comers" are still living in Georgia. We will not describe in detail the ethnic collectives that immigrated into Georgia at different times since we believe that the following example of the Azerbaijani language in Georgia is sufficient to illustrate our discussion very clearly. The analysis of historico-demographic data gives us the opportunity to make the following statement in this connection:

The collective self-consciousness of Azerbaijanis living in Georgia is conditioned not only by a common origin and a common past (even in connection with their settling in Georgia they came at different times, from different places and for different reasons), but by their compact settlement, religion, common language and Caucasian self-perception. Their isolation from the Georgian population on religion grounds distinguishes Azerbaijanis in compact settlements in Georgia. The present economic and linguistic situation involves difficulties for the Azerbaijanian population when it comes to satisfying the constitutional demands of the Georgian republic (including knowing the state language) and accordingly creates problems regarding full and active integration into the life of the republic.

Georgian authorities need to meet these difficulties by developing their language policy with respect to the Muslim population orientated towards the neighbouring Azerbaijani republic; this includes securing a supply of text-books from Baku. Sometimes these groups (still under the influence of Soviet consciousness) regard the teaching of Georgian as a forced action, and in Georgia they demand the same status for the Azerbaijani language that it enjoys in the Azerbaijani republic.

The Azerbaijani population living in Georgia, with its "Caucasian perception," strives subconsciously towards the "Common Orient," which helps them to find common ground with Georgians. Thus we can assume that in the conditions of correct language planning and language policy (which is a complex phenomenon and not limited only to the teaching of Georgian) this population will improve their knowledge of Georgian and be brought closer to the Georgian population.

As regards Armenian, the following issues that have been the focus of research: changes of administrative borders and demographic conditions in Javakheti, problems of religious and linguistic expansion, the modern linguistic situation in Javakheti, and problems of the functioning of Georgian among the Armenian population living in Georgia.

Since ancient times, the Armenian population has been implicated in Georgian territorial and demographic expansion led by foreign conquerors of Georgia. This caused the Armenians to hold territorial, cultural and economic pretensions on Georgian land, something which Russia exploited when establishing its colonial regime in the Caucasus by the settlement of an Armenian population, as a "trustly base" for empire, in Georgian territory. For these reasons the Armenian population was "moved" to Georgia at different periods. The instigators of this policy were those states (Russia, Armenia...) who wished to gain Georgian territory but were not interested in the problems of Georgian ethnos or ecology. On the contrary, they needed the Armenian population as a conflictive force and not as a defender of the Georgian language and culture. In fact, parallel to measures to preserve the identity of Armenians, restrictions were imposed on Georgian language, religion, culture and economics in the Georgia-Armenia borderland.

Georgians were not able to use their mother tongue (state language) in the regional administration. Armenian, on the other hand, is an object of state defence (free section financed by the state budget) in its places of compact (and sometimes non-compact)

settlement. A large number of Armenians living in Georgia are either monolingual or Russian-Armenian bilingual. The Armenian language is resolutely defended in Georgia, whereas Georgian in Armenian compact settlements is endangered.

Language is studied for a variety of reasons in different branches of science; for example, the development of language is related to many spheres of social life. The most significant areas to which the study of language is linked are linguistics, philosophy, history, sociology, psychology and political science. These areas systematically occur in various spheres of research, and they often collaborate. To a large degree, official, administrative or governmental measures or operative programmes are based on discussions and findings within the above-mentioned disciplines. Hence, terminological exactness and coordination between them are of great importance.

Terminological diversity exists, however, due to the many and varied fields of linguistic research. For instance, the difference between a dialect and a language is one of the unresolved problems of sociolinguistics. At first this difference seems to be clear, when dialects occur as simple sub-elements of a language, but gradually this problem becomes socially and politically charged, thus leading to a lack of terminological clarity.

Languages in contact often develop into linguistic conflicts. Language conflict can take place in different surroundings, on different occasions and for different reasons, as is manifest in a wide number of situations: a struggle for spheres of influence and status among different languages; social conflicts; conflicts caused in striving for official language status; problems of linguistic rights within one multiethnic state (e.g. an autochthonous language and a new language exerting pressure<sup>1</sup> for social and political aims on the local population); and a struggle for prestige among languages in a multiethnic state.

Relations between linguistic groups are complex and various. An unnatural stimulation of approachment and separation, an attempt to distort natural linguistic processes, and the irresponsible regulation of language contacts for political or economic reasons may affect these relations. In most cases linguistic conflict precedes ethnoconflict.

A state language is a polyfunctional language defined by the constitution and determines the function of all legislative and executive institutions and court authorities within that state.

Modern sociolinguistics pays great attention to the problems of political geography, geopolitics and cultural geography. The "preparatory" period, which comprises different stages of development of social or cultural resistance, is followed by a political result where the changing of a frontier is possible. This period may be characterized as follows: 1. relatively harmless *initial position*: preparation of educational reform, collision of scientific viewpoints, spreading of ethnoculturological discussion in the massmedia, terminological marks of position and others; 2) *practical stage*: military action or reformation, new legislative measures, possible constitutional changes; 3. *final result*: changing of status and frontiers. Sociolinguistics observes all these stages and tries not only to explain but also to predict the possible continuation of a particular stage. During the process of "external" governing of the language situation the

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<sup>1</sup> This pressure may be connected with religion, the massmedia, education, toponymy, the alphabet, etc.

interested party is always apparent, and it is not difficult to guess at the ultimate aims of this interest.

Georgia met the 20th century as a colony of Russia, a harsh destiny that left a marked impression on the country. This was followed by independence, the subsequent loss of that independence, and its restoration once more at the beginning of 1990s. Consequently, the language situation of Georgia has changed many times during the 20th century. The language situation developed in two directions in the Soviet sphere: a) a policy of general Russification; and b) a policy of developing the languages of the republics and autonomies (where the local authority had the right to show some initiatives, on the one hand, and these rights were corrected, on the other hand).

The Soviet Union was a state with goal-oriented language planning and policy and was thus a potentially very interesting object of study. However, only a very small number of sociolinguistic works were created in the Soviet Union, and these were not distinguished by information and discussion.

Two main kinds of **language** planning were observed in the Soviet Union: a) an "open **language** planning," declared by the constitution and by special resolution; and b) a "secret **language** planning," which was realized by the corresponding services and state censor committee (at union and local levels). The ultimate aim of these two types of planning was the formation of the "Soviet people" by increasing the sphere of influence and role of the Russian language. Both processes meant a strengthening of Russian-national bilingualism and the reduction of the rights of national languages.

The preparation of a special theoretical argumentation and propaganda was necessary for the "open language planning"; this process took place under the slogan of the demand of the general public and included almost all spheres of function of a language. On the other hand, "secret language planning" included the regions where there was very considerable population movement and where Russian was necessary for contact with the local inhabitants. Secret language planning was realized by censorship.

The institute of censorship is one of the oldest ideological services known from antiquity. At all stages of the Georgian context, censorial activity mostly applied in relation to a text. Materials, phrases, and words extolling the nationality, homeland or value of Georgians were forbidden. For example, in the 19th century censorship forbade the use of the word "Georgia" and demanded the use of the term "Tbilisi and Kutaisi province" instead. Texts which aimed to instill a sense of national nihilism and to diminish a sense of national worth were specially published with the permission of the censorship service. Censorship did not permit Georgian newspapers to print works translated from Russian and fought against the republishing of already published stories or poems.

Censorship continued its function in the Soviet period when it was claimed to contribute to Georgia's security and unity, but in fact it took care that nothing might separate the republic from the common Soviet body. It was forbidden to translate literary works into Georgian that had not been translated into Russian. Besides the ideological control there was a secret aim – all translators "willy-nilly" used the Russian variant as an original, and this undoubtedly influenced the language of translation. The censorship policy described above entailed a number of important issues: 1) the systematic translation of numerous materials from the same language caused the creation of clichés and calques (one kind of language mix); 2) the constant role as "informational source" increased the high prestige of Russian; 3) a change of vocabulary took place; Russian words, in particular Russian international vocabulary,

increased in the vocabulary of the national languages. For example, in 1958 Russian words in a Turkish-Tatar dictionary were twice as numerous as in 1929. In the same period in the Uzbek dictionary, 20% of the words were Russian. The process of borrowing became more intensive. Not only were words borrowed, but transformation of the form of words into Russian took place; in a dictionary compiled with such words, 70-80% were in the "new form" (mostly scientific terminology); 4) in terms of edition, quality and practical use, bilingual dictionaries of major external languages (English-Russian, French-Russian, German-Russian and others) were superior to the bilingual dictionaries of the national languages. Accordingly, language contacts (mostly with the European languages) were not carried out without Russian playing a mediator role.

Naturally, vocabulary turned out to be the most sensitive aspect in the context of bilingualism. That is why vocabulary became an object of special planning. Moscow demanded a systematic account of the development of the national vocabulary.

The system of education was one of the spheres of language planning. Georgian, with its own alphabet, original linguistic system and great educational, scientific and cultural traditions, appeared to stand firm against these attacks, though it did not escape unscathed from Soviet captivity. An attack on Georgian was realized through the so-called migration movement; through demographic interventions and the specific regime of administrative boundaries, Soviet Russia constantly annulled the balance of state functions of Georgian.

It was convenient for Moscow to place a main local centre for governing the republics in one city and not in several towns within a republic. In comparison to other towns in the republic, the capital attracted large numbers of the population. Besides the concentration of economic leverage at one point, this policy led to a negation of traditions rather than to patriotism for the mother-land; the so-called urban-Tbilisian "patriotism" was underway. The language of a city which is not fertilized with inner literary and dialectal Georgian, but with jargons and a mix of non-Georgian languages, must be prepared for the role of pseudo-literary Georgian.

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# Language Use and Attitudes among Megrelians in Georgia<sup>1</sup>

**Karina Vamling and Revaz Tchantouria**

Megrelians, estimated to be around 400,000 in number with the vast majority living and having lived in Abkhazia and Samegrelo in the western part of the country, are rarely heard of outside of Georgia. Historically, they are descendants of the people of the ancient Colchis in Western Georgia, whereas the roots of Eastern Georgia go back to the old kingdom of Iberia.

The Megrelian language is widely used in Western Georgia, where Megrelians constitute a cohesive, dominant population. However, the number of speakers of Megrelian (in some sources Mingrelian) is not known as it has not featured as a nationality in official censuses and statistic (Klimov 1999:53). Furthermore, the language belongs to the South Caucasian (or Kartvelian) languages and is related to Georgian and Svan; it is most closely related to Laz, which is spoken in present-day Turkey.

The Megrelian-speaking areas are found in Western Georgia, in the regions of Zugdidi, Senaki, Poti, Tsilendzhikha, Khobi, Martvili, Abasha, Gali, and they include the prosperous Black Sea coast. Before the peak of the ethno-political conflict in Abkhazia in 1993, Georgians – including mostly Megrelians – constituted the most numerous group in Abkhazia, in particular in the regions of Gali, Ochamchire and Sokhumi. Georgians accounted for 46% of the population (of a total of 525,000 in the last Soviet census 1989), compared to 18% Abkhaz, 15% Armenians and 14% Russians. Today, there are almost no Georgians left in Abkhazia, except for some groups in the Gali region. Most of the internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Abkhazia have settled in camps in and around the Georgian capital and in Samegrelo.

## Approaches to the status of Megrelian

Investigating the status of Megrelian is a sensitive matter, in particular with respect to the debate on its language/dialect status. In a diachronic perspective, following Chikobava (1936:3, 1967:15), it is common to treat Megrelian and Laz as dialects of the Zan (Megrelo-Chan or Megrelo-Laz) language. According to another approach, Megrelian is said to function as a Georgian dialect from a sociolinguistic point of view (Jorbenadze 1991:17). A more popular view is to maintain that Megrelian is not a language, but rather a dialect because it has no written standard (although Megrelian and Georgian are not mutually intelligible). Speakers of Megrelian use Georgian as their literary language. In many linguistic standard works, Megrelian is considered to be one of the Kartvelian languages (i.e. Harris 1991, Klimov 1999).

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<sup>1</sup> A shorter version of the paper has been published in Vamling (2000).

## **Sociolinguistic aspects of Megrelian**

Megrelian is interesting from a sociolinguistic point of view. It attracts attention as presently being a rather thriving language, despite a number of factors that would indicate expected loss of the language (Edwards 1992). For instance, there is no institutional support for the language and all speakers are at least bilingual in Megrelian-Georgian.

Within the Megrelian communities, the adherence to Megrelian is very high in everyday life: in family and social activities. Outside the Megrelian area, the language is often not transmitted to the second generation, typically in mixed marriages. However, due to the forced migration of Megrelians from Abkhazia to other parts of Georgia, the linguistic map has changed; and Megrelian is now used actively even outside its traditional area.

As the speakers of Megrelian use Georgian as their written language – a situation that has been known for centuries – there has been no choice of dialect as the basis for a literary standard for Megrelian. When it is occasionally written, the Georgian alphabet is used. In schools in Samegrelo the language of instruction is Georgian, starting from the first grade. Even pre-school institutions function in Georgian. During the 1990s new institutions of higher education have opened in Samegrelo, for instance, Zugdidi University. Here, as everywhere else, the language of instruction is Georgian.

Based on data from two pilot studies, this paper investigates self-reported use of the Megrelian language, patterns of multilingualism and attitudes among Megrelians to their language.

## **Two field studies**

Data on attitudes to Megrelian and on language use in the region were collected in two pilot field studies. The data collection in Georgia was carried out by Revaz Tchantouria in the framework of the two projects *The Language Situation in Georgia* (funded by The Council for Studies in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 1997–1999) and *Minority Languages in Georgia* (funded by the Swedish Royal Academy of Sciences, 1997–1999).

## **Interviews on language attitudes**

The interviews consisted of open questions: (1) what are the main factors that contribute to the maintenance of Megrelian, (2) what could threaten the development of Megrelian and lead to the demise of the language, and (3) what are current views on the future of the language. The interviews were conducted in Georgian, but the interviewer was Megrelian. The questions were posed to 20 speakers of Megrelian from different Megrelian districts and of different age and profession.

## **Study of language use**

The second study was structured into 25 multiple choice questions (written in Georgian) and supplemented by a few open questions and background data. The questions were posed to speakers of Megrelian from two groups: (1) Megrelians living in Samegrelo and (2) internally displaced persons from Abkhazia living in the Tskhneti area in

Tbilisi. The questions were answered by 150 persons: 100 from Samegrelo and 50 IDPs from Abkhazia. The age of the respondents range from 11 to 81, with the age group 20-30 as the largest. There is a larger proportion of women among the respondents than men. A variety of professions is represented among the respondents; half of them have completed higher education. The respondents were given the context information that the questions were posed in the framework of a study of language use conducted by researchers from Sweden in collaboration with linguists from the Chikobava Institute of Linguistics of the Georgian Academy of Sciences.

## Results

Results from the two studies are presented below: first the interview study on attitudes towards Megrelian, followed by a summary of results from the investigation of patterns of language use.

### Interviews

In answer to the first question (*Which are the main factors that contribute to the maintenance of Megrelian?*), respondents underline, in a variety of ways, that Megrelian is the language of communication in interaction between Megrelians:

Megrelians everywhere try to communicate in Megrelian. They do that intuitively, as they have learnt to speak Megrelian from childhood (F, nurse, b. 1949, Gulripshi)

Megrelian has been maintained especially in Samegrelo and Abkhazia. Before the conflict, many Abkhaz spoke Megrelian. Outside the official sphere, communication took place in Megrelian. Abkhaz and other non-Kartvelian minorities learned Megrelian, if they lived in the area for a longer period. (M, worker, b. 1962, Gali)

We students communicate among ourselves and with older people in Megrelian (F, student, b. 1979, Zugdidi)

Respondents are also highly aware of demographic factors – such as the fact that Megrelian is spoken in a rather large area, by a relatively high number of speakers, and that the population is mostly cohesive. Another factor drawn attention to by many respondents is that although Megrelian parents speak Megrelian to their children during their first years, they introduce them to Georgian in order to prepare them for school, where Georgian is the language of instruction:

It's important that the children speak Megrelian as their first language at home. I myself taught the children songs and traditions from an early age. Parents teach the Georgian alphabet to children so that they can read simple words before school. In this way Georgian does not feel foreign to them. The history classes at school also help them to understand that Georgia is their native land (SS, F, retired, b. 1928, Gegechkori)

Megrelians are conscious of their Colchian roots and show great pride in their history.

The most common answer to the second question (*What could threaten the development of Megrelian and lead to loss of the language?*) concerns demographic factors. Changes in the demographic situation are considered to be the greatest possible threat to the maintenance of Megrelian. In particular, it is the migration of young people from the area that is particularised:

A threat could be a heavy industrialisation with new labour forces moving into the area.... another threat is the written language, the official Georgian and the foreign languages that are taking the place of the unwritten language. The need for this is growing, especially among young people... (VG, M, construction worker, b. 1960, Tsalandzhikha)

A sensitive matter is the perceived negative attitude towards Megrelian in areas outside Samegrelo, which is noted by several respondents:

A threat to Megrelian could be erroneous political measures from the Georgian government; and also if young people are ashamed to speak Megrelian in the cities. (BK, F, retired, b. 1923, Zugdidi)

... a supercilious relation to Megrelian as not being a written language... (KG, M, b. 1927, Senaki)

... that you are ashamed of speaking Megrelian outside Samegrelo and where there are no other speakers (TsS, F, student b. 1979, Zugdidi)

Mixed marriages, that is Megrelians marrying non-Megrelian Georgians, is another factor to be highlighted by the respondents. If such couples settle outside Samegrelo, this has typically lead to a rapid shift to Georgian. In Abkhazia, Megrelian-Russian and Megrelian-Abkhaz marriages were common.

When questioned about their *beliefs about the future of the language*, respondents, generally, expressed a rather optimistic view on the future of Megrelian:

As a future teacher of Georgian, I intend to work in Samegrelo. If I will have children of my own, I will encourage their knowledge of Megrelian (TsS, F, student, b. Zugdidi)

I believe that there is a future for Megrelian, as long as there are strong family traditions, folklore, songs, dances...' (LU, F, nurse, b. 1962, Gali)

The very drastic changes in the demographic situation for the Megrelians, decreasing in large numbers in Abkhazia, but at the same time gaining new domains in the capital due to the settlement of the IDPs from Abkhazia are noted:

Megrelian will live on – it is notable that young people from Samegrelo and Abkhazia speak Megrelian among themselves. It shows their orientation, at the same time they know Georgian and consider it to be their mother tongue and they also study foreign languages (AS, M, medical doctor, b. 1950, Gegechkori)

It makes me happy to hear that young people speak Megrelian even in Tbilisi...  
Megrelian is resistant to assimilation, even in a non-Kartvelian environment  
(KsG, F, lawyer, b. 1924, Senaki)

**Study of language use**

Results from the second field study are given below. We focus on a comparison of data from the two groups: (1) Megrelians in Samegrelo and (2) Megrelian IDPs from Abkhazia according to various parameters. The diagrams below show results as percentage of responses.

**Language fluency in Megrelian, Georgian and Russian**

The respondents were asked to indicate fluency in the three languages: Megrelian, Georgian and Russian. As Megrelian is not written, only oral fluency in the three languages was taken into consideration.

The greatest differences in fluency are noted with respect to Megrelian and Russian. There is a higher fluency ranking for Megrelian in Samegrelo (Fig. 1a), whereas the knowledge of Russian is considerably stronger among IDPs from Abkhazia (Fig. 1b). A few respondents in Samegrelo even state that they have no knowledge of Russian.

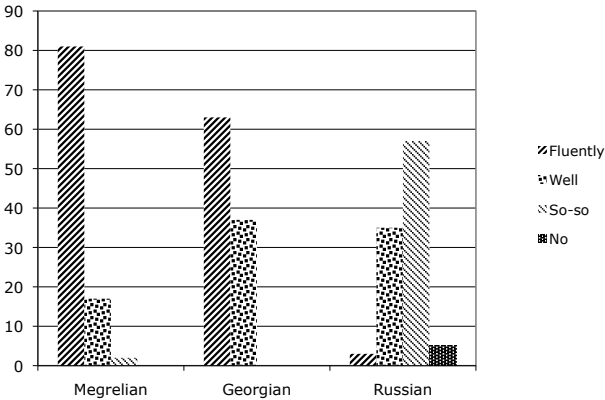


Fig. 1a. Self-reported language fluency among in Samegrelo

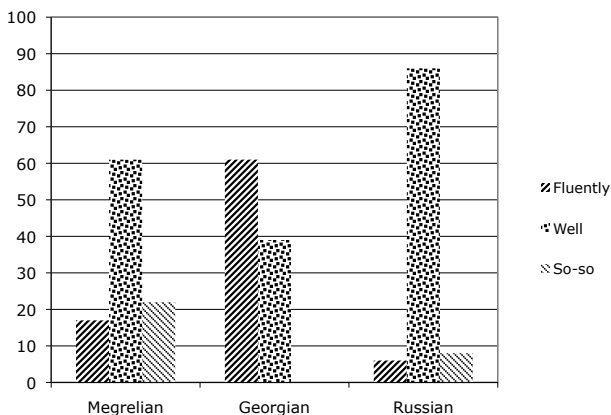


Fig.1b. Self-reported language fluency among IDPs from Abkhazia

### First language(s) acquired

There is a considerable difference in the answers with respect to which language or languages were acquired at a very early age. Over 70% of the respondents in Samegrelo acquired Megrelian as their first language at home. Respondents from Abkhazia give a more complex picture, with either Georgian or Megrelian as their first language or both languages together.

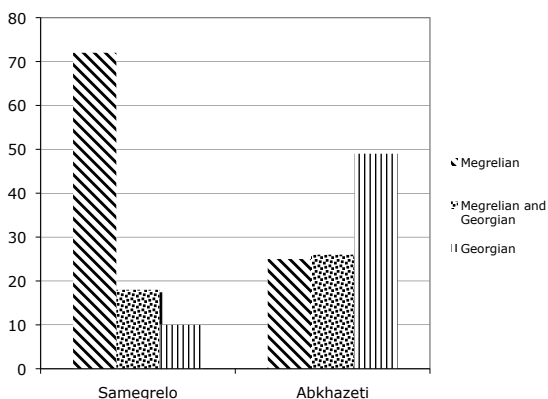


Fig. 2. First language(s) acquired

### Language fluency of parents

In the question concerning language fluency of parents, the choices – for mother and father respectively—were as follows: 1. Megrelian; 2. Megrelian and Georgian; 3. Georgian; 4. Megrelian, Georgian and Russian; and 5. Russian. Generally, speakers that are fluent in only one language are very few. The most common situation in Samegrelo is to have bilingual parents that are fluent in both Megrelian and Georgian (Fig. 3a). Trilingual parents that are fluent in Georgian, Megrelian and Russian are more common among respondents from Abkhazia (Fig. 3b). Fluency in Russian is notably higher among the fathers.

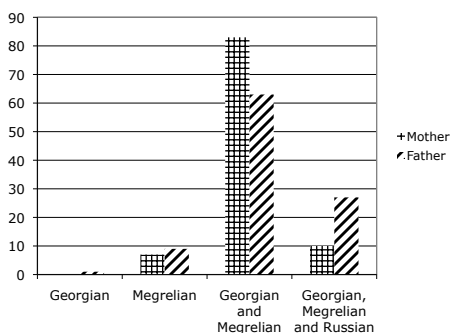


Fig.3a. Language fluency of parents (Samegrelo)

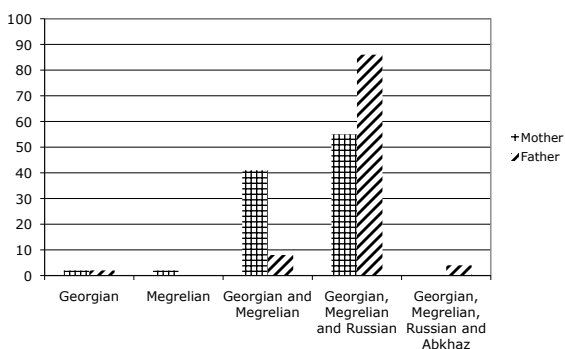


Fig.3b. Language fluency of parents among IDP:s from Abkhazia

### Language choice according to interlocutor

Language choice—Georgian, Megrelian or Russian—was studied according to interlocutors of three generations: grandparents, parents and persons of the same age.

Megrelian is shown to be the dominating language in Samegrelo, with almost no use of Russian (Fig. 4a). The use of Megrelian is less prevalent among the Megrelians from Abkhazia. Russian, on the other hand, is considerably stronger (Fig. 4b). A notable tendency among Megrelians from both Samegrelo and Abkhazia is a more common use of Georgian in interaction with persons of the same age than with parents and, in particular, grandparents.

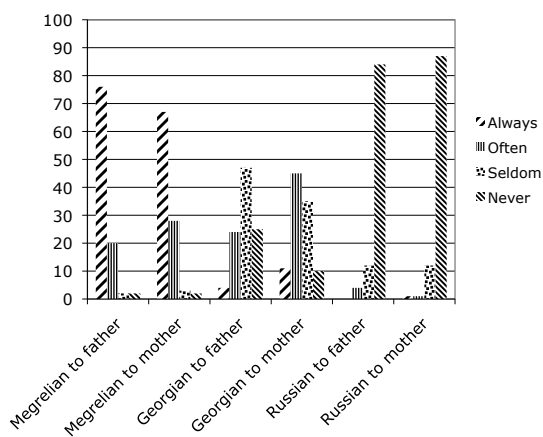


Fig.4a. Language choice in communication with parents (Samegrelo)

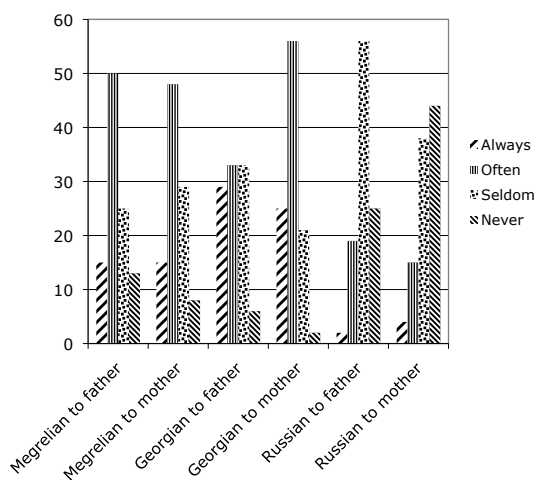


Fig.4b. Language choice in communication with parents among IDP:s from Abkhazia

Among the respondents from Abkhazia, Megrelian is the preferred language of communication with grandparents (Fig. 5b) than with parents (Fig. 4b). The use of Russian with grandparents is also much less common.

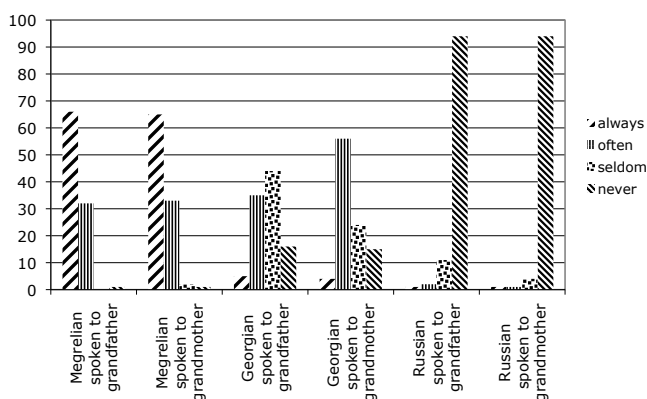


Fig.5a. Language choice in communication with grandparents (Samegrelo)

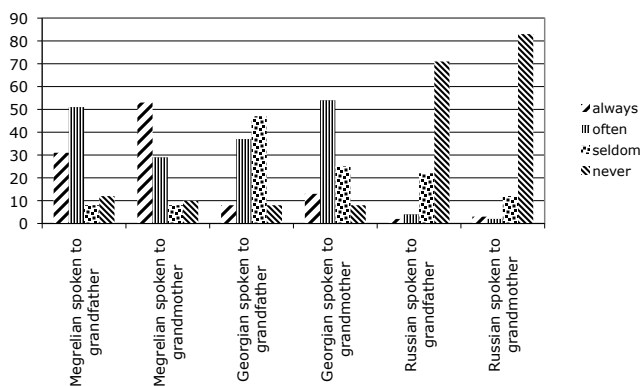


Fig.5b. Language choice in communication with grandparents (among IDP:s from Abkhazia)

### Use of Megrelian (in Samegrelo) in different domains

When asked about the use of Megrelian (in Samegrelo), it was found to be widespread ('often', 'sometimes') in the following domains (Fig. 6b): at home, in oral folklore, at the market, at funerals and *supra* (banquets), and at the workplace. In domains that are outside but somehow related to education–kindergarten and free time at university or school–Megrelian is less frequently used. The use of Megrelian in personal correspondence is very limited. The same domains of the use of Megrelian – at home, in oral folklore, at the market, at funerals and *supra* – show up in replies by IDPs from Abkhazia (Fig. 6b), but at a considerably lower level.

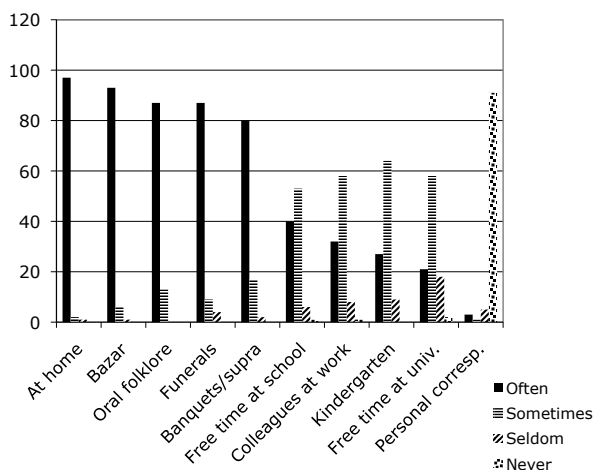


Fig.6a. Reported language use in different domains (Samegrelo)

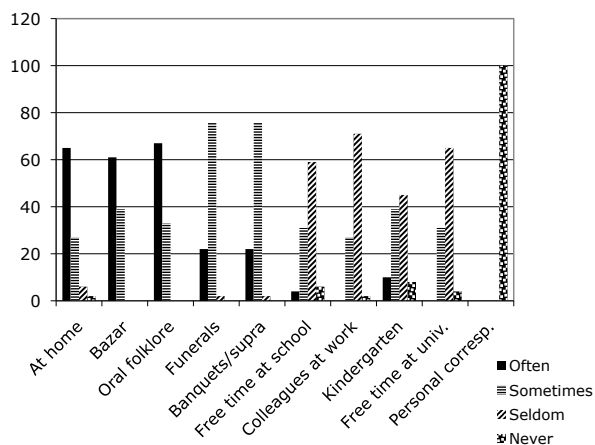
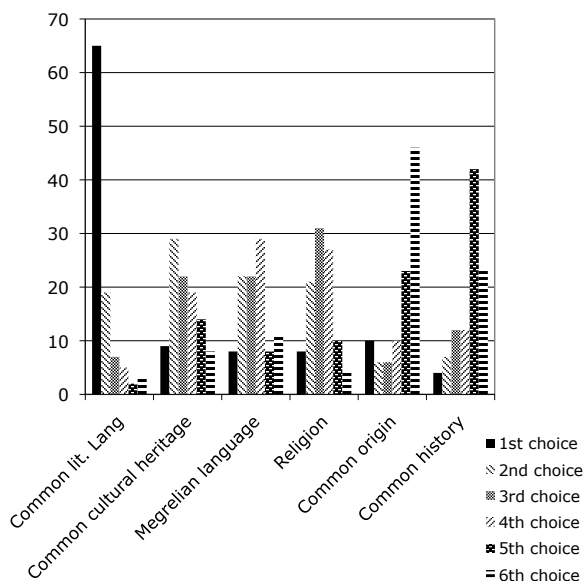


Fig.6a. Reported language use in different domains (IDP:s from Abkhazia)

### Ranking of factors determining identity

The study includes a ranking of factors according to perceived importance for national identity (Georg. *erovnuli vinaobis mtavari nishnebi*). The replies single out one factor very clearly as the most important one: the common literary language (Fig. 7). The common cultural heritage, the Megrelian language and common religion pattern similarly, whereas common history and origin are much lower in this ranking. As almost all the respondents indicated Georgian when asked about Nationality (Georg. *erovneba*); hence, the ranking responses regard Georgian (in the wide sense).



## Concluding remarks

It should be kept in mind that the results presented in the paper have to be seen in the light of the rather small scale of the studies. Both pilot studies show extensive use of Megrelian, especially in Samegrelo. When comparing reported language use and fluency among Megrelians in Samegrelo and Megrelian IDPs from Abkhazia, the overall patterns are very similar, although the percentages for Megrelian are lower in the latter group on all parameters. The picture of language use and fluency is more complex and diffused in this group, which reflects the multilingual setting of Abkhazia and the impact of Russian in the region.

The linguistic situation of Georgia has changed due to the forced migration of large numbers of Megrelians from Abkhazia at the beginning of the 1990s. As a result, the number of Megrelians has increased in Western Georgia and in Tbilisi, where they use their language actively, even outside its traditional areas. However, the strong position of the Georgian language in Tbilisi is a further factor that may play a role in language fluency and patterns of language use among the IDPs from Abkhazia who live in the capital.

The ranking of factors according to perceived importance for national identity indicate that Megrelians consider themselves Georgian by nationality in a wide sense, and are closely tied by cultural and historical bonds to the other Kartvelian ethnic groups, where the common literary language is selected as the most important factor for their national identity.

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# **The Present-day Situation of the Minority Ethno-Linguistic Peoples within the Avaric Region in the Republic of Dagestan**

**Rune Westerlund**

In Dagestan, with a total area of 50,000 sq. kilometers, more than 30 languages are spoken. The largest ethnic group in Dagestan is the Avars, who traditionally inhabit the mountainous area of the South-West. In this area the Avar people have maintained a leading position, and at least 15 ethno-linguistic peoples have lived alongside this majority group for centuries. These ethno-linguistic peoples belong to the Andic and Tsezic groups, and most of them were placed as independent census categories in the first Soviet census of 1926. However, in each population census taken thereafter, those categories were reduced to a single category, namely Avar. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia had its first All-Russian census in October 2002, in which the Andic and Tsezic peoples were once again designated as separate census categories. However, according to the official result of the All-Russian Census of 2002, some census categories such as Botlikh, Godoberi and Bagulal were still not counted separately.

This article presents a short background of the minority peoples of Dagestan and discusses the results of 2002 census. Between 2001 and 2005 representatives of some ethno-linguistic peoples such as Andi, Bagulal, Godoberi, Tindi and Botlikh within the Avaric region were interviewed. The comments and opinions of the respondents concerning the current and future ethno-linguistic situation is discussed.

## **Peoples and Languages in the Caucasus**

Throughout history, the Caucasus has been described as an area with a great number of peoples. The Greek geographer Strabo (b. 63 BC) crossed the Black Sea and ended up in Dioscurias, presently Sukhumi in Abkhazia, where he counted at least 70 peoples. In addition, he encountered at least 26 different languages in Caucasian Albania, present-day Dagestan and Northern Azerbaijan. Plinius the Elder (23-79 AC) reported that in the Caucasus area there were at least 300 peoples with different languages (Catford 1977; Klimov 1969, 1994; Vogt 1973).

There are at least 50 languages spoken in the Caucasus today; and only in the Republic of Dagestan, with its 2 584 200 inhabitants, there are more than 30 languages. The total area of Dagestan is 50,300 sq. kilometers, which is almost 75% of the size of Georgia. About 60% of the population of Dagestan live in rural areas (All-Russia Population Census, 2002), and most of the languages spoken in the Caucasus belong to the Caucasian language family. Many scholars consider the peoples speaking Caucasian

languages as the indigenous peoples of the area (Catford 1977; Hewitt 2004; Klimov 1969).

Quite a few Indo-European languages are also spoken in the Caucasus, such as Armenian, Greek, Kurdish, Ossetic, Talysh, Tat and, of course, the main lingua franca of the region, Russian. The Semitic language Neo-Aramic is spoken by a few thousand in Georgia and Armenia. Apart from the Indo-European and the Caucasian languages, one can find a great number of people speaking Altaic languages such as Azeri, Balkar, Karachay, Kumyk, Nogay and Turkmen, and in the far north on the steppes the Mongolian language Kalmuckian (Catford 1977; Gordon 2005; Klimov 1969, 1994).

Many languages survived the 50 years of war against the Russians in the 1800s; the outbreaks of civil war after the Russian Revolution and the collectivization process; the Second World War; the deportation of Caucasian peoples such as Chechens, Ingush and Tsezic peoples (e.g. Hunzib, Hinukh); and some Altaic peoples such as Tatars, Balkars and Karachays. As a consequence, many linguists, anthropologists, sociologists and others pay special interest to this area. Although most works are in Russian and Georgian, many important works concerning the Caucasian languages are published in English and German, such as B. Geiger et al. *Peoples and Languages of the Caucasus*, 1959; G. V. Klimov, *Die Kaukasischen Sprachen*, 1969 and *Einführung in die kaukasische Sprachwissenschaft* (translated by Jost Gippert), 1994; J. C. Catford, *Mountain of Tounges: The Languages of the Caucasus*, 1977; B. G. Hewitt, *Caucasian Languages in The Languages of the Soviet Union*, 1981; and *Introduction to the Study of the Languages of the Caucasus*, 2004.

## **Caucasian language families**

One of the many difficulties that scholars of language history and linguists have faced on the issue of Caucasian languages is that most languages of the area have not had any written form whatsoever. Many of the languages that now have a written form have received literary status as late as the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, although Georgian, for example, has had its literary form for more than 1,500 years (Klimov 1969; Hewitt 2004).

There are, however, examples of 500-600 year-old texts from Dagestanian languages, such as Dargwa, Lak and Avar. These texts are in Arabic script. There are also some traces of texts in the language which some scholars believe to have been spoken as the lingua franca in the southern part of present Dagestan, the northern part of Azerbaijan and the eastern part of Georgia until about 12 A.D. These areas are sometimes called *Caucasian Albania*, and the language is called Agvan (Catford 1977; Koryakov 2002; Klimov 1999, 1994; Vogt 1973).

Many scholars suggest that the Dagestanian language Udi is derived from the aforementioned language Agvan. Udi is spoken today by a few thousand mainly Christian speakers in Nidzh and Oghus (formerly Vartashen) in Azerbaijan; in Oktomberi (formerly Zinobiani), Georgia; and in diasporas in the Russian Federation, Armenia, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan (Schulze 2002; Vogt 1973).

### The state languages of Dagestan

According to the legislation of the Russian federation, Russia is a multiethnic federation where the language policy is part of the national policy. According to the law *On the Languages of the Peoples of the Russian Federation* (1991-10-25 as amended by Federal Law, July 24, 1998), it is declared that “[...] all the languages of all peoples of the territory of the Russian state are a national property, part of the historical and cultural heritage, and thus protected by the state” (RSFSR Law on the Languages of the Peoples of the Russian Federation 1998). The substance of this law seems to have much in common with the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, but ECRML has not yet been ratified by Russia (ECRML Strasbourg 1992, 5.XI.; Vieyetz 2002).

In addition to this law, the Russian Federation has declared that certain languages have so called “official status” within the federation, which means that for the Republic of Dagestan it has 14 so-called *state languages*. Speakers of such languages (except Russians) were called *The Peoples of the Autonomous Republics* and numbered to ten ethnic categories in Dagestan in the 1989 census (Sokolovski 2002, 2005; Stepanov 2002).

According to the censuses of 1989 and 2002, the fourteen *state languages of today* had the following number of first language speakers in Dagestan (USSR Census 1989; All-Russian Census 2002):

**Table 1. The State languages of Dagestan and the number of native speakers of these languages**

| Dagestan languages |         |         | Altai and Indoeuropean (IE) |         |         |
|--------------------|---------|---------|-----------------------------|---------|---------|
|                    | 1989    | 2002    |                             | 1989    | 2002    |
| Avar               | 490 458 | 741 812 | Kymyk (Altai)               | 229 436 | 405 349 |
| Dargin             | 277 222 | 429 347 | Azeri (Altai)               | 73 192  | 136 431 |
| Lezgin             | 200 363 | 345 943 | Nogai (Altai)               | 23 803  | 38 015  |
| Chechen            | 57 083  | 92 599  |                             |         |         |
| Lak                | 89 515  | 142 523 | Russian (IE)                | 165 588 | 120 875 |
| Tabasaran          | 76 975  | 112 778 | Tat (IE)                    | 11 892  | 1 792   |
| Rutul              | 14 719  | 25 033  |                             |         |         |
| Agul               | 13 585  | 25 447  |                             |         |         |
| Tsaskhur           | 5 134   | 8 122   |                             |         |         |

### Avars and ethno-linguistic peoples counted as Avars 1939-1989

In the Republic of Dagestan, the traditional area of the Avar-Andic-Tsezic peoples represents 20% of the total area of Dagestan, mainly in central and southwest Dagestan. This area is almost all mountainous, and the name *Avar* (авар мацӀ, маӀарул мацӀ, avar mac’c’, ma’arul mac’c’) actually means “mountain language” and “language of the mountain dwellers”. They inhabit about 10 000 sq. kms, which is equivalent to 25% of the total area of Switzerland. Because of the mountainous geography with very few accessible passes, many groups live quite isolated. Their villages are situated on hillside

slopes, and their traditional means of livelihood is sheep herding and farming. Only a small part of the area is arable, which means that people have used terrace agriculture for centuries. The ethnic groups are divided into tribes and village communities, so each village and language is important for keeping their own traditions. The religion is Sunni Muslim (Akiner 1986; Kolga et al 1993).

In the Tsuntinskij district, for instance, certain mountain villages can be reached by car while many villages can be reached on foot only. Many children must, therefore, go to boarding schools in order to finish their compulsory school education (van den Berg 1995).

From the 1700s until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Avars dominated communication and trade in southern Dagestan. For most minority peoples in the area, the Avar language was used as the lingua franca. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century until the 1920s, Avar was occasionally written with the Arabic script. In 1928 the Latin script was introduced and exchanged for the Cyrillic script in 1938 (the year when many other languages in the Caucasus as well as most languages in the rest of the Soviet Union switched to the Cyrillic script). However, this does not apply to Georgian and Armenian (Catford 1977, Klimov 1969; Vogt 1973).

### **Ethno-linguistic groups within the Avaric region. The censuses of the Soviet Union 1926-1989 and the All-Russian census 2002**

In Russia the term *indigenous minority* has an official definition, as any ethnic group numbering less than 50,000 persons has the status of an indigenous minority (Kazakevitch 2002; Silver 1986). In the first All-Soviet census that took place in 1926, most minorities within the Avaric group were counted separately; but in the following five censuses from 1939 to 1989, these minorities were counted as Avars. A new list of indigenous minorities of Russia was adopted by the Russian parliament in 1999, and a list of nationalities and languages to be used in the census of 2002 was agreed on by the State Committee for Statistics, compiled by the Academic Council of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, and Academy of Sciences (Sokolovski 2002, 2005, Stepanov 2002).

According to the list of ethnic categories in the Russian Census 2002, the minority groups that had been counted as Avars in the censuses from 1939-1989 were again split up into 14 different ethnic categories. This list includes the thirteen minorities speaking languages of the Andic and Tsezic groups and one language of the Lezgian language group, namely Archi. However, the Dagestan government did not fully accept this list and claimed that some of these ethno-linguistic groups had to be counted as Avars, as had been the case from 1939 to 1989. The State Council of Dagestan is built up of the representatives of the state languages, and the electoral units, therefore, mirror the balance of power among these groups (Sokolovski 2002, 2005).

**Table 2. The ethnic categories and languages introduced in the All-Russian Census 2002**

| Minorities within the Avaric group (district) | Census of 1926 (nationality) | All-Russian Census 2002 (ethnic) | All-Russian Census 2002 (language) | Estimated number of speakers in 1990s |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Andi (Botlikhskij)                            | 7 840                        | 19 382                           | <b>23 729</b>                      | >20 000 (Alekseev 1999)               |
| Botlikh (Botlikhskij)                         | 3 354                        | 16                               | 90*                                | >8 500 (Alekseev 2003b)               |
| Godoberi (Botlikhskij)                        | 1 425                        | 39                               | 103*                               | >2 500 (Kibrik 1998)                  |
| Chamalal (Tsumadinskij)                       | 3 438                        | 12                               | 2 355*                             | >9 000 (Alekseev 2003c)               |
| Bagulal (Tsumadinskij and Akhvakhskij)        | 3 054                        | 40                               | 57*                                | >5 000 (Kozhemjakina 2003c)           |
| Tindi (Tsumadinskij)                          | 3 812                        | 44                               | 616*                               | >5 000 (Alekseev 2003g)               |
| Karata (Akhvakhskij Botlikhskij)              | 5 305                        | 6 052                            | <b>6 574</b>                       | >5 000 (Alekseev 2003e)               |
| Akhvakh (Akhvakhskij)                         | 3 683                        | 6 376                            | <b>5 793</b>                       | ~6 000 (Magomedbekova 1999a)          |
| Khvarshi (Tsumadinskij)                       | 1 019                        | 128                              | <b>1 872</b>                       | ~1 900 (Alekseev 2003f)               |
| Tsez (Tsuntinskij)                            | 3 276                        | 15 256                           | <b>15 356</b>                      | >12 000 (Alekseev et al. 2004)        |
| Hinukh (Tsuntinskij)                          | ---                          | 531                              | <b>548</b>                         | >500 (Alekseev 2003d)                 |
| Hunzib (Tsuntinskij)                          | 122                          | 998                              | <b>1 839</b>                       | ~2 000 (van den Berg 1995)            |
| Bezhta (Tsuntinskij)                          | 1 448                        | 6 198                            | <b>6 461</b>                       | ~7 000 (Alekseev 2003a)               |
| Archi (Charodinskij)                          | 863                          | 89                               | 524*                               | ~1 000 (Kibrik 1994)                  |

The figures for *\*Botlikh*, *\*Godoberi*, *\*Chamalal*, *\*Bagulal*, *\*Tindi* and *\*Archi* do not correspond to the estimated number of speakers (Alekseev 1999, 2003b, c, g; Koryakov 2002; Kibrik 1994, 1998; Kozhemjakina 2003c; Magomedbekova 1999b). The local authorities in Dagestan may have employed various tactics to gain a result that would agree to the policy of the state government since the State Council of Dagestan is built up of the representatives of the 14 state ethnic groups, of which Avar is one, so that the electorate unit would fit the balance of power among these groups (Sokolovski 2005).

This prediction is quite obvious for the result of the different ethno-linguistic groups of the Tsumadinskij district (*Bagulal*, *Tindi*, *Chamalal* and *Khvarshi* and of the Botlikhskij district (*Godoberi* and *Botlikh*). However, the result of the Census of 2002 compared to the estimated number of speakers in the 1990s seems to be realistic as far as it concerns the *Andi* of the Botlikhsky district, *Karata* and *Akhvakh* of the Akhvakhsky district and *Tsez*, *Hinukh*, *Hunzib* and *Bezhta* of the Tsuntinsky district (Alekseev 1999, 2003a, d, e, f; Alekseev et al 2004; Koryakov 2002; Magomedbekova 1999a; van den Berg 1995).

### **Information and opinions of the respondents of Andi, Botlikh, Godoberi, Bagulal and Tindi**

In addition to analyzing the figures from the All-Russian Census of 2002, I have interviewed some persons representing different ethnic groups of Dagestan. Therefore, I will present some information and opinions from representatives of five ethno-linguistic groups and also some reference information of representatives of the State Languages Avar (five respondents): Tabasaran, Lak, Dargwa and Kymyk (Altai). The survey was carried out between October 2003 and May 2005.

The persons I have interviewed, who represent the minorities *Botlikh*, *Godoberi*, *Andi*, *Tindi* and *Bagulal*, were born between 1968 and 1983, and have completed at

least 10 years of school. Their native villages are situated 5 to 35 kilometers from each other in the Botlikhskij and Tsumadinskij districts.

**Table 3. First, second and third languages and languages of instruction at school for the respondents**

| Respondent         | Number of Speakers | Languages |         |               | Main lang. of instruction at school |              |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|
|                    |                    | First     | second  | third         | grade 1-4                           | grade 5-9/10 |
| (Dagestan 2002)    |                    |           |         |               |                                     |              |
| Andic Lagnuages    |                    |           |         |               |                                     |              |
| Bagulal (K)        | >5 000 (est)       | Bagulal   | Avar    | Russian       | Avar                                | Russian      |
| Botlikh (B)        | >8 500 (est)       | Botlikh   | Russian | Avar          | Russian                             | Russian      |
| Andi (A)           | 23 039             | Andi      | Avar    | Russian       | Avar                                | Russian      |
| Godoberi (G)       | 2 500 (est)        | Godoberi  | Botlikh | Russian, Avar | Russian                             | Russian      |
| Tindi (T)          | 5 000 (est)        | Tindi     | Avar    | Russian       | Avar                                | Russian      |
| -----              |                    |           |         |               |                                     |              |
| State Languages    |                    |           |         |               |                                     |              |
| Avar 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | 741 812            | Avar      | Russian | Arabic, Kumyk | Avar                                | Russian      |
| Tabasaran          | 112 778            | Tabasaran | Russian | Azeri         | Russian                             | Russian      |
| Dargin             | 429 347            | Dargwa    | Lak     | Russian       | Russian                             | Russian      |
| Lak                | 142 523            | Lak       | Russian | Dargwa        | Lak                                 | Russian      |
| Kumyk (Altai)      | 405 349            | Kumyk     | Russian | Turkic        | Kumyk                               | Russian      |

### Language of instruction at school

Four of my respondents completed their compulsory school education in their home villages and have now moved to cities in Russia or abroad, while one respondent moved with his parents to a city before his primary school education began. My respondents all return to their native areas at least once a year.

Before starting school they spoke only their native languages, but three respondents had learned some Russian from television. In school the means of instruction, tests and exams were in Avar during the first years. Avar was a completely unfamiliar language for my Bagulal, Andi, Botlikh and Godoberi respondents. The Tindi respondent had learned Avar from his relatives in an Avar-speaking village before beginning school.

The Botlikh respondent, who moved to a city, attended a Russian school there. The Godoberi respondent went to a Russian school in Botlikh. All respondents state that most teachers were the speakers of their pupils’ native languages and that instructions were quite often given in the local languages. However, the tests and exams were all in Avar or Russian. From the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grades most instructions were in Russian, but Avar was taught as a separate subject.

### Teaching materials/School books

One problem that these people faced was that there was a constant lack of modern teaching material in Avar. Most books were quite old, and sometimes they had to use supplementary books in Russian. Even today, both in cities and villages, the schools have to rely on 20-year-old books. Dagestan has few funds for publishing textbooks;

and although there are new books published, this happens often without consulting the Dagestan Pedagogical Institute (Respondents A, K, Avar 1, Avar 4; RFE/RL 2002).

### **The present situation**

Within the ethno-linguistic areas like Botlikh, Godoberi, Andi, Tindi and Bagulal, people generally use their native languages within their own villages and settlements. As far as the minority languages within the Andic and Tsezic groups are concerned, attempts have been made to construct written languages, for example, *Andi*, *Tindi*, *Bezhta* and *Tsez* languages. The Avar newspaper *Khaqiqat* regularly published one page in some of these languages for some time in the 1990s. In the village of Kidero of the Tsuntinskij district, there are attempts to use Tsez schoolbooks in the first grade (van den Berg 1995; Alekseev and Radzhabov; Respondents A, B, K).

### **The village of Botlikh, the center of Botlikhsky district**

The district center, Botlikh, is increasing in population and has more than 5,000 inhabitants today. Although the Botlikh language is the normal means of communication, Avar is spoken quite frequently there since Botlikh is the administrative center for the people from five different language groups: *Godoberi* (the villages of Godoberi, Ziberkhali and the settlement Beledi), *Botlikh* (the district center Botlikh and the villages of Miarso, Ashino and the farm Ankho), *Andi* (the villages of Andi, Gunkha, Rikhvani, Gagatli, Ashali, Zilo, Rushukha, Chanko, Tsibilta, Muni, Kvankhidatl and the farms Shivor, Mekheturi and Khando), *Karata* (the village of Nizhije Inkhelo), and the state language *Avar* (the villages of Ansalta, Rakhata, Shadroda, Tando, Tasuta, Alak, Kheleturi, Ortakolo, Tlokh and Kizhani). Botlikh has also recently become the center of one institution for two other districts, Tsumadinskij and Akhvakhskij, where the languages *Tindi*, *Bagulal*, *Karata*, *Akhvakh* and *Khvarshi* are spoken (Respondents A, B, G, K, T and Avar 1, 5).

### **The ethno-linguistic group of Andi**

One of the largest ethno-linguistic groups within the Andi and Tsezic groups is Andi, with its more than 20 000 speakers. Although a considerable number of Andi people have moved to the Dagestanian plains, mainly to the district of Khasavyurt, about half of the population still lives in their traditional areas, in the Botlikhskij district. The Andis, primarily young people with strong ethnic identity, stress their distinction from Avars. However, they face great difficulties in getting representation on the level of the central administration in Dagestan. Some very strong Avar clans from the area have an overwhelming influence in power structures and law enforcing agencies (Respondent A, B and Avar 1).

## **What will happen with the minority languages within the Avaric region in the future?**

My respondents believe that the language of correspondence in some district centers (such as Botlikh) probably will change from the minority languages to Avar and Russian; but as long as the people live in their villages in the highlands, the minority languages such as *Godoberi*, *Botlikh*, *Andi*, *Karata*, will survive for quite a while. When people move to the urban areas, to the plains and to other language areas, the small languages are most likely to disappear.

My respondents also give other reasons for the weakening of the small languages:

- The number of the Russian television channels has increased, and recently two Russian radio stations started to operate in the district center of Botlikh.
- The influence of the Russian culture is increasing, which has a great impact on the social life even though the roots of traditions and customs are still strong. A few years ago one could hardly hear Russian songs or see Russian dances at wedding ceremonies, but today it is quite common.
- Transportation facilities connecting the capital of Dagestan, Makhachkala, and the district center of Botlikh have improved; and since the main lingua franca in the capital is Russian, people get used to using Russian to a greater extent.
- People with various languages from the smaller villages migrate to the district centers, where they have to use Avar to a greater extent than before.

## **Conclusion**

Within the Avaric region in the Republic of Dagestan, a great number of minority languages are spoken; the smallest, Hinukh, in the village of Ginukh, at an altitude of 2,130 meters in Tsuntinsky district, has only 548 speakers. As early as the 1950s, linguists and other scholars predicted that most of the languages within the Andic and Tsezic groups, especially the smaller ones, were going to become extinct before the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, none of these languages is extinct today. Although many languages are potentially endangered, there is a greater chance that they will survive for quite some time thanks to the mountainous rural location. As David Crystal states in his book *Language Death* (2002) “... [I]n some circumstances such as rural setting, 500 speakers could permit a reasonable optimistic prediction” (Crystal 2002).

On the other hand, the smaller languages, such as *Godoberi* and *Botlikh*, around the growing district center of Botlikh will have greater difficulties surviving since the use of the state language, Avar, is increasing in that area as well as the gradual adoption of the Russian culture. The ethno-linguistic groups have also a hard time gaining official representation on higher political levels. Andi candidates have unsuccessfully tried to get representation on the republican level because of the strong Avar clans of Gunib, Charoda and Khunsakh, which have an overwhelming majority in the power structures and law enforcement agencies (Respondent A and Avar 1, 3).

The greatest threat to the minority languages in Dagestan is probably financial. Dagestan, having 14 state languages, has to invest a great deal of resources in order to keep up the standards of these languages. The teaching material in some of those state

languages is of poor quality. Indeed, financial resources for preserving programs for the great number of the minority languages seem to be absent.

However, it is my conviction that many of these minority languages will survive as long as people stay in their traditional highland areas, where the tribal system is of great importance. It is also vital that a language is used locally and that everybody finds it quite natural to be at least bi-lingual. With regards to considerably larger languages, such as Andi and Tsez, it would be wrong to predict that they will become extinct within the next 50 years. Teaching material is already used in some schools in the native Tsez-speaking district. Furthermore, my Andi respondent believes that it is quite possible that Andi will be taught at school in the future.

The smallest languages, such as Hinukh, Archi, and Hunzib, will probably have the hardest time surviving the next 50 years, although a certain amount of hope is suggested by David Crystal when he suggests that the language of a very small rural community can survive much longer than in an urban environment.

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## **Respondents**

Five respondents representing minority peoples

Andi (A)  
Bagulal (K)  
Botlikh (B)  
Godoberi (G)  
Tindi (T)

Ten reference respondents representing five of the 14 state languages

Avar 1  
Avar 2  
Avar 3  
Avar 4  
Avar 5  
Dargin  
Tabasaran  
Lak  
Kumyk

# Human Rights, Terrorism, and the Destruction of Chechnya

Ib Faurby

## Introduction

During the years following the dissolution of the former Soviet Union, the sufferings of the Chechens surmounted that of any other people of the federal union. Since 1991 the republic has suffered two devastating wars as well as internal upheavals, economic breakdown, crime and terrorism. The result has been an almost total destruction of Chechen society.

During the final days of the Soviet Union, Chechnya, under the leadership of Djokhar Dudayev, declared itself independent—as did the union republics. Moscow, however, did not accept Chechnya's independence, nor did it engage in serious negotiations with Dudayev about the future relationship with Grozny. For two years Moscow conducted a half-hearted and ineffective economic blockade of Chechnya. Then in December 1994, after failed attempts to support a coup by Dudayev's opponents, Russian armed forces intervened with the alleged purpose of re-establishing constitutional order, and the 1994/96 war ensued.

The war ended in Russian defeat and military withdrawal. In January 1997, the Chechen Chief-of-Staff during the war, Aslan Maskhadov, was elected president of Chechnya in an election which the OSCE declared as "free and fair". In May, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and Maskhadov signed a peace agreement which promised Russian support for the reconstruction of Chechnya and that negotiations about Chechnya's future status would be concluded before the end of 1999.

However, Maskhadov had almost insoluble problems. Chechnya was still a clan-based society, and the so-called field commanders had forces loyal to them and not to the elected president. On the whole, Chechen society was almost totally devastated. Its economy was in ruins and the promised economic support from Russia did not materialize; unemployment skyrocketed, and former fighters turned to criminality, including armed robbery and hostage-taking.

Then in the early autumn of 1999, a group of Chechen fighters under the leadership of former field commander Shamil Basayev entered neighbouring Dagestan in support of local Wahhabis, with the declared purpose of establishing a Chechen-Dagestani Muslim state. The attack was rebuffed by Dagestani militia and Russian regular troops. However, the armed confrontation as well as some suspicious bombings in Moscow and elsewhere gave President Yeltsin and his newly appointed Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin, the excuse to start the second war against Chechnya.

This time the Russian forces were far better prepared but no less ruthless. It is not possible to put a definitive date on the end of the second war. Gradually, the Chechen forces were pushed into the high southern mountains and became unable to conduct regular military operations. Moscow installed a pro-Russian Chechen leadership headed by Akhmed-Hadji Kadyrov, who was unable to command popular respect, caught as he was between the Kremlin and the Chechen population.

In March 2004, Kadyrov was killed in a bomb-attack in Grozny. A year later Russian troops killed Maskhadov, the last moderate leader of the Chechen independence movement. In June 2006, Maskhadov's successor, Abdul-Khalim Saduleyev, was killed by Russian forces, and the following month Shamil Basayev died in a bomb explosion, allegedly carried out by Russian special forces.

During 2002 the regular war came to an end, but the terror escalated. Russian forces continued their violations against the civilian population. When the notoriously criminal Ramsan Kadyrov succeeded his father, there was a stark increase in violations against ordinary Chechens by the pro-Russian administration. At the same time, former guerrillas, regular criminals and foreign fundamentalists increasingly turned to terrorism inside Chechnya and elsewhere in Russia.

The latest phase of the Russian-Chechen conflict has been characterized by a several hostage takings and an increase in the number of suicide bombings. A new and conspicuous feature of these acts has been the participation of female hostage-takers and suicide bombers: the so-called "black widows". Many observers saw this as a sign of a deepening of the conflict.

The major terrorist actions from August 2002 through to September 2004 demonstrate the evolution of this particular aspect of the conflict:

- August 2002: Two Russian airplanes bombed in mid-air (90 passengers and crew killed).
- September 2002: Chechen terrorists take hostages at the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow (approximately 800 hostages of which at least 129 killed during the rescue operation).
- December 2002: Suicide truck with explosives targets the site of the Moscow-installed Chechen government in Grozny (72 deaths).
- December 2002: Suicide truck with explosives targets a Russian-occupied military building in Grozny (57 deaths).
- May 2003: Suicide truck with explosives targets local (pro-Moscow) government building in Northern Chechnya (65 deaths).
- May 2003: Female suicide bombers attempt to kill Kadyrov (18 deaths).
- June 2003: Female suicide bomber near army bus in Mozdok, North Ossetia (16 deaths).
- July 2003: Two female suicide bombers at rock festival in Moscow (more than 15 deaths).
- August 2003: Suicide truck with explosives targets military hospital (50 deaths).
- September 2003: Suicide truck with explosives targets Chechen pro-Moscow intelligence building (3 deaths).
- May 2004: Bomb kills Akhmed-Hadji Kadyrov and several others in Grozny.
- September 2004: Hostage-taking by Chechens and others at a school in Beslan. (More than 300 deaths, half of them children, during the botched rescue attempt).

## **Human Rights Violations**

Both parties in the Russian-Chechen conflict have committed serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law. In the West this has sometimes lead to the attitude that both parties are equally guilty. The Russian side has

continuously drawn attention to Chechen violations, something which has not been lost on some Western media, commentators and politicians.

It is, however, beyond any doubt that during both wars the Russian forces committed the largest number of violations as well as the most serious. This is the unanimous conclusion of several reports, including reports by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the US State Department, the Russian Presidents Human Rights Committee (in 1996), Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International as well as other humanitarian NGOs. The following is a quote from a report dated April 2000 by the Committee of Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe:

...the scale and number of human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law on the Chechen side cannot even remotely compare to those of the Russian side, which are of much greater magnitude, and, due to Russia being a state party to the European Convention on Human Rights and thus bound by duty to protect the rights she is violating, much more serious.<sup>1</sup>

The most serious Chechen violations consist of hostage taking and violent terrorist attacks. Most dramatic were the two hostage actions during the first war in Budjonnovsk and Kizlyar, which included the murder of hostages. These reprehensible acts must be condemned, but it should not be forgotten that in both instances most of the hostages killed were killed by Russian forces.<sup>2</sup>

There have been numerous other cases of hostage taking in Chechnya, though it has been difficult to ascertain to what extent they have been cases of individual crime or part of a deliberate policy on behalf of the Chechen fighters. The two largest and most reprehensible acts after the secession of regular military operations in the second war were the hostage-taking in the Dubrovka Theatre in Moscow and the School no. 1 in Beslan, North Ossetia.

Chechen violations during the military operations include fighting in and from housing areas, thereby exposing the civilian population to Russian counter-attacks. That was the case during the extended battles for Grozny as well as the battles in and around many towns and villages.<sup>3</sup> There are also reports about Chechen fighters having executed, physically molested or threatened with execution village leaders and others who would not co-operate with them or who co-operated with the Russian authorities or the Russian-installed Chechen administration.<sup>4</sup>

The Russian side has also claimed that Chechens kept prisoners of war or other captives as slaves or in slave-like conditions. Finally, there have been Russian claims that Chechen fighters have tortured or in other ways maltreated Russian prisoners.

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<sup>1</sup> Council of Europe. Parliamentary Assembly. Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights. Conflict in Chechnya - Implementation of Russia of Recommendation 1444 (2000). Doc. 8700. 5 April 2000.

<sup>2</sup> *Chechnya and Dagestan. Caught in the Crossfire: Civilians in Gudermes and Pervomayskoye*. Human Rights Watch/Helsinki: March 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Council of Europe. Parliamentary Assembly. Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights. Conflict in Chechnya - recent developments. Doc. 8948. 23 January 2001

There are, nevertheless, many instances where former Russian prisoners have said that they were well-treated by their Chechen captors.

The nature and extent of the Russian violations of humanitarian international law and human rights law are, as mentioned, well documented. The list is long and includes almost all categories of human rights violations. The Russian conduct of the war has shown that the purpose is not the claimed fight against international terrorism but a collective punishment of the Chechen people.

During both wars there have been numerous instances of disproportionate and indiscriminate bombing of the civilian population (the most striking example, but certainly not the only one, being the destruction of Grozny during both wars). Already on 6 January 1995, the International Court of Justice denounced the indiscriminate use of force by the Russian army against civilian targets in and around Grozny. The court stated that "the Russian army violated the right to life of unarmed civilians on a massive scale".<sup>5</sup> The Russian President's Human Rights Commission, of which Mr. Sergej Kovaljov was then chairman, estimated that the original battle for Grozny during the first war cost 27,000 civilian lives.<sup>6</sup> Due to censorship and other restrictions, we do not have figures for the loss of civilian lives in Grozny during the present war.

During both wars, immense destruction has been served on towns and villages throughout Chechnya. "The attacks on populated areas must be characterised as a war against the civilian population," wrote the OSCE Assistance Group in Chechnya in a report in March 1996.<sup>7</sup>

Russian forces often surrounded towns and villages and threatened the population with attack if it did not hand over an arbitrary number of weapons or pay considerable sums of money to the Russians. A particularly gruelling example is the town of Samaskij, which twice during the first war was the scene of massacres of women, children and elderly men. The Russian human rights organisation "Memorial" has documented the killing of more than one hundred civilians in Samaskij during the attack in April 1995.<sup>8</sup> Almost one year later, in March 1996, 174 persons were killed and approximately 200 men taken to so-called filtration points. Further, many houses were set on fire.<sup>9</sup>

Similar examples abound from the second war.<sup>10</sup> From the first 18 months of the conflict there are three cases of mass killings of the civilian population by Russian

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<sup>5</sup> Nicolas M. L. Bovay, "The Russian Armed Intervention in Chechnya and its Human Rights Implications", *International Commission of Jurists - The Review*, 54, 1995, p. 34, here quoted from Svante E. Cornell, "International Reactions to Massive Human Rights Violations: The Case of Chechnya", *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 1, 1999, p. 88.

<sup>6</sup> *On the Observance of the Rights of Man and the Citizens in the Russian Federation (1994-95)*. Report of the President's Commission on Human Rights. Moscow: February 1996, chapter 2.1.

<sup>7</sup> "Human-Rights Situation Remains Unimproved". Telefax from OSCE AG to CiO, 12 March 1996.

<sup>8</sup> Samashki. Moscow: Memorial, 1995. (To be found on the address <http://www.smn.co.jp/chechen/>).

<sup>9</sup> Greg Hansen and Robert Seely, *War and Humanitarian Action in Chechnya*. Providence, RI: The Thomas J. Watson Institute for International Studies, 1996, p. 43; *Civilians Targeted. A Médecins sans Frontières Report on Violations of Humanitarian Law in Chechnya*. Moscow: April 18, 1996, p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> Russia/Chechnya. The "Dirty War" in Chechnya: Forced Disappearances, Torture, and Summary Executions. *Human Rights Watch*. Vol 13, No. 1 (D), March 2001.

troops, which have been well-documented by Russian and international NGOs.<sup>11</sup> To this should be added a number of suspected mass killings during the same period as well as the revelation of a mass grave at a village less than a kilometre from the main Russian military base at Khankala in the eastern part of Grozny. Fifty-one bodies were found, several of which belonged to persons who had been taken into custody by the federal forces.<sup>12</sup>

Besides mass killings, there are numerous well-documented cases of summary executions of individual Chechens - men, women and even children.<sup>13</sup> From both wars there are reports of columns of refugees being attacked by aircraft, helicopters and artillery as well as by soldiers with light arms. Russian helicopters have also attacked refugees trying to cross the mountains into Georgia.

There were also several reports of Russian officers demanding payment in order to let civilians escape from areas under attack. During the present war, Russian border troops have also demanded payment for letting refugees pass the border from Chechnya into Ingushetia. Arbitrary detention of Chechens and their maltreatment, including torture, has taken place in temporary detention centres.

During both wars, Russian authorities established so-called filtration camps where boys (from 10 years old and upwards), men, and occasionally women have been interned, supposedly in order to check whether or not they are terrorists. Conditions in the camps are primitive, not to say inhuman. In some cases the interned are placed in unheated box cars. What is more, the supply of food and water is insufficient.<sup>14</sup> The Council of Europe has, among other criticisms, mentioned that the internees receive no legal council. Based on interviews with former detainees, several international humanitarian organisations claim that internees have been tortured and raped.<sup>15</sup>

During both wars Russian forces have pillaged and stolen Chechen property and often carried it away in military vehicles and stored it at military bases until it could be transported out of Chechnya. Russian officers have clearly known about this but have not intervened to stop the traffic in stolen goods. Some officers even participated in these illegal activities.<sup>16</sup>

In direct violation of international humanitarian law, Russian civilian and military authorities have obstructed the work of humanitarian organisations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, whose access to detainees and victims is guaranteed by the Geneva Conventions.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Council of Europe. Parliamentary Assembly. Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights. Conflict in Chechnya - recent developments. Doc. 8948. 23 January 2001; Civilian Killings in Staropromyslovski District of Grozny. *Human Rights Watch*. Vol 12, no. 2 (D), February 2000. Russia/Chechnya, . . . Op.cit. "No Happiness Remains". Civilian Killings, Pillage, and Rape in Alkan-Yurt, Chechnya. *Human Rights Watch*. Vol. 12, No. 5 (D), April 2000; Russia/Chechnya. February 5: A Day of Slaughter in Novye Aldi. *Human Rights Watch*. 2001

<sup>12</sup> "Russia/Chechnya. Burying the Evidence: The Botched Investigation into a Mass Grave in Chechnya", *Human Rights Watch*. Vol. 13, No. 3 (D), May 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Russia/Chechnya, . . . , Op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> O. Orlov, A. Cherkasov and S. Sirotkin, *Conditions in the Detention in Chechen Republic Conflict Zone: Treatment of Detainees*. Moscow: Memorial Human Rights Centre, 1995.

<sup>15</sup> Russia/Chechnya, Op.cit.

<sup>16</sup> H.J. Riexs and Egbert G. Wesselink, *Chechnya. One year of War*. A Pax Christi International Report. 11 December 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Update No. 96/2 on ICRC activities in Chechnya/Northern Caucasus. 14 August 1996; Hansen and Seely, *Op. cit.*

Finally, Russian authorities have been very negligent in bringing legal proceedings against officers and men who have committed human rights violations and war crimes. This has been severely criticised by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Already during the first war, the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights stated that it was “unacceptable” that there were no investigation of or legal proceedings against Russian soldiers who were suspected of violations of human rights.

This criticism has been repeated during the present war. In January this year the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights wrote:

... the key problem from a human rights perspective remains the lack of accountability for crimes committed by federal servicemen and the personnel of law-enforcement agencies against civilians and the resulting impunity which in turn, encourages further human rights violations by the Russian federal forces operating in the Chechen Republic and leads to unnecessary and unacceptable suffering among the civilian population<sup>18</sup>

Thus there can be no doubt about the seriousness and scale of the Russian violations. To quote once again from the April 2000 report from the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe:

The Russian side has continued its indiscriminate and disproportionate military campaign in the Chechen Republic..., including direct attacks on the civilian population. The Russian federal troops have committed - and apparently continues to commit - grave human rights violations and even war crimes. Peaceful civilians have been - and still are at risk of being - shot dead, raped, arrested and arbitrarily detained, tortured and ill-treated; their homes destroyed and looted. ... Most violations of human rights by the Federal troops in Chechnya go unreported, due to the restrictions imposed on the free movement of journalists in Chechnya, and the non-admittance of non-governmental human rights organisations, and stay unpunished.<sup>19</sup>

## Russia's Responsibility

In the international debate over human rights violations in Chechnya, Russian representatives have continuously referred to Chechen violations as justification for Russian acts. Many Western governments seem in their rhetoric, at least in part, to have accepted that justification.

However, as the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has written:

The scale of Russia's military intervention in Chechnya was and is of such a magnitude that it cannot be justified in terms of an anti-terrorist operation, and must in itself be condemned as a violation of human rights and international humanitarian law.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Council of Europe. Parliamentary Assembly. Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights. Conflict in Chechnya - recent developments. Doc. 8948. 23 January 2001.

<sup>19</sup> *Doc. 8700, op.cit.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

The Chechen violations cannot be used as justification for Russian violations. It is Russia who is a signatory of international conventions and other legal instruments concerning the conduct of war and the protection of human rights. It is Russia, who, by signing these instruments, has committed itself to a set of legally binding norms.

In a report to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Lord Judd assessed the situation in the following way:

While recognising that human rights violations have been, and are still, perpetrated by both sides in the conflict, the assembly considers that membership of the Council of Europe requires a commitment to a higher order of conduct. The Assembly cannot accept that a member state's failure to comply with the organisation's standards is justified by the behaviour of its adversaries.<sup>21</sup>

## International Law

In international law and human rights one can distinguish between the following: Human rights law, which consists of international conventions and declarations, most of which have become customary international law binding all states and having general applicability; and International humanitarian law, which only applies to armed conflicts of an international or internal nature.<sup>22</sup>

The number of international conventions and other relevant documents on human rights is extensive. They include the following:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights from 1948
- The Convention for Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide from 1948
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights from 1966
- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment from 1984
- The Convention relating to the Status of Refugees from 1951 and its Additional Protocol from 1967
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child from 1989

In a regional (i.e. European) context, the following statutes and conventions exist and after Russia's membership of the Council of Europe in February 1996 also applies to Russia:

- The Statute of the Council of Europe,
- The European Convention on Human rights and its additional protocols
- The European Convention Against Torture, Inhuman and or Degrading or Punishment from 1987.

Besides these legal documents there are also a number of so-called politically binding documents, primarily adopted by the CSCE (from 1994 the OSCE). These are the

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> *Humanitarian Intervention. Legal and Political Aspects*. Copenhagen: The Danish Institute of International Affairs, 1999, p. 52.

Helsinki Final Act (1975), the Vienna Final Act (1989), the Paris Charter (1990), and the Copenhagen and Moscow Documents on the Human Dimension (1990 and 1991). Furthermore, there is the Politico-Military Code of Conduct, signed in Budapest less than a week before the first Russian-Chechen war.

As for international humanitarian law - which applies to armed conflict - the most important texts are the Four Geneva Conventions from 1949 and the two additional Protocols to these conventions. Only the common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol II from 1977 (which specifies the principles of the common Article 3) apply to internal conflicts such as the Russian-Chechen conflict. However, there can be no doubt that Protocol II does apply to the conflict. This has also been confirmed in a ruling by the Russian Constitutional Court in July 1995.

Finally, with the decision, which is soon to come into force, to establish the International Criminal Court under the auspices of the UN, there is the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.<sup>23</sup> This statute clearly defines what constitute the most serious crimes of concern to the international society, namely genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression.

The legal definitions of the most serious crimes according to international law are as follows:

*Genocide* (as defined in Article 6 of the 1998 Statute of the International Criminal Court and Article II of the 1948 UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide) is characterised by the specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such.

*Crimes Against Humanity* (as defined in Article 7 of the 1998 Statute of the International Criminal Court) are characterised as widespread or systematic attack against any civilian population.

*War Crimes in Non-international Armed Conflicts* (as defined in Article 8, 2 c and e of the 1998 Statute of the International Criminal Court and the common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions) include the following:

- wilful killing; torture or inhuman treatment of persons protected by the Geneva Convention; extensive destruction of property, not justified by military necessity; and the taking of hostages.

I do not intend to discuss whether or not the Russian violations in Chechnya can be characterised as genocide. The accusation of genocide is so serious that it should not be used lightly. It will require an in-depth legal and empirical study, which to my knowledge has not been conducted. However, it seems to me, from the reports I have read, that there can be little doubt that the Russian forces in Chechnya have committed serious violations, some of which clearly fall within the definitions of crimes against humanity and war crimes. Furthermore, the Russian conduct of the wars is in violation of the Statute and the Conventions of the Council of Europe, as has been stated in numerous reports from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

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<sup>23</sup> To be found on <http://www.un.org/law/icc/statute>

## Perspectives

The phase of the century-long Chechen quest for independence which began with the dissolution of the Soviet Union has ended as a tragedy for the Chechen people. Thousands, probably more than one hundred thousand, have been killed, many more wounded and traumatized, and yet even more have had their homes and livelihood destroyed. The small republic lies in ruins, and the prospects for reconstruction and a tolerable life look sombre for the majority of the population.

The structure of Chechen society has broken down. The leaders of the independence movement never managed to establish a functioning political and economic system. After the first war and the elections in January 1997, President Aslan Maskhadov's authority was undermined by the Russian authorities, Chechen politicians and field commanders, as well as by fundamentalist foreigners and common criminals.

In addition, traditional Chechen societal structures and "pre-modern" values, which during earlier wars and the deportation to Central Asia had secured the survival of the Chechen people, are breaking down. A new generation of unemployed young men, who only know war and devastation and do not respect traditional Chechen norms, has a destructive role. Needless to say, this does not bode well for the future.

## Conclusion

In this presentation I have, by and large, limited myself to violations of human rights. By way of conclusion, I want to say a few words about the role of human rights in international politics.

In the half-century since the Second World War, human rights have come to play an increasing role in international relations. A large number of treaties, declarations etc. have been drawn up and ratified by the majority of states and, as mentioned, become part of customary international law. Furthermore, in the years following the end of the Cold War, human rights language has found its way into the foreign policy declarations of many governments. The widespread reluctance to challenge the Russian human rights violations in Chechnya has, however, had serious consequences for international law. It has been clearly demonstrated that large and politically important states can defy international law with impunity. This should not surprise anyone, but it is a sobering reminder at a time where ritualistic declarations of commitments to human rights have become politically popular. More specifically, the willingness of the Council of Europe to admit and uphold the membership of a state which continues to violate the Council's Statute and Conventions is a testimony to the demise of what for long was considered to be the world's most effective human rights regime.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>For a more detailed presentation of this argument see: Ib Faurby and Märta-Lisa Magnusson, "Europarådet, Rusland og krigen i Tjetjenien", *Udenrigs*, nr. 2, 2000, pp. 39-51. (A Russian language version can be found at <http://www.caucasus.dk>).

# Why No Settlement in the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict? – Which are the obstacles to a negotiated solution?

Märta-Lisa Magnusson

## Introduction

The conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, a predominantly Armenian-populated region within Azerbaijan, was the first of several simmering conflicts over contested territory that erupted in the former USSR at the end of the 1980s. In early 1988 violent clashes broke out, triggered by the formal request of the local authorities in Nagorno-Karabakh, at that time an autonomous region within Azerbaijan SSR, for a transfer of the region to Armenia SSR. The hostilities continued with increasing brutality throughout the following years and escalated into a full-scale war following a December 1991 referendum on independence in Nagorno-Karabakh and a subsequent declaration of independence on 6 January, 1992. The war, which gradually spread into Azerbaijani territories outside Nagorno-Karabakh proper, raged until Russian officials brokered a cease-fire in May 1994. By then Karabakh-Armenian forces with support from Armenia proper had captured and depopulated several Azeri districts outside Nagorno-Karabakh, leaving some 20% of the territory of Azerbaijan outside Baku's control. All-in-all the hostilities resulted in 25,000 deaths, over half a million Armenian and Azeri refugees, the displacement of approximately 600,000 Azeris from the occupied territories and the eviction of almost all Azeris, constituting 22% of the approximately 185,000 total population, from Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>1</sup>

The May 1994 cease-fire has, despite sporadic breaches, held. However, while the violent hostilities have long-since ended, no political settlement of the conflict has been reached. Since the beginning of 1992, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE, until 1994 called CSCE) has been involved in efforts to obtain a settlement of the conflict. At the First Additional meeting of the CSCE Ministerial Council in Helsinki on 24 March 1992, the ministers expressed their conviction that "a conference on Nagorno-Karabakh under the auspices of the CSCE would provide an ongoing forum for negotiations towards a peaceful settlement of the crisis on the basis of the principles, commitments and provisions of the CSCE."<sup>2</sup> The conference was to take place in the capital of Belarus, Minsk, and would include 11 CSCE participant states plus Armenia and Azerbaijan. This was the beginning of the "Minsk process". The Minsk Conference has not convened to date, but mediation

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<sup>1</sup> For details on the number of refugees and displaced persons see *Bloodshed in the Caucasus. Escalation of the Armed Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh*. Helsinki Watch, September 1992 (hereafter *HW92*). *Azerbaijan, Seven Years of Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh*, Human Rights Watch/Helsinki, 1994 (hereafter *HRWH*). Neil MacFarlane and Larry Minear, Occasional Paper 25, Thomas J. Watson Jr. Institute for International Studies, 1997, p.1, and pp.16.

Quotes from sources in Russian are, if not otherwise specified, translated into English by the author of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> [www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1991/mcs/adhels92e.htm](http://www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1991/mcs/adhels92e.htm). The members of the Minsk Conferences were Belarus, Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, France, Germany, Italy, Russian Federation, Sweden, Turkey and the United States of America. Later some changes in the membership occurred.

efforts have been undertaken within the framework of the established mechanism, since mid-1992 called the “Minsk Group”.

In the first two years of its existence, the Minsk Group was chaired by Italy followed by Sweden. At the 1994 Budapest Summit (where CSCE became OSCE), the institute of Co-chairmen was established, with Russia given status as permanent Co-chair. In spring 1997 the Co-chairmanship was extended to a “troika” comprising Russia, the USA and France. Since then this Co-chair troika has led the efforts to mediate a settlement of the conflict. In the course of the Minsk process, several other institutions related to the conflict have been established.<sup>3</sup>

However, after fifteen years of intensive international efforts, the prospects of reaching a settlement are still remote. The aim of this paper is to provide an analysis of the Minsk process and explain the lack of progress in settling the conflict. I shall not engage in an analysis of the historical roots of the conflict or try to explain why the conflict erupted in the first place.<sup>4</sup> Neither shall I present proposals for a

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<sup>3</sup> After the 1994 Budapest Summit, where the participating states declared their political will to provide a multinational CSCE peacekeeping force “following agreement among the parties for cessation of the armed conflict,” a High-Level Planning Group was established and tasked with preparing the deployment of such a force. A Personal Representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, representing the latter in issues related to the conflict, was introduced in 1995.

<sup>4</sup> For background analyses see Svante Cornell, *Small Nations and Great Power, A study of Ethnopolitical Conflicts in the Caucasus*. Richmond: Curson, 2001; Suzanne Goldenberg, *Pride of Small Nations. The Caucasus and Post-Soviet Disorder*, London 1994; Mac Farlane and Larry Minear, op. cit.)

Armenians and Azerbaijanis both claim “ownership rights” to Nagorno-Karabakh. While the roots of the conflict probably can be traced far back in history, it is reasonable to seek the underlying causes in processes unfolding at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for an understanding of the actual hostilities.

In 1918, shortly after the collapse of the Russian Empire, three independent states, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, were formed from the imperial possessions to the south of the Caucasus Range. Violent hostilities erupted between Armenians and Azeris over Nagorno-Karabakh. In 1920 the Red Army moved in and put the two independent republics under Bolshevik control. Stalin placed the predominantly Armenian populated Nagorno-Karabakh under the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan, and in 1923 the territory was assigned the status of an autonomous region within Azerbaijan SSR.

Neither the Karabakh-Armenians nor those in Armenia proper accepted this decision. Throughout the Soviet era, Armenian leaders made unsuccessful attempts to raise the Karabakh issue, with their protests becoming more vocal after Stalin’s death. Petitions submitted to the central authorities in Moscow complained about neglect of the economic development of Nagorno-Karabakh, cultural discrimination and demographic manipulation to reduce the local Armenian population. The central authorities did not respond to the petitions. Armenian historic grievances were also - and still are - nurtured by memories of what they define as genocide on the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire during World War I. Armenian fears of the Turks are projected on the Turkish-speaking Azeris.

Azeri historic grievances were nurtured by memories of Armenian atrocities committed in the violent clashes of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the assignation of autonomous rights to Armenians within Azerbaijan, but not to Azeris living in Armenia proper, and by a perception of Armenia as a puppet of Moscow.

settlement based on my analysis. My study is limited to the dynamics of the complicated peace process and the nature of the conflict is discussed as a factor in this context, not as an object of study in its own right. While not providing any proposals for a settlement my analysis will hopefully assist actors professionally engaged in promoting a settlement of the seemingly unsolvable conflict.

In the existing scholarly literature on the conflict little attention has been paid to the role of the self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (NKR) in the peace process. The focus is typically on the two state parties: Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, as will be demonstrated in my paper, Nagorno-Karabakh is an actor in its own right in the conflict as well as in the peace process.

I define the conflict as primarily an intra-state conflict involving secession but with elements of irredentism.<sup>5</sup> The main actors are defined as, on the one side, Azerbaijan and, on the other, the self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, with Armenia proper as an external player supporting the latter. Based on this assessment, the following possible negotiated solutions to the conflict exist: the conflicting parties' agreement on either:

1. Autonomy for Nagorno-Karabakh or federal relations within the existing Azerbaijani state
2. Recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent state.

I shall argue that the main obstacles to a settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict should be sought in the following factors:

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<sup>5</sup> "Secession" may be defined in line with Alexis Heraclides: "Secession, the most radical form of separatism, is a unilateral and opposed act seeking complete independence for a region which constitutes metropolitan territory of a sovereign independent state". Alexis Heraclides, "Secessionist Conflagration", *Security Dialogue*, 25(3), 1994, p. 292 (note 1).

'Irredentism' may be defined as attempts, pursued by a state to retrieve ethnic kinsmen and their territory across borders. "The decision to retrieve group members across a territorial border by forcibly altering the borders is a governmental decision. In this respect, it differs from the decision to initiate a secessionist movement, which is an ethnic group decision" "Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, London, 1985, p. 281-82.

Sometimes the concept 'secession' is used to include less radical demands in terms of varying degree of self-rule within existing states: "The often tactical nature of demands, their elasticity, even fickleness, the willingness of independence movements to settle for much less than statehood, and the occasional interest of secessionists in capturing the whole state if that proves possible- all of these argue for an inclusive conception of separatism and secession, terms I shall therefore use interchangeably. Such a conception should embrace movements seeking a separate region within an existing state, as well as those seeking a separate and independent state", Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, London, 1985, p. 230.

In some conceptions 'secession' includes attempts to secede from one state to become member of another: "Further, to attempt to secede is to strive for independence from the state from which one is seceding, but it need not be an attempt to achieve complete political independence. In some cases a group may endeavor to secede from one state in order to become part of another/.../. Therefore it would be an error to define secession as separation from an existing state in order to become a sovereign state. Nonetheless, in most actual cases secessionists seek sovereign status...." Allen Buchanan, *Secession. The Morality of Political Divorce from Fort Sumter to Lithuania and Quebec*, Westview Press, Oxford, 1991, p. 10.

- Intransigent positions of Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh on the “ownership”, that is, the right to rule, over the contested territory. Azerbaijan, invoking the internationally protected principle of territorial integrity of states, insists that a solution must be found maintaining Nagorno-Karabakh within the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan. Nagorno-Karabakh, seeking international recognition and invoking the likewise internationally protected right to self-determination, rejects any solution leaving Nagorno-Karabakh within the jurisdiction of Azerbaijan. The position of Azerbaijan prevents a solution in the form of independence for Nagorno-Karabakh. The position of the latter prevents a solution based on autonomy for Nagorno-Karabakh, or federal relations, within Azerbaijan.
- The position of Armenia. While supporting the principle of territorial integrity of states in general, Armenia at the same time supports Nagorno-Karabakh’s right to self-determination. Armenia’s position has on the one side impeded a solution based on Nagorno-Karabakh’s reintegration into Azerbaijan. On the other side Armenia has not endorsed recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh as an independent entity.
- The position of the OSCE Minsk Group. Throughout the peace process OSCE and its Minsk Group have sought a solution based on the territorial integrity of states promoting autonomy for Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan. Thus, the bias of the Minsk Group mediators for the principle of territorial integrity has prevented Nagorno-Karabakh from obtaining their goal of independence.
- A contradiction between the character of the conflict and the format of the OSCE Minsk peace process. Reflecting the prevailing norm on territorial integrity of states, the format of the peace negotiations has not allowed for the full participation of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. The asymmetric format has complicated discussions on key issues and has also made it possible for Nagorno-Karabakh to disregard solutions agreed upon by Armenia and Azerbaijan.

A fifth condition that has contributed to the lack of progress in the peace process is external actors’ economic and geopolitical interests in the Caucasus region. This concerns especially Russia and the USA, both Minsk Group member states and since 1997 Minsk Group Co chairs. While the rivaling interests of the Minsk Group mediators have encouraged efforts to obtain a settlement, the configuration of external interests has also made it possible for the parties to pursue their own interests and obtain support for their positions. Not only Armenia and Azerbaijan but also NKR have sought to utilise the geopolitical context in which the conflict is embedded to their own advantage. Hence, the symbiosis of great power interests and third party mediation is another impediment to a negotiated settlement of the conflict. This factor, while important, will not be discussed in my paper.<sup>6</sup>

## **Normative regime on territory vs. ‘de facto’ states**

To guide my analysis I will use Scott Pegg’s conceptualization of a ‘post- 1945 normative regime on territory’ and one of the products of this normative regime, ‘the

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<sup>6</sup> On this topic see Märta-Lisa Magnusson, “Karabakh- den besværlige brik i de stores spil” i: Ib Faurby og Märta-Lisa Magnusson (red.) *Korsvej og Minefelt. Kultur og konflikt i Kaukasus*. Systime Academic, Århus, 2003; Edward Walker, “No War, No Peace in the Caucasus” in: Gary K. Bertsch (et al.eds.) *Crossroads and Conflict*. Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia. London, 2000; Svante Cornell, op. cit., 2001.

'de facto' state', presented in his book *International Society and the De facto State* (1998).<sup>7</sup> The 'normative regime' concept is useful as a tool for understanding the position of the OSCE Minsk Group mediators, Azerbaijan and partly also Armenia in the peace process. The concept of 'de facto state' is useful for understanding the position of the self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic in the peace process. Both concepts help identify the obstacles to obtaining a political settlement of the conflict case under study.

Since 1945, Pegg maintains, a normative consensus has emerged within the international community on the preservation of existing states within their fixed territorial borders and characterized by a negative attitude towards secession. While earlier "territorial change was seen as a normal, indeed inevitable, part of international relations/.../ post 1945 international society is more fundamentally conservative on the need to preserve the existing territorial map and more adverse to secessionist aspirations than anything witnessed in the history of international relations" (Pegg, pp. 121-122).

Prior to the post 1945 de-colonization era recognition of states was based on 'objective', empirical criteria. These criteria are reflected in Article 1 of the 1933 Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of States: "The State as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: (a) a permanent population; (b) a defined territory; (c) government; and (d) capacity to enter into relations with other states". In the post-1945 era there has been "a shift from sovereign statehood based on empirical capabilities to sovereign statehood based on juridical rights" (Pegg, p. 127). Sovereignty has been granted as a "moral right" and "...the post-war era has witnessed the wholesale granting of statehood to large numbers of former colonies with few, if any, demonstrated empirical capabilities" (Pegg, pp. 4,1). Juridical statehood became the criteria for recognition.

As a "signal defining moment" in this process Pegg identifies the passage of the 1960 UN General Assembly Resolution 1514, entitled A Declaration on Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Pegg, 127). According to that resolution, 'All peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue economic, social and cultural development'. Requiring prospective states to live up to the traditional empirical criteria for statehood was no longer acceptable. Former colonies had a legal right to self-determination and "inadequacy of political, economic, social or educational preparedness should never serve as a pretext for delaying independence".

Under the new post-1945 normative regime "Once aquired, sovereign statehood has been almost impossible to lose" (Pegg, p. 1). Dismemberment of once recognized states was not approved. The UN GA Resolution 1514 stipulates that: "any attempt at the partial or total disruption of the national unity and the territorial integrity of a country is incompatible with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nation." "A lack of empirical viability no longer matters in a world where juridical statehood is underwritten by the new normative structures of international society" (Pegg, p. 1).

This "new sovereignty game" has on the one side produced a large number of so called 'quasi states': states which are internationally recognized as full juridical equals, "yet manifestly lack all but the most rudimentary empirical capabilities" However, "some of the same normative logic in the international society that produces quasi states may also facilitate the creation of something that is more or less

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<sup>7</sup> Scott Pegg, *International Society and the De facto State*. Ashgate, Aldershot, 1998.

their inverse: the *de facto* states. (Pegg, pp. 3-4) De facto states are entities within states that are “dissatisfied with the way they have been frozen’ off the political map and denied admission to the exclusive club of sovereign states”. They are breakaway state groups that “demonstrate capabilities of the sort that once led to full recognition as an independent state”. However, “international norms that support existing quasi-states also deny the legitimacy of any would-be challengers” and prevents the acceptance of such groups. “The quasi-state is legitimate no matter how ineffective it is. Conversely, the *de facto* state is illegitimate no matter how effective it is” (Pegg, pp. 4-5). Pegg defines a *de facto* state in the following way:

“A *de facto* state exists where there is an organized political leadership which has risen to power through some degree of indigenous capability; receives popular support; and has achieved sufficient capacity to provide governmental services to a given population in a specific territorial area, over which effective control is maintained for a significant period of time. The *de facto* state views itself as capable of entering into relations with other states and it seeks full constitutional independence and widespread international recognition as a sovereign state. It is, however, unable to achieve any degree of substantive recognition and therefore remains illegitimate in the eyes of international society.” (Pegg, p. 26)

In the view of Pegg the ‘de facto state’ fulfills the first three criteria for statehood in the Montevideo Convention: a permanent population; territory, and partly government (Pegg uses the weaker formulation “organized political leadership”). However, the fourth criteria, capacity to enter into relations with other states, is problematic since “the *de facto* leaders view themselves as having this capacity to enter into relations with other states; an opinion not necessarily shared by other states” (Pegg, p. 27).<sup>8</sup>

In the view of Pegg, the ‘de facto’ state “is in many ways an anachronistic entity”, trying to follow the classical “and now outdated” pattern of obtaining international recognition. “The etiology of the *de facto* state is 1) the construction of effective state institutions which demonstrate empirical capabilities and, hopefully 2) lead to subsequent juridicial recognition and acceptance of those capabilities” (Pegg, p. 149).

The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic fulfils Pegg’s criteria of a ‘de facto’ state. It has an organized political leadership in the form of a government, a president, a parliament, armed forces, security service, police, customs authorities and even ‘diplomatic’ representations in a number of foreign countries, among others, Russia, USA and France. The oldest structure of the ‘organized political leadership’ is the parliament, which was established in late December 1991, shortly after the referendum of independence (it was the parliament that proclaimed the independence on January 2, 1992). Since than two parliamentary elections have been held (in April 1995, July 2000 and). During the 1992-94 war Nagorno-Karabakh was governed by a State Defence Committee, established by the NKR government. When the war was over the office of presidency was established in NKR. In December 1994 Chairman of

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<sup>8</sup> Pegg thus differentiates between secession as a “broader phenomenon” and ‘de facto states’, which “result from secessions that are empirically successful on the ground yet juridical failures in the international society/.../Many of the violent secessionist movements never reach such an advanced level in terms of territory controlled, governing institutions, popular support, and the like so as to qualify as a de facto state” (Pegg, p. 161).

the State Defence Committee, Robert Kocharian, was appointed president by the NKR parliament. In November 1996 presidential election was held in Nagorno-Karabakh, won by Kocharian. After Kocharian in 1997 was called to Armenia and appointed Prime Minister there (a year later he was elected president of Armenia) early presidential election were held in NKR. They were won by Arkady Ghukasian, (since 1993 NKR's 'Minister of Foreign Affairs) who also won the next presidential election in 2002.

NKR views itself as capable of entering into relations with other states and it seeks full constitutional independence and international recognition as a sovereign state.

However, empirical capabilities no more translate into inclusion into the exclusive club of sovereign states. The 'de facto' state has no legal standing in the international community. As a non-recognized entity it has no legal right to the territory it claims to control. The normative regime against dismemberment of existing states, or the redrawing of territorial borders, prevents the 'de facto' state from obtaining "ownership" of a territory already considered part of an established state.

In the post 1945 de-colonization process former colonies obtained international recognition within the existing borders drawn by the colonial powers. In this process the principle of '*uti possidetis*' ('as you now possess') applied, meaning that the borders inherited by the former colonies should be respected. (Pegg, p. 122) In the post-Cold War period the international society extended '*uti possidetis*' to include also internal boundaries. This was done in the case of the former Soviet republics and the Yugoslav successor republics. (Pegg, p. 122).

In his analysis Pegg does not include cases from the former Soviet Union.<sup>9</sup> More specifically related to this part of the world Asbjørn Eide, a specialist on international law and member of the UN Subcommission on Preventing of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, wrote in 1993: "The CSCE, United Nations and the European Community have recognized the states emerging out of the dissolution of the USSR and the Yugoslav federation with the borders they had prior to dissolution" (Eide, 1993, p.155).<sup>10</sup> Both these entities were (at least formally) federations, comprising union republics and, within some of these, autonomous entities. Only the union republics were internationally recognized. According Eide: "In both of those cases the principle of *uti possidetis* applies, i.e. the new states emerging out of the dissolution of the federation were the union republics as they were constituted prior to the dissolution, with the borders they had at that time. The various lower-level autonomies within the union republics could not, without violating the principle of territorial integrity, claim a right to secession. This has been the clear position taken afterwards by the CSCE and its members, and by the United Nations." (Eide, p. 154) "In cases of decolonization and dissolution of federations, the principle of "*uti possidetis*" has been applied, to ensure that unless there are very strong reasons in the favour of any other solution, the "territorial integrity" means respect for borders as drawn by the colonial powers, or in case of the dissolution of federation, respect for

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<sup>9</sup> The cases he focuses on in his analyses are Northern Cyprus, Eritrea, Somaliland and the LTTT controlled areas of Sri Lanka. Of the five 'de facto' states that have emerged in the Post-Soviet space he mentions, but does not elaborate on, The Transdniestrian Republic and Chechnya.

<sup>10</sup> Asbjørn Eide, "In Search of Constructive Alternatives to Secession", in: Christian Tomuschat, *Modern Law of Self-Determination*, London, 1993.

the borders of the constituent republics of the federation as they existed prior to the dissolution of the federation” (Eide, p. 154).<sup>11</sup>

While in the “Wilsonian” era after World War I the concept of self-determination was based on ethnic, cultural or national groups, in the period after World War II this has given way to a new conceptualization of self-determination based on territory.

However, “The relevant point for secessionists is that the principle of ‘equal rights and self-determination of peoples’ appear twice in the UN charter/.../the secessionist’s belief is that self-determination has evolved in the past and that it may evolve again in the future... in such a manner as to benefit their own particular claims” (Pegg, pp. 140- 41).

Under the prevailing normative regime recognition of a secessionist entity is more or less possible only on condition of prior consent of the existing sovereign state. (Pegg, 131-32) (cf. one recent exception being the widespread recognition of the former Yugoslav republics without the consent of Belgrade). “When such consent is granted by the former sovereign, be it in a colonial or non-colonial (Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union) situation, the right of the breakaway entity to sovereignty as constitutional independence is widely recognized throughout the international community”. (Pegg, p. 131). “The key member of the international community for secessionists is, ironically, the government of the mother state. Unless secessionist can vitiate the active opposition of the central government, other states will be extremely hesitant to recognize the breakaway region in all but the most egregious of circumstances” (Pegg, (quoting Roland McCullen, p. 131).

## Nature of the conflict

The conflict under study might be defined as inter-state, between Armenia and Azerbaijan. During the 1992-94 war the Karabakh Armenians received military and logistic support from Armenia proper. While the government of Armenia claimed that it was not involved in the military activities, a 1992 Helsinki Watch report concluded: “Reliable sources, in addition to circumstantial evidence, strongly suggest that if the Armenian government is not directly involved in the arming of Nagorno-Karabakh, it is certainly turning a blind eye to the transfer of weapons from Armenia to the region”.<sup>12</sup> Two years later, a 1994 Human Rights/Helsinki Watch report concluded that “This armed conflict is an example of an “internationalized” internal or non-international armed conflict, that is, a civil war characterized by the intervention of the armed forces of other states on behalf of the rebels. The Republic of Armenia has become a party to the conflict by virtue of its commitment of troops to fight in Azerbaijan against Azerbaijani armed forces. Armenia also gives substantial assistance to the rebels.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> A right to secession might arise from domestic law. This is the case with federations, which at least formally have been formed by voluntary accession by member republics, and where it is explicitly stated in their respective constitutions that they have a right to withdrawal from such federations. Both in the USSR and Yugoslavia the constitutions recognized the right to secession. However, the disintegration of these two federations, “did not arise as an exercise of secession but because the federal authorities were no longer able to function” (Eide, p. 153-54).

<sup>12</sup> *HW92*, p.12.

<sup>13</sup> An appendix to the report, under the paragraph “International law”, concludes that “As a matter of law, Armenian army troop involvement in Azerbaijan makes Armenia a party to the

Another circumstance supporting the view that the primary conflicting parties are Armenia and Azerbaijan is the following: On February 20, 1988, the Armenian majority in the regional legislative (regional Supreme Soviet) of Nagorno-Karabakh voted to appeal to the Supreme Soviets of Azerbaijan, Armenia and USSR for the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region (NKAO) to Armenia SSR. While the Presidium of the Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet and the USSR Supreme Soviet rejected the request, Armenia was supportive. On December 1, 1989, the Armenian Supreme Soviet and a National Council of Nagorno-Karabakh (established by some deputies after the dissolution of the NKAO regional soviet) jointly decided to incorporate NKAO into Armenia.<sup>14</sup> This decision has not been revoked to date.

However, by late 1991 the request for transferring Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan to Armenia was gradually replaced by claims of independence for Nagorno-Karabakh. A few days after 30 August, when the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan declared restoration of the state independence of the Azerbaijani Republic, which had existed from 1918-to 1920, the regional soviet of Nagorno-Karabakh (jointly with an adjacent and predominately Armenian populated district, Shaumiyan) declared the establishment of a “Nagorno Karabakh Republic” within the still existing Soviet Union on September 2. The declaration referred to “the aspiration of the Armenian people to reunite”.<sup>15</sup>

No such reference was made in the “Declaration of State Independence of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic” adopted on 6 January 1992. The declaration of independence was based on “the inalienable right of peoples to self-determination and the will of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, expressed in the republican referendum of 10 December, 1991”.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, when USSR finally dissolved, Nagorno-Karabakh decided to opt for an independent state of its own. This decision was probably influenced by a realistic assessment that Armenia, which had declared independence on 21 September, would hardly start its existence as an independent state by incorporating a part of the territory of a neighbouring state. With the declaration of independence, NKR withdrew earlier claims of unification with Armenia.

From January 1992, the conflict became first and foremost an intra-state conflict between, on the one side, the central authorities in Baku, and on the other, the self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, but with Armenia as an important player on the side of the Karabakh-Armenians.

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conflict and makes the war an international armed conflict, as between the government of Armenia and Azerbaijan.”, HRWH, 1994, p.73.

<sup>14</sup> For the text of the declaration see Svante Cornell, op.cit., p. 88.

<sup>15</sup> “Deklaratsiya O provozglashenie Nagorno-Karabakhskoi Respubliki”. *Status Nagornogo Karabakha v politiko-pravovykh dokumentakh i materialakh*. Erevan, 1995, p. 69.

<sup>16</sup> “Deklaratsiya o Gosudarstvennoj Nezavisimosti

Nagorno-Karabakhskoj Respubliki”, ibid., p. 88. According to a document issued by the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, 108.736 persons, that is, 82.2%, of all voters participated, and of those 99.89% voted for independence. The majority of those not taking part in the referendum were “inhabitants in Azerbaijani settlements”. “Akt O rezultatakh referendumu o nezavisimosti Nagorno-Karabakhskoj Respubliki”, ibid., p. 85.

## The parties' definition of the conflict

### Azerbaijan

From the point of view of Azerbaijan, the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh is interstate, that is, between Armenia and Azerbaijan. In the view of newly independent Azerbaijan, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic was an illegal structure and an instrument of Armenia's expansionist ambitions. When the Supreme Soviet of Azerbaijan on November 23, 1991, and in response to the developments in Nagorno-Karabakh, decided to abolish the autonomous region as "a national territorial entity" altogether, the Supreme Soviet "took into consideration" that "the policy pursued by the leadership of Armenia aimed at the removal from Azerbaijan of its from time immemorial historic territory, and the transformation of NKAO to an instrument for this policy is a real threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani Republic".<sup>17</sup>

This position has been maintained by Baku to date. At the opening session of a negotiation round in Florida, April 2001, current Azerbaijani president, Heydar Aliyev, stated: "It is known that this conflict stemmed from the territorial claims toward Azerbaijan by Armenia, which tried to seize and annex Nagorno-Karabakh, an indigenous part of Azerbaijan. It happened in 1988, when Armenia and Azerbaijan still were sister republics within the Soviet Union... Armenia, striving to realize its territorial claims against neighboring country of Azerbaijan, has provoked separatist and terrorist forces in Nagorno-Karabakh to an armed confrontation. Later Armenia itself started a military aggression against Azerbaijan."<sup>18</sup>

Viewing the conflict as rooted in Armenia's territorial claims on Azerbaijan, Azerbaijani officials dismissed, and still does, the official Armenian representation of the conflict as demagoguery. In his speech to the UN on September 29, 1994, President Aliyev stated: "The Republic of Armenia, under the pretext of realization of the right to self-determination of an ethnic group of Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, is openly carrying out plans on annexation of the territories of our state, forcibly changing our state borders and expelling the Azerbaijani population from their homes. All this is cloaked in an arbitrary interpretation of the "rights of people for self-determination" as the right of any ethnic community to self-proclaim its independence and join another state. Such interpretation of the right for self-determination blatantly contradicts the principles of sovereignty form of and territorial integrity of a state/.../ I think there is no need to prove that here we are not dealing with the "realization of the right for self-determination" but with a gross violation of international law in the aggression against the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of a UN member state".<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> "Zakon Azerbajdzhanskoj Respubliki Ob Uprazhnenii Nagorno-Karabakhskoj Avtonomnoj Oblasti Azerbajdzhanskoj Respubliki", Status Nagornogo Karabakha v politiko-pravovykh dokumentakh i materialakh. Erevan, 1995, p. 79.

<sup>18</sup> "Statement: Azerbaijan President Heydar Aliyev in Key West, Florida". Azerbaijan International, April 3, 2001 [www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabkh/karabkh...](http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabkh/karabkh...) (unofficial transl.)

<sup>19</sup> "Excerpts from Aliyev's UN speech", Azerbaijan International, Winter 1994 (2.4), [www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/magazine/24\\_folder/24\\_articles/24\\_unspeech.ht...](http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/magazine/24_folder/24_articles/24_unspeech.ht...)

Nagorno-Karabakh's claims of independence are, seen from the point of view of Azerbaijan, not only illegitimate, but that they, first and foremost, are put forward by a puppet entity, a proxy of Armenian territorial expansion and aggression. In a speech at the December 1996 Lisbon Summit, President Aliyev reiterated: "The non-legitimate claims for independence of Nagorno-Karabakh are incompatible with the generally recognized norms of international law. We will never agree to these claims, and we will never allow the creation of a second Armenian State on the territory of the Azerbaijan republic." Armenia, he claimed, "refuses to recognize the territorial integrity of the Azerbaijani republic, seeks to legalize the results of aggression, and tries to attain independence for the Nagorno Karabakh region of the Azerbaijan Republic and to join it to Armenia."<sup>20</sup>

Azerbaijan views the conflict as aggression based on territorial claims of neighboring Armenia and casts the conflict in line with the prevailing international normative regime against secession. It also invokes the international norm against aggression, codified in the UN Charter.

Denial of consent to Nagorno-Karabakh's withdrawal from Azerbaijan's jurisdiction is the "key asset" on the Azerbaijani side. Without prior consent from Azerbaijan, a solution in terms of international recognition of Nagorno-Karabakh is not a realistic option, given the normative hostility within the international community against secession without the mother state's prior consent.

## Armenia

In the view of newly independent Armenia, the conflict was not between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh. While not revoking the 1989 decision integrating Nagorno-Karabakh into Armenia, Armenian officials affirmed, and still do, that Armenia has no territorial claims on Azerbaijan. Armenian officials framed, and still do, the conflict in the discourse of peoples' right to self-determination. Addressing the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly in September 1992, President Ter-Petrosyan declared, "Armenia, which has no territorial claims against Azerbaijan, has insisted/.../ that /the people of NK/ cannot be denied the right of self-determination, and that this population cannot be sacrificed using the principle of territorial integrity as a cover."<sup>21</sup>

In his speech before the UN General Assembly in 1993, Armenian Foreign Minister, Papazyan, stated, "Armenia's position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict has been clear and consistent since day one. The conflict is between the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, who are striving for their self-determination, and the Azerbaijani government, which is refusing to address the rights and security concerns of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh."<sup>22</sup>

To date, Armenia has refrained from recognizing the independence of the self-declared Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. In the Armenian view there is, however, no doubt of the legality of the secession of Nagorno-Karabakh from Azerbaijan. In a statement at the 9<sup>th</sup> OSCE Ministerial meeting in Bucharest on December 4, 2001, current Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia, Vartan Oskanian, said: "Mr. Chairman, no amount of ambiguous diplomatic language can mask the fact that men, women and children of Nagorno-Karabagh have earned the right to live peacefully on

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<sup>20</sup> Aliyev, "Speech at the Summit of OSCE", Lisbon, December 2, 1996, p. 3.  
[www.president.az/sp14.htm](http://www.president.az/sp14.htm)

<sup>21</sup> Quoted from *Covcas*, No.II. 1992, 28, 9/23/92 (APIC).

<sup>22</sup> Quoted from *HRWH*, 1994, p. 112.

their historic lands, free of alien domination and foreign occupation. Nagorno-Karabagh's secession from Soviet Azerbaijan was both legal, peaceful and just... Just as Azerbaijan was no longer willing to accept the Soviet legacy, and withdrew from the Union, Nagorno-Karabagh was no longer willing to live under conditions imposed arbitrarily by Stalin decades earlier... Azerbaijan's claim on Nagorno-Karabagh has been legally invalid. Its absolute and blind adherence to the principle of territorial integrity will do it no good, since Nagorno-Karabagh has never been a part of independent Azerbaijan. The League of Nations did not accept Azerbaijan's territorial claims then, we do not accept them now."<sup>23</sup>

While denying being directly involved in the military activities in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia posited itself as an interested party, concerned over the fate of the ethnically kindred Karabakh-Armenians: "Not a single state can remain silent in the face of the destruction of its brothers" an Armenian official, interviewed by the Helsinki Watch in Spring 1992, explained.<sup>24</sup>

"There is no such thing as Armenia's aggression. Armenia is not involved in this conflict... There are no Armenian troops in Azerbaijan. Of course, there could be citizens of Armenia who are fighting on a voluntary basis," Armenian Ambassador to the USA, Alexander Arzumanyan, stated in 1994.<sup>25</sup>

Armenia has been careful not to recognize Nagorno-Karabakh's independence, thus adhering to the international norm of withholding recognition until the mother state consents. This has strengthened Azerbaijan's position in that Armenia also seems to admit that a settlement based on the principle of self-determination depends, first and foremost, on Azerbaijan. However, while not explicitly supporting Nagorno-Karabakh's claim for independence, Armenia's diplomatic – and military – support has impeded a settlement based on Azerbaijan's territorial integrity.

## Nagorno-Karabakh

The NKR leadership shared - and still does - the Azerbaijani view that the conflict is inter-state. Since the referendum on independence on December 10, 1991 and the subsequent formal declaration of independence on January 6, 1992, the conflict, according to Stepanakert, should be considered as between the independent, albeit not recognized, NKR, and the Republic of Azerbaijan. While Azerbaijan considered itself to be a victim of Armenian aggression, NKR maintained that it was a victim of aggression committed by Azerbaijan: "Today we are defending ourselves against aggression from the Azerbaijani Republic, aimed at annihilating the statehood of NKR through extermination of its people", the Supreme Soviet of NKR declared in the September 1992.<sup>26</sup> "As a result of the referendum, military actions between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh should be dealt with and qualified, with all the resultant consequences of international law, as a war between independent states. The Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh resorted to the right to defend itself against the

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<sup>23</sup> "Statement by H.E. Mr. Vartan Oskanian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia at the 9th Ministerial Meeting of the OSCE Bucharest, Romania, Dec. 4, 2001". [www.armeniaforeignministry.com/htms/speeches/OSCE\\_Bucharest\\_Dec42001.html](http://www.armeniaforeignministry.com/htms/speeches/OSCE_Bucharest_Dec42001.html) (consulted 10-03-02)

<sup>24</sup> Quoted from *HW92*, 1992, p. 11.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted from *Covcas*, No. 4, 1994, 2/22/94 (Reuter). *HRWH*, 1994, p. 67.

<sup>26</sup> "Zayavlenie Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta Nagorno-Karabakhskoi Respubliki" (20 September, 1992). *Status Nagornogo Karabakha v politiko-pravovykh dokumentakh i materialakh*. Erevan, 1995, p. 90.

Azerbaijan aggression”, a representative of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of NKR stated in an article in 1998.<sup>27</sup>

Karabakh-Armenian officials stress the legality of the region’s claim for independence, invoking decolonization and referring to existing legislation at the time of Nagorno-Karabakh’s declaration of independence.

“The Nagorno-Karabakh Republic is the result of our many years’ liberation, and anti-colonial struggle, and it became a reality on the basis of the USSR law “On the procedure of reviewing issues related to the withdrawal of union republics from SSR...” the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of NKR stated in a declaration in September 1992.<sup>28</sup>

This position is maintained by NKR today. During a visit to Nagorno-Karabakh in early October 2003 I interviewed a number of officials. Without exception all claimed the legality of NKR’s secession, invoking the existing law at the time, especially the April 1990 USSR law on secession. They also maintained that Nagorno-Karabakh was never included in the independent 1918-20 Azerbaijan Republic. All of those I interviewed also stressed the peaceful character of the NKR secession, arguing that it was the Azerbaijani side that was responsible for the aggression.

Stressing the legality of NKR’s withdrawal from Azerbaijan under the USSR law of secession, NKR Prime Minister Danelian continued: “I don’t think there is a contradiction between the two principles (territorial integrity and peoples’ right to self-determination) If there is aggression- yes. But we declared independence in a peaceful way. After that there was aggression- and selfdefence. Azerbaijan attacked us- that was aggression and a violation of our (territorial) integrity (tselostnost). We defended ourselves”.

Hence, in the view of NKR, no settlement based on autonomy within Azerbaijan is possible. NKR seeks de jure recognition, but any settlement of the conflict must take into consideration that Nagorno-Karabakh already has declared independence, based on a referendum among the population of Nagorno-Karabakh. In the words of the NKR Foreign Ministry representative quoted above: “In accordance with the regulations of international law the main question in the negotiation process between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh should not be the discussion of Nagorno-Karabakh’s *state* status, as this is obvious, but the question of recognition of Karabakh state independence and the signing of an international treaty between Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Rouben Zargarian, *The International Legal Status of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh*, in: Ole Høiris and Sefa Martin Yürükel, *Contrasts and Solutions in the Caucasus*, Aarhus University Press, 1998, p. 344.

<sup>28</sup> “Zayavlenie prezidiuma VS NKR 20 Sept. 1992”. *Status NK v politiko-pravovykh dokumentakh i materialakh*, Erevan, 1995, p. 91. The September 2, 1991 declaration of the establishment of a Nagorno Karabakh Republic within the still existing Soviet Union, also referred to the USSR Supreme Soviet law On Secession of April 3, 1990, under which “for the peoples of autonomous republics and autonomous units the right to independent decision on the question of staying within the Soviet Union or in a seceding union republic is upheld, as well as the right to address the question of their own state-legal status”. “Deklaratsiya O provozglashenie Nagorno-Karabakhskoi Respubliki”. Ibid, p. 69. *Status Nagornogo Karabakha v politiko-pravovykh dokumentakh i materialakh*. Erevan, 1995, p. 69. “O poryadke resheniya voprosov, svyazannykh s vykhodom soyuznoi respubliki iz SSSR”, *Vedomosti S’ezda narodnykh deputatov SSSR i Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR*, No.15, 11 Aprelya 1990 g., pp. 303.

<sup>29</sup> Rouben Zargarian, op. Cit., p. 344.

## CSCE's definition of the conflict and parties to the conflict

The decision on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict taken at the first Additional Meeting of the CSCE Ministerial Council on March 24, 1992, talked about "the armed conflict in and around Nagorno-Karabakh." Subsequent CSCE/OSCE documents sometimes avoid giving an explicit definition of the conflict, preferring expressions like the "Conflict in the Area dealt with by the Conference on Nagorno-Karabakh" (Annual Report 1994), "CSCE action in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict" (Budapest Summit declaration) or just "the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict." The "OSCE Handbook Online," however, talks about "the armed conflict that had been raging between Armenia and Azerbaijan since 1988 over the contested region." A Danish Foreign Ministry's publication on OSCE from 1996 and a subsequent Foreign Ministry publication on the 1997 Danish OSCE Chairmanship write about "the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave."<sup>30</sup>

However, the format of the forum for negotiations which was established at the meeting - the Minsk Conference - ... indicated that the conflict was regarded as an inter-state conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Minsk conference comprised, among its participants, only states -including Armenia and Azerbaijan- while "elected and other representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh would be invited as interested parties by the Chairman of the Conference after consultations with the states participating at the Conference".

The distinction in status between, on the one hand, Armenia and Azerbaijan designated as full participants in the Minsk Conference, and, on the other, "elected and other representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh" to be invited as "interested parties," indicated that there were two direct parties to the conflict, Armenian and Azerbaijan, and other, non-direct parties.

In the first phase of the Minsk process, the Chairman of the Minsk Group addressed the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh's participation in the peace negotiations in accordance with a principle of two ethnically distinct representations: an Armenian community of Nagorno-Karabakh and an Azeri community of Nagorno-Karabakh.<sup>31</sup>

Gradually, however, Nagorno-Karabakh was elevated at the definitional level from "interested party" to party. However, a distinction was maintained between the two recognized state parties, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and the non-recognized Nagorno-Karabakh entity. Thus, a September 1993 "Adjusted Timetable of urgent steps to implement Security Council resolution 822 (1993) and 853 (1993) states: "In the context of the timetable, the term "parties to the conflict" refers to the Government of Armenia and Azerbaijan and to the leadership of Nagorny Karabakh, each according to its own role in the conflict. The Azeri interested part of Nagorny Karabakh will continue to have a role in the negotiations towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The terms "party to the conflict" and "leadership of Nagorny Karabakh" do not imply recognition of any diplomatic or political status under domestic or international law".<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> "OSCE Handbook Online, [www.osce.org/publications/handbook/5a.htm](http://www.osce.org/publications/handbook/5a.htm). OSCE, Udenrigsministeriet, København, 1996, p. 22. *I Europas brændpunkter. Det danske for-mandskab for OSCE i 1997 – Erfaringer og perspektiver*. København 1999, p. 88.

<sup>31</sup> John Maresca, "Resolving the Conflict Over Nagorno-Karabakh" in: Chester A. Crocker et.al (eds.), *Managing Global Chaos. Sources of and Responses to International Conflict*, Washington, 1996, p. 260.

<sup>32</sup> "Adjusted Timetable of urgent steps to implement Security Council resolution 822 (1993) and 853 (1993)": Letter Dated 1 October 1993 From The Permanent Representative of Italy

All four resolutions on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict adopted in 1993 by United Nations Security Council expressed concern at “the deterioration of relations” and/or tension “between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Azerbaijan.” On the other side, the first Security Council resolution (822 of April 30) designated the forces that had invaded the Kelbadjar region outside Karabakh as “local Armenian forces.” Resolution 853 of July 29 and 884 of November 12 urged the government of Armenia to “exert its influence to achieve compliance by the Armenians of the Nagorno-Karabakh region of the Azerbaijani Republic” with the Security Council’s resolutions. These formulations allowed for an interpretation that Armenia was not a direct party to the conflict, and, consequently, that the conflict was not entirely inter-state. Neither CSCE nor the UN branded Armenia as an aggressor.

At the 1994 Budapest Summit “the participating States welcomed the confirmation by the parties to the conflict of the cease-fire agreement,” and in March 1995, at a meeting of the OSCE Senior Council, the Chairman-in-Office confirmed “...previous OSCE decisions on the status of the parties, i.e., the participation of the two states – parties to the conflict and of the other conflicting party (Nagorno-Karabakh) in the whole negotiating process, including in the Minsk Conference. In addition, interested parties may be invited to the Minsk Conference and its preparatory work for consultation.”<sup>33</sup>

As an international organization, comprising states and committed to the principle of territorial integrity, CSCE/OSCE could not include a non-recognized entity as NKR in the formal peace negotiations without the consent of Azerbaijan.

According to a Finnish report on the Minsk peace process after the Budapest Summit (Finland was Minsk Group Co-chair in 1995-96): “...at the time Finland assumed the co-chairmanship the talks had broken down due to procedural disputes, which is usually only a way to avoid serious negotiations. The most serious procedural dispute of the conflict concerns the status of Nagorno Karabakh in the peace process. Despite the de facto situation Azerbaijan still refuses to recognize Karabakh as a party to the conflict. It argues that the conflict is between Armenian and Azerbaijan and that the Armenian and Azeri communities are the only ‘interested parties’ which in fact was the formulation in the Helsinki decision of March 1992. The position of the Minsk Group members is clear: without any hesitation Nagorno Karabakh is the third party to the conflict – and to avoid further polemics the OSCE documents speak collectively about ‘the Parties to the conflict’”<sup>34</sup>

However, while an understanding gradually emerged that there were three conflicting parties involved in the peace negotiations, the format was still asymmetric. The “other conflicting party” or “the third party” was Nagorno-Karabakh, not the Nagorno-Karabakh *Republic*. The Minsk Group refrained from using the designation NKR, since no such entity in the view of Azerbaijan existed, and because an inclusion of NKR in the negotiations could be interpreted as a formal recognition of this self-proclaimed state.

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To The United Nations Addressed To The President Of The Security Council, 1 October 1993, [www.azembassy.com/conf/browsel.htm](http://www.azembassy.com/conf/browsel.htm)

<sup>33</sup> OSCE Chairman’s Summary, [www.osce.org/docs/english/190-199/sc\\_ef/1sc95e.htm](http://www.osce.org/docs/english/190-199/sc_ef/1sc95e.htm)

<sup>34</sup> Terhi Hahala, “The OSCE Minsk Process: A balance after five years”, *Helsinki Monitor*, 1998, No 1. p. 10.

Therefore, while the definition of the conflicting parties gradually changed a bit, the mediation format still did not – and probably could not – adequately reflect the complex nature of the conflict. This meant that the mediators lacked efficient mechanisms to adequately address the essential dimension of the conflict, that is, the conflict line between the ‘de facto’ state Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan.

In addition, both Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia could derive support from the UN Security resolutions for the claims that Armenia was neither a direct party to the conflict nor the aggressor in the conflict.

## **Parties’ position on settlement principles and parties to the conflict**

### **Azerbaijan**

While rejecting any settlement proposals not respecting the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, however, since the beginning of the peace process, Azerbaijan has offered to restore the autonomous status of Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan and also to expand the autonomous rights of the region. Already in February 1992, some three months after Azerbaijan abolished the autonomy of Nagorno-Karabakh, President Ayas Mutalibov announced that Azerbaijan was prepared to grant cultural autonomy to Nagorno-Karabakh within Azerbaijan.<sup>35</sup> In a UN speech on September 24, 1994, Aliyev stated: “We are prepared to provide for guarantees to the Armenian population of Nagorno-Karabakh. We stand for the restoration on the mutual basis of communications in the region, including the humanitarian corridor between Nagorno-Karabakh and the Republic of Armenia. We are also prepared to discuss the status of Nagorno-Karabakh within the Azerbaijani state. However, there are norms and principles which are everlasting to us, namely, our sovereignty and territorial integrity, evacuation of the occupied territories by their troops, and the return of refugees to their homes, including 50 thousand Azerbaijani refugees to their native land in Nagorno-Karabakh.”<sup>36</sup>

By late 1996 Azerbaijan was prepared to guarantee the “highest degree of self-rule” for Nagorno-Karabakh.

Since the bottom line for any settlement in the view of Azerbaijan is respect of its territorial integrity, Azerbaijan also insists that the first issue to be address in the peace negotiations is the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the occupied territories around Nagorno-Karabakh and the return of IDP’s to these territories. The issue of Nagorno-Karabakh’s political status should, in the view of Azerbaijan, be addressed only after the withdrawal of forces from the occupied territories and the return of IDPs.

As Azerbaijan perceives the conflict as between Armenia and Azerbaijan, since the beginning of the Minsk process it has also refused to negotiate directly with representatives of NKR. Azerbaijan has not, however, ruled out *any* negotiation with the Karabakh-Armenians. While refusing to negotiate with representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh *Republic*, it has been willing to talk with representatives of the Armenian community in Nagorno-Karabakh.

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<sup>35</sup> Elizabeth Fuller, “Nagorno-Karabakh: Internal Conflict Becomes International, *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, Number 11, 13 March 1992, p. 2. *HW92*, p. 15.

<sup>36</sup> “Exerps from Aliyev’s UN speech”. Azerbaijan International, [http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/magazine/24\\_forlder/24\\_articles/24\\_unspeech.ht...](http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/magazine/24_forlder/24_articles/24_unspeech.ht...) (consulted 8/28/2003)

To date Azerbaijan has accepted NKR as an equal party to negotiations only once. That was in May 1994, when Azerbaijani officials negotiated accepted NKR as co-signatory to the Russian brokered cease-fire agreement. However, this was a deviation from the 'normal' position of Azerbaijan: "In military agreements we recognize the Armenians of NK as a warring side. However, in accordance with the international mandate of 24 March, 1992 (CSCE resolutions), we accept only two parties to the conflict, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and only two interested parties, the Armenians of NK and the Azerbaijanis of NK. We will not back down from this position," the leader of the Azerbaijani delegation in Moscow, Vafa Guluzade, reportedly stated.<sup>37</sup>

In an interview with this author in mid December 2001, a senior official at the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Austria stated, "Of course, this conflict is inter-state, a conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan". The parties to the conflict, he stressed were Armenia and Azerbaijan: "one country, which invaded Azerbaijan, occupied our territories, and another country, which is a victim of aggression - Azerbaijan." But, he added, "There are also two interested parties to the conflict, according to the decision of the OSCE and the Minsk format, the Azeri community of Nagorno-Karabakh, which was forcibly expelled ... and the Armenian community of Nagorno-Karabakh." The Minsk format," he continued, "envisages the final stage of settlement as a conference to be held in Minsk. The settlement will be finalized at the conference. The participants to that conference will be countries of the Minsk Conference and Armenia and Azerbaijan, and also, upon consultation with the participating states, interested parties should be invited to the conference. But not as separate entities/.../ Nagorno-Karabakh is not subject of international law."

Azerbaijan's refusal to negotiate directly with NKR has hampered a settlement since issues of central importance for a settlement have been forced into an Azerbaijan/Armenia framework instead of an Azerbaijan/NKR framework. Armenia is not in a position to decide on the status issue, which is a matter to be decided first and foremost between NKR and Azerbaijan, or on the withdrawal of forces for the occupied territories - at least not alone.

## Armenia

Although agreeing to bilateral Armenia-Azerbaijan negotiations, Armenia, throughout the Minsk process, has insisted on the inclusion of Nagorno-Karabakh in the peace negotiations as a separate entity. Already at the initiation of the "Minsk process" Armenia insisted that Nagorno-Karabakh should be represented on an equal footing with other participants in the planned peace conference. "...a conference without the direct representation and equal participation of Nagorno-Karabagh cannot be a serious endeavor", Foreign Minister Rafi Hovannesian stated on 26 March, 1992.<sup>38</sup> Maintaining that the conflict revolved around Nagorno-Karabakh's right to self-determination, Armenia also held the view that Azerbaijan should negotiate directly with representatives of Nagorno-Karabakh. However, since fighting and shelling had taken place not only in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, but also along the borders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and since Armenia claimed that Azerbaijan had imposed economic and transport blockades on Armenia proper, Armenia, to some degree considered itself as a party to the conflict and thus to negotiations.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted from *Covcas* No. 4, 1995, 2/14/95 (Noyan Tapan), p. 19.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted from *Covcas*, No. II. 10, 3/26/92 (AFP).

<sup>39</sup> As Maresca noted in his 1996 article quoted above: "Armenia holds that it is not directly involved in the conflict, but is subject to aggression through blockades by both Azerbaijan

Addressing the 47 session of the UN General Assembly in September 1992, President Ter-Petrosyan stated: "It has been clear to us that the first step toward the resolution of the conflict must be the institution of a cease-fire, to be followed, on the one hand, by negotiations between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabagh on the status of the territory, to be secured by the necessary international guarantees, and on the other hand, by negotiations between Armenia and Azerbaijan on all matters arising from the conflict."<sup>40</sup>

However, while insisting on the inclusion of Nagorno-Karabakh as a separate party to the negotiations, Armenia has refrained from suggesting that Nagorno-Karabakh would be included as Nagorno-Karabakh *Republic*.

To my question whether Nagorno-Karabakh should be considered a party to the conflict and to the peace negotiations, a senior official at the Armenian OSCE representation in Vienna in December 2001 answered, "Absolutely... Karabakh was an actor. Karabakh is an actor. Karabakh is a party. What Karabakh cannot do is sit at the table at the OSCE". But, he stressed, "The Minsk Group Co-chairmen always go to Karabakh". Asked if he considered Armenia to be a party to the conflict and negotiations, he responded, "According to Azerbaijan, there is no Karabakh. That's the problem... Armenia is definitely a party to negotiations; party, because Azerbaijan does not want to do bilateral negotiations with Karabakh. On the other hand, Azerbaijan cannot refuse to negotiate at all, because it says that its territory is occupied."

In the official Armenian discourse, the designation Nagorno-Karabakh *Republic* rarely occurs. Instead, the designation Nagorno-Karabakh, or, as in the case of the senior official quoted above, just 'Karabakh' is used. To my question "when you say Karabakh do you mean Nagorno-Karabakh Republic?" the Armenian official at the Armenian OSCE representation replies:

"People say things like the self-styled Karabakh Republic, put the president in question marks etc. Reality is that there is Karabakh. There is a territory there, a place, where Karabakh Armenians live, that are not subject to Azerbaijani political, military sovereignty. That's the reality it's not some hypothetical construction. Karabakh, or as we call it, Artsakh, that's an entity. What international law recognizes to it now is different than what it is. It is there, and Azerbaijani citizens cannot go there, it's very simple.../ Azerbaijanis want to act according to principles that are contradicted on the ground. On the ground there is Karabakh, there are Karabakh borders, Karabakh authorities".

The cautious avoidance of the designation 'Nagorno-Karabakh *Republic*' (and the 'R' in the abbreviation NKR) shall be seen in the light of the symbolic loading involved. Any application of this designation in official Armenian discourse would be perceived as a deviation from the prevailing norm on non-recognition except in case of prior consent by the 'de jure' state. Armenia has also refrained from giving unqualified support for the principle of peoples' right to self-determination. Armenian

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and Turkey". Maresca, op. cit., 258. Turkey imposed a blockade on Armenia in spring 1993 (MacFarlane&Minear, op. cit., p. 38). In May 1992 clashes had also erupted on the border between Armenia and the Azerbaijani autonomous republic Nakhichevan, located to the west of Armenia. *HW92*, p. 14; Carol Migdalovitz, 92109: Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict, Updated December 3, 1996, Foreign Affairs and National Defence Division, p. 4.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted from *Covcas*, No. 11.28, 9/23/92 (Armenian Press & Information Center –APIC)

officials underline that Nagorno Karabakh is an exception- due to the “realities” on the ground. After having obtained independence, Armenia, like most other states, is keen to defend the principle of territorial integrity of state.

However, Armenia’s insistence on Nagorno-Karabakh’s participation as a separate party in the peace negotiations has complicated bilateral Armenia-Azerbaijan talks and reduced instigations on the NKR side to compromise on the region’s demands for independence.

## **Nagorno-Karabakh**

From the beginning of the Minsk peace process, NKR has insisted that a settlement must be based not only on the principles of territorial integrity but also on peoples’ right to self-determination. In a statement prepared for the third session of the preliminary Rome talks in 1992, the Nagorno-Karabakh delegation explained the basis on which they had decided to participate: “We trust that CSCE can become the base for a negotiating process because it is founded not only in the interests of States in maintaining their integrity but also on the following essential principles: the principle of self-determination of nations; the principle of the peaceful changing of borders; that all the ten principles of the Helsinki Final Act are accepted in an identical an unconditional manner and each interpreted in conformity with the others; the principle of the peaceful solution of the conflict, should the principles contradict each other.”<sup>41</sup>

Offers of autonomy within Azerbaijan were not enough for the independence-minded Karabakh-Armenians in 1992, and later offers of “highest degree of self rule” within Azerbaijan have been dismissed by NKR.

From the very beginning of its self-declared ‘independence,’ NKR also insisted on being recognized as a full party to any peace negotiations. Its position on the issue was expressed in the following way by the Chairman of Nagorno-Karabakh’s Parliamentary Commission on External Affairs, Melik Shahnazarian, in mid February 1992 (as the first CSCE fact-finding mission and also the Iranian Foreign Minister appeared in the region): “...without the participation of the Nagorno-Karabagh Republic, it is impossible for any negotiation to produce results; the fact that an independent republic has already been formed in Nagorno-Karabagh must be taken into consideration”.<sup>42</sup>

NKR insisted on being represented at the level of Nagorno-Karabakh *Republic* already in the 1992 Minsk Conference preparatory meetings in Rome. According to the NKR official home-page, “The lack of exact regulation of the negotiation status of Nagorno-Karabakh allowed the dual interpretation of the rights and duties of the Nagorno-Karabakh side/.../ That is why the Nagorno-Karabakh delegation was absent at the first meetings of the Minsk Group.../ The delegation left for Rome to take part in the third meeting, having in mind only one question – to define the status of its participation.”<sup>43</sup>

From the very beginning of the Minsk peace process, NKR has refused to accept the designation “interested party”. In 1997 the NKR Ministry of Foreign Affairs “requested the Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship to propose to the OSCE Council of Ministers to adopt at the forthcoming session in Copenhagen a decision “reflecting the

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<sup>41</sup> “The position of the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh on the participation in the Minsk Preliminary Meetings”, *Covcas*, No.II.20, 9 July 1992.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted from *Covcas*, No. II. 6, 1992, 2/14/92, (APIC).

<sup>43</sup> Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Process, <http://nkr.am/eng/mid/process.htm>

role of Nagorno-Karabakh as a party to the conflict in all stages of the negotiating process, including the Minsk Conference”.<sup>44</sup> In a March 1998 speech NKR Foreign Minister Naira Melkouminan stated: “Nagorno-Karabakh must be assured an equal status in the negotiations, because, in the end, it is vital for the settlement to take place in bilateral talks between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh.”<sup>45</sup>

### **CSCE/OSCE peace proposals. Territorial integrity first**

In the March 1992, CSCE decision on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the peaceful settlement of the conflict should be based on the “principles, commitments and provisions of the CSCE. The principles to which all participating states in the CSCE/OSCE agree to abide, comprises ten principles, formulated in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and includes: sovereign equality (under this principle the participating states “consider that the frontiers may be changed in accordance with international law, by peaceful means and by agreement”); refraining from the threat or use of force; inviolability of frontiers; territorial integrity of states; Peaceful settlement of disputes; non-intervention in internal affairs; equal rights and self-determination of peoples.” These principles are unranked in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act Decalogue and the Helsinki 1992 decision includes no ranking of the principles. However, throughout the Minsk peace process, the efforts to obtain a settlement of the conflict have been biased towards the principle of territorial integrity.

Throughout 1992 the Minsk Group mediators’ energy was consumed by fruitless efforts at preliminary meetings to pave the way for the convening of the Minsk Conference. In 1993 the Minsk Group presented several timetables of “urgent measures” to terminate the conflict. These time tables were based on the UN Security Council resolutions all of which confirmed the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and Armenia. (Three of the four Security Council resolutions were in their turn based on reports of the Chairman of the Minsk Group/Conference.) As noted in a OSCE Handbook Outline, “The designated participants of the Minsk Conference” have been meeting ... “in an ongoing attempt to hammer out a political solution on the basis of the United Nations Security Council resolutions 822, 853, 874, and 884 (1993).”<sup>46</sup>

The document from the 1994 OSCE Budapest Summit did not explicitly express that a settlement of the Karabakh conflict should be based on the principle of territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. This was in contrast to the chapters dealing with the conflicts in Georgia and Moldova, in which the participating states reiterated their “support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity” of the two conflict ridden states. However, in the chapter dealing with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, “the participating states confirmed their commitment to the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council,” indicating that the same principle was to guide the search for a solution also of this conflict.<sup>47</sup>

The Budapest summit also directed the Minsk Group Co-chairmen “to conduct speedy negotiations for the conclusion of a political agreement on the cessation of the

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<sup>44</sup> “Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of NKR”, 15 December 1997; [www.nkr.am/eng/index.htm](http://www.nkr.am/eng/index.htm)

<sup>45</sup> Naira Malkoumian, “The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and the New Geopolitical Realities of the Caucasus”, *Corporate Briefing Series*, March 2, 1998, [csis.org/ruseura/cs980302.htm](http://csis.org/ruseura/cs980302.htm)

<sup>46</sup> OSCE Handbook Online, Field Activities “The Conflict Dealt with by the Minsk Conference (Nagorno-Karabakh)”, <http://osce.org/publications/handbook/5a.htm> (26-01-01)

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1999mcs/5buda95e.htm>

armed conflict, the implementation of which will eliminate major consequences of the conflict for all parties and permit the convening of the Minsk Conference.” This indicated that the mediators should concentrate on military issues first, leaving other issues, like Nagorno-Karabakh’s political status, to a later stage.

After the Budapest Summit, negotiations within the Minsk Group, led by the now permanent Russian Co-chair and the Finnish Co-chair, resumed. During 1995 the two Co-chairs presented several settlement proposals. According to a Finnish account, the Co-Chairs’ written proposals, agreed in advance by the Minsk Group members, were presented “in July 1995, September 1995 and March 1996. Accordingly, the settlement could be based on the following principles: respect for the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and extensive self-rule in Nagorno Karabakh, combined with sufficient security guarantees including unimpeded access to Armenia as well as free and voluntary repatriation of refugees.”<sup>48</sup>

In an article published in 2000, former Russian Co-Chairman of the Minsk Conference Valentin V. Lozinski, recalls, “The mediators took into consideration the fact that the UN Security Council invariably reaffirmed in its resolutions the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and of all other states in the region as the most important precondition for settling the conflict.” Lozynskiy also recalls that “During the negotiations the Armenian and Nagorno-Karabakh sides contended that the principle of self-determination of peoples took priority over the principle of territorial integrity of states. The mediators rejected those attempts at justification and pointed out that this approach contradicted the clearly formulated provisions of the OSCE Final Act, which in the text of the Eight Principle directly stated that ‘the participating States will respect the equal rights of peoples and their right to self-determination, acting at all times in conformity with the purposes of the Charter of the United Nations and with the relevant norms of international laws, including those relating to territorial integrity of States’.”<sup>49</sup>

## **Lisbon principles and 1997 settlement proposals**

At the end of 1996, the Minsk Group Co-Chairs submitted a settlement proposal to the OSCE Lisbon Summit; the proposal was based on three principles:

- Territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia and the Azerbaijani Republic;
- Legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh defined in an agreement based on self-determination which confers on Nagorno-Karabakh the highest degree of self-rule within Azerbaijan;
- Guaranteed security for Nagorno-Karabakh and its whole population, including mutual obligations to ensure compliance by all Parties with the provisions of the settlement.

All participating states, except Armenia, approved the principles. Using its right to veto, Armenia prevented the principles from being included in the summit’s final document. Instead, “under a U.S.-sponsored compromise,” the proposal was read as a statement of the Chairman-in-Office that affirmed all the three principles. In the

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<sup>48</sup> Terhi Hakala, “The OSCE Minsk Process: A balance after five years”. *Helsinki Monitor*, 1998, Vol 1.

<sup>49</sup> *International peacekeeping*, January-February 2000.

statement, the Chairman-in-Office “regrets that one participating State could not accept this. These principles have the support of all other participating States.” The statement was annexed to the Lisbon Summit document.<sup>50</sup>

The Armenian delegation issued a statement expressing its opinion to the statement of the Chairman-in-Office. The C-i-O statement, the Armenian statement noted, “predetermines the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, contradicting the decision of the OSCE Ministerial Council of 1992, which referred this issue to the competence of the OSCE Minsk Conference, to be convened after the conclusion of a political agreement.” “The Armenian side,” the statement continued, “is convinced that a solution of the problem can be found on the basis of international law and the principles laid down in the Helsinki Final Act, above all on the basis of the principle of self-determination.”<sup>51</sup>

The response of NKR to the 1996 Lisbon Summit statement on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was vexatious. “The negotiations will not lead to the desired results if the mediators make attempts to predetermine the status of Nagorno-Karabakh within the framework of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan,” NKR president Robert Kocharian declared.<sup>52</sup>

### **1997 peace proposals**

In early 1997 the newly established CO-chair troika – Russia, the USA, and France – worked out a new peace proposal. A first version of the proposal was presented in May-June in Yerevan, Stepanakert and Baku. According to the 1997 Co-Chairmen report, the proposal embraced “a comprehensive approach in two agendas.” The first agenda comprised “immediate steps to end the armed conflict including, inter alia, troop withdrawal, the deployment of a multinational peacekeeping force, the return of displaced persons, the establishment of measures to guarantee the security of all populations, the removal of blockades and embargoes and the normalization of communications throughout the region.” The second agenda was “to determine the status of Nagorno-Karabakh that will be approved by the Minsk Conference. The agendas were kept separate to allow the parties to negotiate and implement each at its own pace, but with a clear understanding that at the end of the day all outstanding issues will have to be resolved.”<sup>53</sup>

A revised version of the peace plan was presented to the parties in July 1997. According to the version published in Azerbaijani official media two and a half year later, (!) the separate agenda structure was maintained.<sup>54</sup> Among the new elements was a proposal that Azerbaijan would lease out the Lachin corridor to OSCE.

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<sup>50</sup> Lisbon Document, OSCE 1996 Summit, Lisbon 2-3 December 1996, Annex 1, “Statement of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office”, [www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1999/summits/lis...](http://www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1999/summits/lis...) Edward Walker, “No War, No Peace in the Caucasus. Contested Sovereignty in Chechnya, Abkhazia, and Karabakh”, in Gary K. Bertsch et al. (eds.), *Crossroads and Conflicts. Security and Foreign Policy in the Caucasus and Central Asia*. New York and London: Routledge, 2000, pp. 174.

<sup>51</sup> “Statement of the Delegation of Armenia”, Lisbon Document...Annex 1.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted from Oganessian, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>53</sup> “Report by the Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Conference on Nagorno-Karabakh to the Ministerial Council of the OSCE (MC.Gal/2/97).

<sup>54</sup> Photocopy provided to this author by the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Vienna, December 2001. For an outline of the July 1997, and subsequent September 1997 and November 1998 proposals, based on the publicized versions in Azerbaijani and Armenian media, 20-21

The May-July proposal did not explicitly refer to the Lisbon principles. However, the issue on Nagorno Karabakh's status was defined within the following parameters: "All conflicting parties recognize the territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders of Azerbaijan and Armenia" and "Nagorno Karabakh is a state- and territorial formation within Azerbaijan and its self-determination will include rights listed below, as they will be defined in agreements between the Azerbaijan Republic and Nagorno Karabakh authorities, approved by the Minsk Conference and incorporated into the constitution of Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh." The preamble of the peace proposal referred to the 1993 UN SC resolutions.

Azerbaijan and Armenia accepted the peace proposals as a basis for negotiations, albeit with reservations.<sup>55</sup> NKR rejected the proposal.

In September the Co-Chairs returned to the region with yet a modified version of the peace proposal. This one was "phased," that is, it was aimed at resolving military issues first and the status issue at a second stage. Contrary to the previous drafts, the latest one did not contain any specification of Nagorno-Karabakh's future status.<sup>56</sup> However, while not containing in the main text any statement on Nagorno-Karabakh's subordination to Baku, the preamble of the proposal obliged the parties to comply with the United Nation's Security Council resolutions of 1993, all of which confirmed the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan accepted the proposal, as did Armenia. Nagorno-Karabakh, however, also rejected this proposal.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, Nagorno-Karabakh also rejected all versions of the 1997 Minsk Group Co-chairs settlement proposals. In a speech in Washington (at Center for Strategic and International Studies) 2 March, 1998, NKR Foreign Minister Naira Malkoumian stated: "The compromise we are being asked to make by the international community, must, however, take place within the context of people's right to self-determination and within an equitable negotiation framework that requires balanced concessions by both parties. Unfortunately, this has not been the case so far. Instead, it has become clear that, through the recent OSCE Minsk Group process, our Republic has come under pressure to accept a settlement based on concessions on our part, which have yet to be negotiated by the parties to the conflict. Security, legal status, territorial issues, and refugee settlement are all legitimate topics for discussion, yet my government believes that none of these issues should be predetermined by the mediating group as a precondition for formal negotiations."<sup>58</sup>

In their report to the 6<sup>th</sup> OSCE Ministerial Council in Copenhagen in 1997, the Minsk Group Co-Chairs regretted that an agreement on the cessation of the armed conflict had not yet been achieved, and they deplored the non-complying approach they met in Stepanakert:

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February 2001, see "OSCE Karabakh Peace Proposals Leaked", *RFE/RL, Caucasus report*, 23 February, 2001; see also Walker, op. cit., p. 176, Laitin and Suny, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>55</sup> "Armenia/Azerbaijan: Nagorno-Karabakh Rejects Peace Plan", *RFE/RL*, 25 August 1997; "Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Process," <http://nkr.am/eng/mid/process.htm>; Walker, op. cit., p. 175, Laitin and Suni op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>56</sup> Photocopy provided to this author at the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Vienna, December 2001; See also *RFE/RL, Caucasus report*, 23 February, 2001.

<sup>57</sup> "Armenia/Azerbaijan: Nagorno-Karabakh Rejects Peace Plan", *RFE/RL*, 25 August 1997; "Nagorno-Karabakh Peace Process," <http://nkr.am/eng/mid/process.htm>; Walker, op. cit., p. 175, Laitin and Suni op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>58</sup> Naira Malkoumian, "The Nagorno Karabakh Conflict and the New Geopolitical Realities of the Caucasus". Corporate Briefing Series, <http://www.csis.org/ruseura/cs980302.htm>

“With the acceptance of the Co-Chairmen’s proposal by Azerbaijan and Armenian as a basis for negotiations, the Co-Chairmen concentrated, during November and December 1997, on obtaining the same response in Nagorno Karabakh. However, Nagorno Karabakh continued to take a negative position with regard to holding negotiations on the basis of the Co-Chairmen’s proposal.”<sup>59</sup>

While Ter Petrossian by now was prepared to relinquish Armenia’s opposition to “territorial- integrity- first” approach, he was not in a position to induce the NKR leadership to agree with this adjusted position. On the contrary, the modification in Ter Petrossian’s position would cost him dearly. Shortly after his accept of the September 1997 settlement proposal was made known, he was forced to resign. His successor as president of Armenia was Robert Kocharian, former president of NKR. Kocharian took the position that Armenia should not endorse any vertical subordination of Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan – only “horizontal relations”:

“We will not accept any subjugation to Azerbaijan for Nagorno-Karabakh, any vertical relationship with Azerbaijan, Armenia’s new Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanyan stated in April 2001. “But anything on the level of horizontal ties will be seriously considered by the Armenian side.”<sup>60</sup>

This “no vertical relations” approach was reflected in a November 1998 peace proposal, suggesting that the election of a former “karabakhi” as president of Armenia had strengthened the voice of NKR in the negotiation process.

### **“Common state” proposal**

In November 1998 the Minsk Group Co-chair troika presented yet another proposal. Also called the “common state” proposals, this was a package solution in that it suggested a contemporaneous solution of political aspects; the status issue; and military aspects, including the withdrawal of forces, the return of internally displaced persons and the reopening of communication lines. Contrary to all previous proposals, this one referred not only to the principle of territorial integrity but also to peoples’ right to self-determination. No references were made to the 1993 UN Security Council resolutions. The new proposal proposed a construction whereby Nagorno-Karabakh would be co-ordinated with, not sub-ordinated to, Azerbaijan. The proposed construction was close to a con-federation: “Nagorno-Karabakh is a state and territorial formation in the form of a republic and creates a common state with Azerbaijan within its internationally recognized borders”. Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh would “sign an Agreement on delimitation of competences and mutual delegation of authority between relevant organs of state power, which will have force as constitutional law.”<sup>61</sup>

Armenia and NKR accepted the plan, with the latter’s Foreign Minister Melkoumyan noting that “in essence it ascertains the equality of the two sides – the

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<sup>59</sup> “Report By The Co-Chairmen Of The OSCE Minsk Conference On Nagorno-Karabakh To The Ministerial Council Of The OSCE (MC.Gal/2/97).

<sup>60</sup> Rosalind Russel, “Armenia Says No Azeri Rule for Nagorno-Karabakh” (Source Reuters English News Service), Azerbaijan International [www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabakh/media/key\\_west\\_after/media\\_russel...](http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabakh/media/key_west_after/media_russel...)

<sup>61</sup> Photocopy, provided to this author by the embassy of Azerbaijan in Vienna, Dec. 2001.

Karabakhian and Azerbaijani – and thereby acknowledges the fact, that Nagorno-Karabakh is not an object but a subject of security.”<sup>62</sup>

Azerbaijan, however, rejected the “common state” proposal. At the opening of a new round of talks in Key West, Florida, May 2001, President Aliyev stated, “We did not accept the proposal of the Co-Chairs on a “common state”. The term common state, which has no international law basis, implies that the Nagorno-Karabakh is an independent state and territorial entity, and grants it, equally with Azerbaijan, the status of the subject of the “common state”. This proposal fully contradicts norm and principles of international law, deprives Azerbaijan from a part of its territory and actually legitimates Armenian aggression against Azerbaijan”.<sup>63</sup>

Commenting on the “common state” proposal in March 1999, President of NKR Arkadij Ghoukasian explained, “Today, we face a choice. Either we come to an agreement with Azerbaijan to jointly create a common state based totally on mutual parity or we continue to demand international recognition of the NKR. If, from now on, Azerbaijan maintains an uncompromising stance in the conflict resolution process, we will have no other choice but to pursue the second option.”<sup>64</sup>

Contrary to previous proposals, the “common state proposal” did not receive support from the OSCE as such. It was not mentioned in the report from the OSCE Ministerial Council in Oslo, December 1998 and it was not supported in the final document of the OSCE Summit in Istanbul, December 1999. The document reiterated OSCE’s support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia, Moldova, the Russian Federation and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Charter for European Security adopted at the Istanbul Summit recommended “various concepts of autonomy as framework for solving problems related to national minorities.”<sup>65</sup>

Thus, as this presentation of the peace proposals put forward by the Minsk Group demonstrates, with only the exception of the 1998 “common state” proposal, all of them have been biased to the principle of territorial integrity of states and thus supported one of the parties of the conflict: Azerbaijan. They have also, with one exception, prioritized the withdrawal of forces from the occupied territories before the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh’s political status. For the same reasons, NKR - contrary to Armenia-has rejected all Minsk Group settlement proposals since 1994, except the 1998 common state proposal.

## **Back to territorial integrity first**

Since 1999 the peace process has continued mainly in the form of direct talks between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Since 2002 these face-to-face meetings at presidential level have been complemented with a parallel track involving personal representatives of the two presidents and their foreign ministers. According to media reports, different proposals have been “on the table” since 2000. However, the source and official status of these proposals have not been confirmed. Therefore, rumours of

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<sup>62</sup> Naura Melkumyan, “Nagorno-Karabakh: V Poiskakh Ustojchivogo mira”, Tsentralnaya Aziya i Kavkaz, Nr. 4, 1999. [www.ca.c.org/journal/cac04\\_1999/st\\_09\\_melkumjan.shtml](http://www.ca.c.org/journal/cac04_1999/st_09_melkumjan.shtml)

<sup>63</sup> “Statement: Azerbaijan President Aliyev in Key West, Florida”, April 3, 2001, Azerbaijan International; [www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabakh/karabakh...](http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabakh/karabakh...)

<sup>64</sup> Arkady Ghoukasian, “Nagorno-Karabakh on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century”. Speech before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council on March 1, 1999.

[www.lawac.org/speech/goukasian.htm](http://www.lawac.org/speech/goukasian.htm)

<sup>65</sup> *OSCE Istanbul Summit Charter for European Security*,

<http://www.osce.org/docs/english/1990-1999/summits/istachat99e.htm>

a territorial swap proposal circulated in media reports in 2000. In connection with a February 2000 meeting in Paris, between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan, and a following negotiation round in May, in Key West, Florida, the media reported on the existence of so called Paris principles.

Without supplying a source, "The Economist" wrote in April 2001: "The contours of a possible deal are becoming clear. The Armenians would give Azerbaijan back six of the seven regions they captured. Nagorno-Karabakh and the adjacent Lachin region that links it to Armenia would be granted self-governing status. Azerbaijan would be compensated with an international protected road, linking it to its isolated enclave of Nakhichevan."<sup>66</sup>

Commenting on the new proposals that reportedly were en route, Michael Emerson and Nathali Tocci at the Centre for European Policy Studies in Brussels, noted that: "The terminology of the 1998 'common state' has been abandoned, given its earlier rejection by Azerbaijan. However, it seems that the new proposals allow for the self-government of Karabakh, such that the enclave would be highly autonomous, and *de facto* although not *de jure* independent. It would be loosely tied to Azerbaijan through non-hierarchical relations, yet directly linked territorially to Armenia through Lachin." The new proposal "moves away from the concept of a land swap between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which would have seen Azerbaijan gaining control of Armenia's Meghri district ceding Karabakh and Lachin to Armenia."<sup>67</sup>

Who devised the ideas of "territorial swap" and "corridor exchange" or when it entered into the negotiations is not clear. But to all appearances the "corridor swap" was one of the elements comprising the so-called Paris principles.

On 1 May 2001 Armenia's Foreign minister Oskanian told an Austrian paper that "We are negotiating about free movement from Armenia to Karabakh and from Azerbaijan to Nakhchivan".<sup>68</sup>

While the "common state" proposal suggested a settlement based on both territorial integrity and peoples right to self-determination, the approach of the mediators now again seems firmly based on the territorial integrity principle. In March 2002, the then U.S Minsk Group co-Chairman Rudolf Perina stated, "All of us, I believe, here, recognize the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan and see that as a starting point. I think if one did not recognize that, there would not be much to negotiate; there would not be a problem here. But we, like the entire international community, support the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and certainly the United State does".<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> "During Key West Talks. For the Resolution of the Karabakh Conflict. Crossroads in Karabakh". (Source "The Economist") April 21, 2001. *Azerbaijan International*, [www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabakh/media/ke...](http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabakh/media/ke...)

<sup>67</sup> Michael Emerson and Nathalie Tocci, "Borderland Europe (7) Towards a breakthrough in the South Caucasus over Nagorno-Karabakh?", 6 May, 2001, [www.ceps.be/Commentary/May10/Emerson.php](http://www.ceps.be/Commentary/May10/Emerson.php)

<sup>68</sup> "Armenian Paper suggests U.S. Plans between Enhanced Karabach Role for Iran". *BBC Monitoring Service*, May 10, 2001, [www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabakh/media/ke..](http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabakh/media/ke..)

<sup>69</sup> "As Minsk Group Marks 10 Years, Karabakh Peace Appears More Elusive Than Ever", *Azerbaijan International*, [http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabakh/karabakh\\_discussions/karabakh\\_gre..](http://www.azer.com/aiweb/categories/karabakh/karabakh_discussions/karabakh_gre..)

## Bilateral Armenia-Azerbaijan negotiations

Since 1999 the peace process has continued on a bilateral level, with Nagorno-Karabakh more or less excluded. As the negotiator on the Armenian side by now was the former president of NKR, this may explain why no serious objections were heard from the Karabakh side - to begin with.

However, soon official statements from Nagorno-Karabakh disclosed increased irritation. In an interview in 2003, NKR president Arkadij Ghukasian stated: "Without Karabakh it is impossible to solve the problem. This depends neither on Azerbaijan, nor Armenia or Russia and USA. Karabakh was a subject of the war and ought to be a subject of negotiations – this is above any doubt... Why is the issue not settled yet? Because until now the right diagnosis has not been made, this war is between Nagorno Karabakh and Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan started and lost it. Yes, Armenia is a party of the conflict, but she is an implicated (vovlechnennaya) party. Naturally, she stood up at the defense of Karabakh."<sup>70</sup>

In an interview to me on October 2, 2003, a NKR official stated that "The international community makes a mistake if they think that the conflict can be solved by Armenia-Azerbaijan negotiations." He even thought that the "Armenia-Azerbaijan negotiations had made things worse". "These negotiations lead nowhere, he said.

## Armenian and NKR incongruities

Although Armenia has been inclined to support 'step-by- step' solutions, resolving military issues first and the question of Nagorno-Karabakh's political status at a later stage throughout the peace process, NKR has insisted on a 'package solution,' maintaining that military aspects, such as withdrawal of forces from the occupied territories and the return of refugees, should be addressed simultaneously with the status issue.

The incongruence between Armenia and NKR on the ordering of issues in a settlement became evident already in mid 1993 when the Minsk Group presented a "Timetable of urgent steps to implement Security Council resolution 822." The timetable called for a withdrawal from Kelbajar (a territory outside Nagorno-Karabakh seized by Karabakh Armenian forces in April 1993); a 60 days cease-fire; the deployment of a CSCE verification mission to verify the withdrawal; the lifting of blockades and the resumption of peace talks within the Minsk Group in Geneva.<sup>71</sup>

In a report by the Italian Chairman of the Minsk Conference, Mario Rafaelli, to the President of the Security Council, Rafaelli wrote: "In the course of the visit, both the President of Armenia and the acting President of Azerbaijan reconfirmed their full and determined support for the CSCE Minsk Group timetable/..../ In Nagorny Karabakh I found a completely different attitude on the part of the local Armenian community leaders. Their attitude appeared to be rigid and governed by military, rather than diplomatic considerations. Although the Chairman of their Supreme Soviet had signed the timetable, they now told us this signature had been fixed in his personal, not official capacity."<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Interview with the president of Nagorno Karabakh, *Noev Kovcheg*, August 2003.

<sup>71</sup> "Timetable of Urgent Steps to Implement Security Council Resolution 822." *Covcas*, No. 14, 24 June, 1993, Documents, p.7.

<sup>72</sup> Letter Dated 28 July 1993 From The Permanent Representative of Italy To The United Nations Addressed To The President Of The Security Council",  
<http://www.azembassy.com/confil/undoc.html> (consulted 27-10-2001)

Chairman of Nagorno-Karabakh's State Defense Council, Robert Kocharian, objected to the request of withdrawal from Kelbajar stating that "We simply cannot let Azeri forces into Kelbajar when it is not clear what the prospects for the peace process will be. It is not a question of whether we like this or not, it is a question of the security of our people."<sup>73</sup>

The NKR leadership also dismissed an earlier version of the timetable on which Armenia and Azerbaijan had agreed stressing that without the full participation of Nagorno-Karabakh peace negotiations would not yield substantial results: "We are convinced that without the participation with full rights of Nagorno Karabagh authorities, such consultations cannot contribute to the resolution of issues related to the life and security of the population of our republic."<sup>74</sup>

NKR officials repeatedly stated that the seizure of territories outside Nagorno-Karabakh proper was not an aim in itself. In the words of then NKR Foreign Minister Arkadij Gukhasian: "Captured territory is also an object of the negotiations. We don't have any claims to the territory in Azerbaijan and are prepared to view this question in the context of all the rest." "Each side could now benefit from negotiations: Azerbaijan could get territory and we could get the recognition of the status of the NKR," Chairman of NKR's Defence Committee, Robert Kocharian, commented in February 1994.<sup>75</sup>

As noted by Farlane and Minear in a 1997 study of the conflict: "The Karabakh Armenians/...viewed their presence in the occupied territories as a bargaining chip on the issue of status of the territory and a security guarantee against Azerbaijan."<sup>76</sup>

Recalling the mediation process between the 1994 Budapest and the 1996 Lisbon Summits, Russian Co-chair Valentin Lozinskiy remarks, "...by the end of 1996, the negotiation process visibly began to falter. One could clearly see in the position of the Nagorno-Karabakh side, the tendency to reject the phased approach to the resolution of the conflict envisaged by the decision of the OSCE Budapest Summit, and to seek a simultaneous solution to all problems, including the most complicated one: that of the future status of Nagorno Karabakh."<sup>77</sup>

While the May-July 1997 peace proposal was stepping back from the unacceptable "phased" approach, according to the NKR's perspective, it was, nevertheless, based on the Lisbon principles. As expressed by its foreign minister, and before long new president, Arkadyj Gukhasian, NKR would accept "only horizontal relations" with Azerbaijan.<sup>78</sup>

Although Armenian President Ter Petrossian in late 1997 accepted a phased, step-by-step, solution, NKR did not. Ter-Petrossian publicly criticized the NKR leadership for lack of flexibility.<sup>79</sup> He also doubted that maintaining the status quo was an option, arguing that the international community would lose "all its patience": "It happened in Bosnia. The Serbs lost everything. I don't think that the maintenance of the status quo is a real option. We may persist for a year or two, but the international

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<sup>73</sup> *Covcas*, Vol. III, No. 16, 1993, 7/14/93.

<sup>74</sup> "Statement of NK rejecting the tri-partite peace initiative – May 26, 1993" (unofficial translation). *Covcas*, Vol. III. No. 12, 1993, Documents.

<sup>75</sup> Both quotations from *HRWH*, 1994, pp. 109-110.

<sup>76</sup> MacFairlane and Minear, op. cit., p. 33.

<sup>77</sup> Lozinskiy, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>78</sup> *Armenpress* 8-14, Noyan Tapan 8-11, 1997. *Itar Tass*, 8 August, 1997.

<sup>79</sup> Lozinskiy, op. cit., p. 13.

community will become exasperated and lose all its patience.”<sup>80</sup> Arkady Gukhasian, newly elected Nagorno-Karabakh President, reciprocated that “Armenia has not been authorized to settle the dispute on our behalf.”<sup>81</sup>

In an article published in the Armenian paper *Hayastani Hanrapetutian*, (On 1 November 1997), Ter Petrossian again reproached the Karabakh leadership for taking an inconsistent and non-constructive position. “By first rejecting the package, than the step-by-step solution, and today proposing to return to the package approach, the Karabakh side has put both Karabakh and Armenia in an uncomfortable situation,” he wrote.<sup>82</sup> This caused an angry response from NKR’s Foreign Ministry. NKR did not object to a package proposal in principle, the statement stressed. It objected to “the variant of a package solution,” which was introduced in the May 1997 proposal. Both agenda 1 (on termination of the armed conflict) and agenda 2 (on the status issue) were “based on the principles of the statement made by the Chairman-in-Office at the Lisbon Summit.... Naturally... this package... could not be accepted as a basis for negotiations”.<sup>83</sup>

In a speech on 2 March, 1998, NKR’s new Foreign minister, Naira Malkoumian stated that “The phased approach favored by the OSCE and Minsk Group clearly predetermines the status of Nagorno-Karabakh. In this arrangement, our Republic would be placed under Azerbaijani sovereignty/....Nagorno-Karabakh is to accept international guarantees and promises of a vague and constrained autonomy. The starting point of these negotiations is already un unfair and one-sided concession.”<sup>84</sup>

While opinions have varied within the NKR leadership as to how many territories that may be objects of negotiations, the “territory for status and security” approach has remained unchanged. In March 1999 NKR President Ghukasian stated:

“It is very obvious that an arrangement based on Azerbaijan’s conditions, that is our withdrawal from their territories before solving the final status of Nagorno-Karabakh, would result in a loss of interests in future negotiations about that status by our opponents. This would undoubtedly scuttle a comprehensive solution and obstruct international security guarantees to Nagorno-Karabakh.”<sup>85</sup>

On March 31, 1998, U.S Co-chair of the Minsk Conference, Deputy Secretary Strobe Talbott, commented on the response of the Nagorno-Karabakh side to the 1997 CSCE step-by step proposal: “Unfortunately, the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities refused to participate in negotiations on this proposal. They insist on discussing status

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<sup>80</sup> Quoted from *Report on Armenia’s Presidential Elections, March 16 and 30, 1998*. A Report Prepared by the Staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Washington, 1998, p. 5, [www.csce.gov/search/search\\_result.cfm](http://www.csce.gov/search/search_result.cfm); Laitin and Suny, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>81</sup> *Report on Armenia’s Presidential Elections*, p. 5.

<sup>82</sup> Quoted from *ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>83</sup> “Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of NKR”, 6 November 1997; [www.nkr.am/eng/index.htm](http://www.nkr.am/eng/index.htm).

<sup>84</sup> Naira Malkoumian, “The Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict and the New Geopolitical Realities of the Caucasus”, *Corporate Briefing Series*, March 2, 1998, [csis.org/ruseura/cs980302.htm](http://csis.org/ruseura/cs980302.htm)

<sup>85</sup> Arkady Ghoukasian, “Nagorno-Karabakh on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century”. Speech before the Los Angeles World Affairs Council on March 1, 1999. [www.lawac.org/speech/goukasian.htm](http://www.lawac.org/speech/goukasian.htm).

from the beginning. Our concern is that concentrating on status first would return the talks to the endless exchanges of maximalist positions that characterized the negotiations before we became co-chairs./.../ Neither Russia, France, nor the U.S is willing to sponsor such negotiations. This is not out of impatience – we are prepared to be patient. But we are only prepared to sponsor negotiations seriously aimed at achieving a settlement, not an exercise in futility.

As I said, presidents Aliev and Ter-Petrosian were prepared to proceed on what we regarded as a constructive and promising basis. The Nagorno-Karabakh authorities were not.”<sup>86</sup>

To my question if Armenia and Azerbaijan could decide on the issue of the occupied territories, the Prime Minister of NKR, Danelian, answered (October 2003): “Nobody has said that we are prepared to give up everything except Lachin... the territories are subjects of negotiation. Neither Ter Petrossian, nor Kocharian nor Gukhasian takes decision on this issue. The people do.” Another NKR official stressed that the territories “are not controlled by Armenian forces” and noted that the UN Security Council do not define them as such. He disapproved of the idea of a territorial swap, adding that “we would like to maintain a part of the common border with Iran”.

Throughout the entire peace process, NKR has been helped and has taken advantage of the internal crisis in Armenia as well as in Azerbaijan. After the Armenian declaration of independence, President Ter Petrossian sought to downplay the nationalist idea of Nagorno-Karabakh’s reunification with Armenia proper (which had brought him to power in 1990), concentrating, instead, on nation and state building within the existing borders. Also, as a new member of UN and CSCE/OSCE, Armenia could not without political and diplomatic costs recognize NKR without Azerbaijan’s prior consent. Ter Petrossian also sought to lessen Armenia’s economic constraints by improving relations with Turkey (Azerbaijan’s supporter on the Karabakh issue) and to promote the prospects for the use of Armenia as a transit country for Caspian oil to Turkey. However, within the Armenian community the Karabakh issue, both in terms of unification and independence for NKR, was widespread. Also among the Armenian diaspora, on which Armenia was dependent, both in terms of economic and political support, the opposition to “give up” Nagorno-Karabakh was strong. NKR leadership capitalized on the widespread opposition both within Armenia and influential diaspora groups, knowing that Ter Petrossian could not without political costs for himself put pressure on NKR to give in to Azerbaijan’s demands. After the “Karabakhization” of the Armenian leadership in 1996-97, the position of NKR was further strengthened. By now, NKR could also take advantage of a growing economic and geo-strategic rivalry between Russia and the US.

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<sup>86</sup> Deputy Secretary Talbott, “U.S. Policy Toward the Caucasus”,  
[http://www.state.gov/www/policy\\_remarks/1998/980331\\_ta...](http://www.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/1998/980331_ta...)

# Discrepancies between Form and Meaning: Reanalyzing Wish Formulae in Georgian<sup>1</sup>

Nino Amiridze

This paper deals with one case of syntactic change in wish formulae in Georgian, namely the use of a verb form taking a certain number of arguments with the particle *net'a(v)i* “would that”, or with an optative enclitic *-mc(a)*, so that the resulting formulae are given a 1-argument-less reading. The case exemplifies the mismatch between form and meaning and is claimed here to have undergone syntactic reanalysis, which is a mechanism involving changes to the meaning of expressions, while not affecting the form itself. The data discussed are drawn from several dialectological sources.

## 1. Georgian Wish Formulae with the Particle *net'a(v)i* “would that”

The standard way of expressing wishes in Georgian is by the use of subjunctive morphology with an optative particle *net'a(v)i*<sup>2</sup> “would that” (1):

### (1) Unaccusative

- a. *net'a(v)i (me) mo-v-k'vd-e*  
would.that I.NOM<sup>3</sup> PV-S1.SG-die-SUBJ  
“I wish I die”
- b. *net'a(v)i (šen) ga-Ø-i-cin-o*  
would.that you.SG.ERG PV-S2.SG-PRV-laugh-SUBJ  
“I wish you.SG laugh”
- c. *net'a(v)i (man) (is) a-Ø-a-šen-o-s*  
would.that (s)he.ERG it.NOM PV-DO3.SG-PRV-build-SUBJ-S3.SG  
“I wish (s)he builds it”

However, there is one more alternative to the subjunctive-marked verb forms in order to express a wish. This other option which we are going to discuss also has the particle *net'a(v)i*; however, the verb shows indicative, not subjunctive morphology. This can be

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<sup>1</sup>This work is supported by the Utrecht Institute of Linguistics OTS.

<sup>2</sup>The form of the particle may vary according to a dialect or an idiolect.

<sup>3</sup>The following abbreviations are used in this paper: ADV=adverbial; AOR=aorist; CAUS=causative; DAT=dative; DIM=diminutive; DO1/2/3=1st/2nd/3rd person direct object; ERG=ergative; EV=epenthetic vowel; GEN=genitive; IO1/2/3=1st/2nd/3rd person indirect object; INDEF=indefinite; INDIC=indicative; INST=instrumental; INTR=intransitive; NEG=negative; NOM=nominative; OPT=optative; PART=particle; PERF=perfect; PL=plural; POSS=possessive; PRV=pre-radical vowel; PV=preverb; QUOT=quotation; S1/2/3=1st/2nd/3rd person subject; SG=singular; SUBJ=subjunctive; TS=thematic suffix; VOC=vocative.

seen by comparing the option illustrated in example (1), which has a subjunctive marking, with the option illustrated in example (2), which does not have such a marking (cf. 2a vs. 1a, 2b vs. 1b, and 2c vs. 1c). The kind of wish formulae with an indicative verb form illustrated in (2) are widespread in the North-Eastern dialects of Georgian as well as in the North-Western Rachan dialect, or more precisely, its Glola subdialect.<sup>4</sup> I will present the data from various dialects later in (6-8); here, I will set forth a limited number of examples:

- (2) a. *net'a(v)i (me) mo-m-k'l-a*  
would.that I.NOM PV-DO1.SG-kill-S3.SG.AOR  
“I wish I die”
- b. *net'a(v)i (me) ga-m-a-cin-a*  
would.that I.NOM PV-DO1.SG-PRV-laugh-S3.SG.AOR  
“I wish I laugh”
- c. *net'a(v)i (me) (is) a-m-a-šen-eb-in-a*  
would.that I.DAT it.NOM PV-IO1.SG-PRV-build-TS-CAUS-S3.SG.AOR  
“I wish I build it”

Although the readings in (2a) and (2b) imply one argument each, a theme (2a) and an agent (2b), the verb forms used there are formally 2-argument transitives (cf. *mo-m-k'l-a* (2a) vs. *mo-m-k'l-a* (3a,b), and *ga-m-a-cin-a* (2b) vs. *ga-m-a-cin-a* (4a,b)):

- (3) a. *(man) (me) mo-m-k'l-a*  
(s)he.ERG I.NOM PV-DO1.SG-kill-S3.SG.AOR  
“(S)he killed me”
- b. *(man) (me) rom mo-m-k'l-a...*  
(s)he.ERG I.NOM that PV-DO1.SG-kill-S3.SG.AOR  
“When (s)he killed me...”
- (4) a. *(man) (me) ga-m-a-cin-a*  
(s)he.ERG I.NOM PV-DO1.SG-PRV-laugh-S3.SG.AOR  
“(S)he made me laugh”
- b. *(man) (me) rom ga-m-a-cin-a...*  
(s)he.ERG I.NOM that PV-DO1.SG-PRV-laugh-S3.SG.AOR  
“When (s)he made me laugh...”

Similarly, although the reading in (2c) implies two arguments, the verb form used there is formally 3-argument transitive (cf. *a-m-a-šen-eb-in-a* (2c) vs. *a-m-a-šen-eb-in-a* (5a, b)):

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<sup>4</sup>One can find wish formulae occasionally also in literature. For instance, the poem in example 9, which could be regarded as belonging to the literary language, is included in primary school Georgian language textbooks and has been taught in Georgia to the initial grades at this level.

- (5) a. *(man) (me) (is) a-m-a-šen-eb-in-a*  
 (s)he.ERG I.DAT it.NOM PV-IO1.SG-PRV-build-TS-CAUS-S3.SG.AOR  
 “(S)he made me build it”
- b. *(man) (me) (is) rom a-m-a-šen-eb-in-a...*  
 (s)he.ERG I.DAT it.NOM that PV-IO1.SG-PRV-build-TS-CAUS-S3.SG.AOR  
 “When (s)he made me build it...”

It seems that in this particular construction, namely with the optative particle *net'a(v)i*, a verb form taking 2 arguments has a 1-argument reading (2a, 2b), and a verb form taking 3 arguments gets has a 2-argument reading (2c).

In (6-9) below, I give some examples of the kind of wish formulae found in literature. The relevant examples in (6-8) come from the dialect data collected by A. Shanidze during the period 1911-1913. Example (9), although from folklore, is not understood as dialectal but as also a part of the literary language.<sup>5</sup>

These examples of wish formulae with the particle *net'a(v)i* in (6-9) all use an indicative verb form taking either 3 (cf. 7, 9c, 9d) or 2 arguments (cf. 6, 8, 9a, 9b), yet the formulae as a whole have 2- and 1-argument readings respectively.

- (6) Pshav dialect, from (Shanidze 1984, 132)  
*net'avi ertad ša-gv-q'ar-n-a*,  
 would.that together PV-DO1.PL-collect-S3.SG.AOR  
 (s)he/it.gather.us  
  
*yame gvian-amc Ø-a-ten-a*  
 night.NOM late-OPT DO3.SG-PRV-turn.into.day-S3.SG.AOR  
 (s)he/it.made.it.turn.into.day  
 Lit.: I.wish together we.gather, night late turn.into.day  
 “I wish we meet together, [and] I wish the night to turn into day late”
- (7) Pshav dialect, from (Shanidze 1984, 132)  
*netavi [čven] tval-it gv-a-čven-a*  
 would.that we.DAT eye-INST IO1.PL-PRV-show-S3.SG.AOR  
 Lit.: I.wish we with.eye (s)he/it.showed.it.to.us  
 “I wish we see it by [our] eyes”
- (8) Gudamaqrian dialect, from (Shanidze 1984, 158)  
*net'a [kmar-s] ra ma-Ø-a-rbol-eb-d-a...?*  
 would.that husband-DAT what.NOM PV-IO3.SG-PRV-run-TS-IMPERF-S3.SG  
 Lit.: I.wish.[to.know] [husband] what it.made.him.run  
 “I wish [to know] why [the husband] was running this way”
- (9) *P'at'ara kalis nat'vra* “A wish of a little girl”, folklore, according to Gogebashvili, cited in *dedaena* (Ramishvili 2006, 112)  
 a. *net'avi ra-d-me m-a-kc-i-a*,  
 would.that what-ADV-INDEF.PART DO1.SG-PRV-turn.into-TS-S3.SG.AOR  
 Lit.: (s)he/it.turned.me.into.it  
 “I wish I turn into something”

<sup>5</sup>See footnote 4.

- b. *bulbul-ad gada-m-a-kc-i-a*:  
 nightingale-ADV PV-DO1.SG-PRV-turn.into-TS-S3.SG.AOR  
 Lit.: (s)he/it.turned.me.into.it  
 “[I wish] I turn into a nightingale”
- c. *bulbul-is ena-Ø m-a-sc'avl-a*,  
 nightingale-GEN language-NOM IO1.SG-PRV-teach-S3.SG.AOR  
 Lit.: (s)he/it.taught.it.to.me  
 “[I wish] I learn the language of a nightingale”
- d. *am bay-eb-s šemo-m-a-šv-i-a!*  
 this.OBL gardener-PL-DAT PV-DO3.SG-PRV-get.accustomed-TS-S3.SG.AOR  
 Lit.: (s)he/it.made.me.get.accustomed.to.them  
 “[I wish] I get accustomed to these gardens”

If we now examine the poems in example (9) line by line and compare the original Georgian sentences to the literary translation, we shall see that the 3-argument verbs (cf. *m-a-sc'avl-a* in 9c, *šemo-m-a-čv-i-a* in 9d) are in fact reanalyzed as 2-argument ones.

Each of the examples in (6-9) illustrates a verb form with a certain number of arguments which is interpreted as 1-digit-less within the wish formulae. The original number of arguments is reflected in the third line of the glosses, while the translation reflects the final reading of the formulae.

## 2. Wish Formulae with the Encliticized Particle –*mca* in Modern Georgian Dialects

There are uses of –*mc(a)* in Georgian dialects which involve indicative verb forms taking a certain number of arguments that are interpreted as 1-digit-less. This will be illustrated by the examples (10-13), of which the first one (given in (Jorbenadze 1989, 435)), is from the Gola subdialect of the Rachan dialect. The next couple of examples, (11) and (12), is from A. Shanidze’s 1911-1913 fieldwork (cf. Shanidze 1984), and the last couple of examples at (13) is from a poem by a contemporary poet, Manana Chitishvili, in which she imitates the Xevsuri dialect.

- (10) Gola subdialect of the Rachan dialect, from (Jorbenadze 1989, 435)

*net'a-mca nat'ra m-a-nat'r-a*  
 would.that-OPT wish.NOM IO1.SG-PRV-wish-S3.SG.AOR  
 Lit.: (s)he.let.me.wish.it  
 “I wish (s)he let me wish a wish” (i.e., make a wish)

- (11) Mtiulian dialect, from (Shanidze 1984, 185)

*čem-i-mc [ʒayl-i] g-kn-a*  
 my-NOM-OPT dog-NOM DO2.SG-make-S3.SG.AOR  
 Lit.: (s)he/it.made.you  
 “I wish you were my dog”

(12) Tush dialect, from (Shanidze 1984, 241)

*mi-a da šen-a, kala-o, q'ana-i-mc mogvca ziar-i*

I.DAT-EV and you.SG.DAT-EV woman-VOC field-NOM-OPT PV-IO1.PL-give-S3.SG.AOR to.be.shared-NOM

Lit.: To.Me and to.you, woman, field.I.wish (s)he/it.gave.it.to.us shared

“I wish me and you, the woman, to have a field shared”

(13) Imitation of the Xevsurian dialect, from (Chitishvili 1984, 10)

a. *aem cixe-s-a-mc čamk'et'a,*

this.OBL fortress-DAT-EV-OPT PV-DO1.SG-lock-S3.SG.AOR

Lit.: Here.this in.fortress.I.wish (s)he/it.locked.me

“I wish I get locked here in this fortress,”

b. *c'q'al-i aryun-is m-a-sv-a da*

water-NOM Arghuni-GEN IO1.SG-PRV-drink-S3.SG.AOR and

Lit.: water of.Arghuni [I.wish] (s)he/it.gave.me.to.drink.it and

“[I wish] I drink water of Arghuni and

c. *šen-a-mc sačemod da-g-c'er-a,*

you.SG.NOM-EV-OPT for.me PV-DO2.SG-write-S3.SG.AOR

Lit.: you.SG.I.wish for.me (s)he/it.wrote.you<sup>6</sup>

“[I wish] to have you given to me by God,”

d. *ayar ga-m-i-šv-a arsad-a*

no.more.time PV-IO1.SG-PRV-let.go-S3.SG.AOR nowhere-EV

Lit.: [I.wish] never (s)he/it.let.me.go nowhere

“[I wish] it not to be necessary for me to leave.”

e. *pex-t č'rel-i c'inda ča-m-a-cv-a,*

foot-DAT.PL many.colored-NOM sock.NOM PV-IO1.SG-PRV-dress-S3.SG.AOR

Lit.: On.feet many.colored sock (s)he/it.put.it.on.me

“[I wish] I wear colorful socks,”

f. *tav-s papanag-i da-m-xur-a,*

head-DAT Papanagi<sup>7</sup>-NOM PV-IO1.SG-put.on.head-S3.SG.AOR

Lit.: On.head Papanagi (s)he/it.put.it.on.my.head

“[I wish] I put Papanagi on my head,”

g. *gz-eb-i m-i-namkr-o-s did+hovl-ma,*

way-PL-NOM IO1.SG-PRV-snowstorm-SUBJ-S3.SG big+snow-ERG

Lit.: ways I.wish.they.get.covered.by.snow.for.me heavy.snow

“Let the paths get snowed under for me,”

<sup>6</sup>The use of the root -c'er- “write” has to be related to the belief that fortune/fate is being written in heaven and nothing is able to change it.

<sup>7</sup>Certain kind of headware for men used in the mountainous regions of Georgia.

- h. *ar-c rodis ga-Ø-a-zapxul-a*.  
 NEG-too when PV-DO3.SG-PRV-summer-S3.SG.AOR  
 (s)he/it.turned.it.into.summer  
 Lit.: not when (=never) I.wish.it.becomes.summer  
 “Let it never become a summer.”

If we examine the poem in example (13) line by line and compare the original Georgian sentences to the literary translation, we shall see that the 3-argument verbs (cf. *m-a-sv-a* in (13b), *ča-m-a-cv-a* in (13e), and *da-m-xur-a* in (13f)) are in fact reanalyzed as 2-argument ones, and the 2-argument verbs (cf. *čamk'et'a* in (13a), *da-g-c'er-a* in (13c), *ga-m-i-šv-a* in (13d), and *ga-Ø-a-zapxul-a* in (13h)) are in fact reanalyzed as 1-argument ones.

Any of the examples in (10-13) show the particle *-mc(a)* encliticized to a particular constituent. The verb forms used in those examples, if taken separately, are either 3-argument verbs (cf. 10, 12, 13b, 13e, 13f) or 2-argument verbs (cf. 11, 13a, 13c, 13d, 13h). However, the sentences with the enclitic, which are in fact wish formulae, receive 2- and 1-argument readings respectively.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. The Morphological Peculiarity of the Indicative Verb Forms in Wish Formulae and Possible Explanations

#### 3.1 For and Against the Extra Argument Analysis for Wish Formulae

We have considered the Georgian wish formulae involving the optative particle *net'a(v)i* and those with the particle *-mc(a)* encliticized to a particular constituent. All the wish formulae make use of indicative verb forms which, taken separately, are associated with a certain number of arguments. Nonetheless, the reading of the each formula is 1-argument less.

When translating wish formulae with the particle *net'a(v)i*, Hewitt (1995, 447) uses the lexeme *God* to make the translation transitive (cf. 14) and thus explain the use of formally transitive verb forms in formulae:

- (14) From (Hewitt 1995, 447)  
*net'av [me] sul šentan m-a-mq'op-a*  
 would.that I.NOM all.the.time with.you DO1.SG-PRV-being-S3.SG.AOR  
 (s)he/it.let.me.be  
 “Would that X [sc. God] might let me be with you all the time”

Tuite, however, notes that none of his informants ever used *God* or any extraterrestrial to explain the morphology (1996, 260).

Together with Tuite, I consider that giving a 2-argument reading as a 3-argument reading (cf. 2c) or a 1-argument verb reading as a 2-argument reading (cf. 2a, 2b) based only on the verb form would be inaccurate (cf. the examples 2a vs. 15a, 2b vs. 15b, and 2c vs. 15c).

<sup>8</sup>There is one exception, namely *m-i-namkr-o-s* in example (18g), which is a 3-argument subjunctive form used in wishes and can never be analyzed semantically as a 2-argument verb. Rather, it takes 3 arguments – *man me is m-i-namkr-o-s* [(s)he/it.ERG I.DAT it.NOM IO1.SG-PRV-snowstorm-SUBJ-S3.SG] “Let it fill it/them with snow for me”.

- (15) a. *net'a(v)i (me) mo-m-k'l-a*  
would.that I.NOM PV-DO1.SG-kill-S3.SG.AOR  
“\*I wish (s)he/it kills me”; “\*I wish the God kills me”
- b. *net'a(v)i (me) ga-m-a-cin-a*  
would.that I.NOM PV-DO1.SG-PRV-laugh-S3.SG.AOR  
“\*I wish (s)he/it makes me laugh”; “\*I wish the God makes me laugh”
- c. *net'a(v)i (me) (is) a-m-a-šen-eb-in-a*  
would.that I.DAT it.NOM PV-IO1.SG-PRV-build-TS-CAUS-S3.SG.AOR  
“\*I wish (s)he/it makes me build it”; “\*I wish the God makes me build it”

However, I think that the verbs with 2-argument readings, as in (2c), are making use of 3-argument verb forms (5), and the verbs with 1-argument readings (2a, 2b) are making use of 2-argument verb forms (3, 4, respectively).

What Tuite's fieldwork (1996) illustrates is that in Modern Georgian, in this particular construction, verb forms that are formally 3-argument are no longer understood as such; furthermore, verb forms that are formally 2-argument are no longer understood in this manner but as 1 digit less. I consider that a wish formula which is finally understood as having an n-argument structure has to be derived from a formula having an n+1-argument structure (16).

(16) *I wish VERB<sub>n</sub> < I wish [the God/the forces of nature/etc. made [VERB<sub>n</sub> ]]*

(where n is the arity of the predicate and can be equal to 1, 2 or 3).

Thus I suppose that the resulting forms in (2a), (2b) and (2c) have to be correspondingly derived from the hypothetical formulae in (17a), (17b) and (17c).

- (17) a. *\*net'a(v)i (man) (me) mo-m-k'l-a*  
would.that (s)he/it.ERG I.NOM PV-DO1.SG-kill-S3.SG.AOR  
“I wish (s)he/it(=the God/the forces of nature/etc.) kills me”
- b. *\*net'a(v)i (man) (me) ga-m-a-cin-a*  
would.that (s)he/it.ERG I.NOM PV-DO1.SG-PRV-laugh-S3.SG.AOR  
“I wish (s)he/it(=the God/the forces of nature/etc.) makes me laugh”
- c. *\*net'a(v)i (man) (me) (is) a-m-a-šen-eb-in-a*  
would.that (s)he/it.ERG I.DAT it.NOM PV-IO1.SG-PRV-build-TS-CAUS-S3.SG.AOR  
“I wish (s)he/it(=the God/the forces of nature/etc.) makes me build it”

I assume there has to be a God or some higher power conceived as an agent argument in the wish formulae, although in modern Georgian this notion is completely lost, as illustrated by Tuite's fieldwork (1996) or by examples (2a), (2b) and (2c). Since in reality not all wishes can come true, and not everything depends on the person making a wish, it is natural to hope for someone or something that is believed to have power over nature and control over human affairs.

I think that the wish formulae examined above illustrate that syntactic reanalysis had taken place, modifying the argument structure but not the form. *Reanalysis* is a “change in the structure of an expression or class of expressions that does not involve any immediate or intrinsic modification of its surface manifestation” (Langacker 1977, 58). The “reanalysis involves a change in constituency, hierarchical structure, category labels, grammatical relations” (Harris & Campbell 1995, 61).

However, it is unclear how the resulting wish formulae in (2a), (2b) and (2c) could derive from a hypothetical source in (17a), (17b) and (17c) respectively. The problem here is that in standard Georgian sentences with an indicative verb form and the particle *net'a(v)i* as in (17a-c) are marginal. The better option is to have a subjunctive verb form as in (18a-c).

- (18)a. *net'a(v)i (man) (me) mo-m-k'l-a-s*  
would.that (s)he/it.ERG I.NOM PV-DO1.SG-kill-SUBJ-S3.SG  
“I wish (s)he/it kills me”
- b. *net'a(v)i (man) (me) ga-m-a-cin-o-s*  
would.that (s)he/it.ERG I.NOM PV-DO1.SG-PRV-laugh-SUBJ-S3.SG  
“I wish (s)he/it makes me laugh”
- c. *net'a(v)i (man) (me) (is) a-m-a-šen-eb-in-o-s*  
would.that (s)he/it.ERG I.DAT it.NOM PV-IO1.SG-PRV-build-TS-CAUS-SUBJ-S3.SG  
“I wish (s)he/it makes me build it”

Neither is it possible to replace the agent argument in the hypothetical source formulae in (17a-c) with a lexeme for God or any other sacred entity and achieve a grammatical result. For instance, the examples with substitution in (19a-c) are as ungrammatical as the hypothetical sources in (17a-c):

- (19)a. *\*net'a(v)i [buneb-is žala-m] (me) mo-m-k'l-a*  
would.that nature-GEN force-ERG I.NOM PV-DO1.SG-kill-S3.SG.AOR  
“I wish the force of nature kills me”
- b. *\*net'a(v)i [lomis-is madl-ma] (me) a-m-a-lap'arak'-a*  
would.that Lomisi-GEN grace-ERG I.NOM PV-DO1.SG-PRV-talk-S3.SG.AOR  
“I wish the grace of Lomisi gives me the ability to talk”
- c. *\*net'a(v)i ymert-ma (me) (is) ga-m-a-k'et-eb-in-a*  
would.that God-ERG I.DAT it.NOM PV-IO1.SG-PRV-build-TS-CAUS-S3.SG.AOR  
“I wish the God make me do it”

The only example (see 20) I was able to find comes from the Kirnat-Maradidi subdialect of the Ajaran dialect described by Jorbenadze (1989). The sentence in (20) is an example of a cursing formula illustrating the lexeme *ymert*- “God” marked by ERG

as a subject argument of the verb form *čame-j-q'van-a*, “(s)he/it brought him/her”.<sup>9</sup> One can construct analogical cursing or even blessing/wish formulae as in (21). Note that the verb form in (20) is indicative not subjunctive. A further crucial observation is that the reading given to the cursing formula in (20) is not necessarily a 2-argument reading. Thus it is possible to have a wish formula<sup>10</sup> which uses an indicative verb form instead of a subjunctive one and additionally takes *God* as a subject (cf. 20 vs. 22). This formula may be interpreted in two ways: both a transitive interpretation, where *God* is an agent, and an intransitive interpretation, where *God* simply disappears:

(20) Kirnat-Maradidi subdialect of the Ajaran dialect, from (Jorbenadze 1989, 571)

*ymert-ma man ar čame-j-q'van-a*  
 God-ERG (s)he.ERG NEG PV-PRV-bring-S3.SG.AOR  
 Lit.: God him/her not (s)he/it.brought.him/her  
 “Let the God not return him/her”; “Let him/her not return”

(21) *ymert-ma (is) ga-Ø-a-xar-a*

God-ERG (s)he.NOM PV-DO3.SG-PRV-happy-S3.SG.AOR  
 (s)he/it.made.him/her.happy  
 “Let the God make him/her happy”; “Let him/her be happy”

(22) *ymert-ma is ar čamo-i-q'van-o-s*

God-ERG (s)he.NOM NEG PV-PRV-bring-SUBJ-S3.SG  
 Lit.: God him/her not (s)he/it.brought.SUBJ.him/her  
 “Let the God not return him/her”; “Let him/her not return”

Thus it has to be possible in principle to derive the resulting wish formulae in (2a-c) from the hypothetical source with *God* or some higher power as an agent argument (cf. 17a-c).

## 3.2 Form and Interpretation

Let me now illustrate several arguments in favor of the view that the wish formulae with an n-argument reading involve the verb forms taking n+1 arguments.

The first and most important piece of evidence for proposing that the wish formulae with the n-argument verb reading make use of (n+1)-argument verb forms comes from the use of transitive stems in the intransitive reading. For instance, Georgian has two different roots, *-k'vd-* and *-k'l-/k'al-* respectively, for the intransitive “dying” and the transitive “killing”. Although the wish formula in (2a) has a reading involving intransitive “dying”, there is a transitive root used there, namely *-k'l-* “kill”.

The other piece of evidence comes from the redundant use, according to the reading, of causative morphology in the wish formula in (2c). The 2-argument verb forms with the root *-šen-* “build” do not require any kind of causative marking (23), while the wish formula with the 2-argument reading in (2c) uses the verb form marked by the causative suffix *-in*. Note that the suffix is exclusively used when there is a causative reading, or

<sup>9</sup>In (20), the direct object is also marked by ERG but, as clarified in Jorbenadze (1989, 571), is equivalent to *igi* “she/he/it.NOM”.

<sup>10</sup>Here in (20) there is, in fact, a cursing formula, to be more precise. However, cursing could also be analyzed as a wishing something bad for someone.

when there is an initiator, an executor and a theme, thus 3 arguments, as in example (24):

- (23)a. Present Indicative, TMA Series I  
*(me) saxl-s v-a-šen-eb*  
 I.NOM house-DAT S1.SG-PRV-build-TS  
 “I build a house”; “I am building a house”
- b. Aorist Indicative, TMA Series II  
*(šen) saxl-i a-Ø-a-šen-e*  
 you.SG.ERG house-NOM PV-S2.SG-PRV-build-AOR  
 “You.SG built a house”
- c. Perfect, TMA Series III  
*(mas) saxl-i a-Ø-u-šen-eb-i-a*  
 (s)he.DAT house-NOM PV-DO3.SG-PRV-build-TS-PERF-S3.SG  
 “(S)he has (apparently) built a house”
- (24)a. Present Indicative, TMA Series I  
*(me) (mas) saxl-s v-a-šen-eb-in-eb*  
 I.NOM (s)he.DAT house-NOM S1.SG-PRV-build-TS-CAUS-TS  
 “I make him/her build a house”; “I am making him/her build a house”
- b. Aorist Indicative, TMA Series II  
*(šen) (mas) saxl-i a-Ø-a-šen-eb-in-e*  
 you.SG.ERG (s)he.DAT house-NOM PV-S2.SG-PRV-build-TS-CAUS-AOR  
 “You.SG made him/her build it”
- c. Perfect, TMA Series III  
*(mas) (mis-tvis) saxl-i a-Ø-u-šen-eb-in-eb-i-a*  
 (s)he.DAT (s)he.GEN-for house-NOM PV-IO3.SG-PRV-build-TS-PERF-TS-  
 PERF-S3.SG  
 “(S)he has (apparently) made him/her build a house”

One more piece of evidence comes from the wish formulae with a 2-argument reading. We have already discussed such a formula given in (2c). Wish formulae having a 2-argument reading, when taking a non-3rd person theme argument, require the argument to be given by a phrase headed by *tav-*, but never by a simple pronoun (25):

- (25) *net'a(v)i da-m-a-mal-(v)-in-a (me) [šen-i tav-i] / \*šen*  
 would.that PV-IO1.SG-PRV-hide-TS-CAUS-S3.SG.AOR I.DAT your-NOM self-  
 NOM / 2SG.NOM  
 “I wish I were hiding you”

The phrase headed by *tav-* cannot be optional; its absence would entail another interpretation:

- (26) *net'a(v)i da-m-a-mal-(v)-in-a*  
 would.that PV-IO1.SG-PRV-hide-TS-CAUS-S3.SG.AOR  
 “I wish I were hiding him/\*you”

As we know, the phrases headed by a grammaticalized body-part *tav-* “head” are used as reflexive phrases whenever arguments of a verb are co-indexed. However, the phrase *šen-i tav-i* in example (25) cannot be analyzed as a reflexive since there is no antecedent for it in the given sentence. Neither can it be regarded as a logophor with an antecedent in a possible previous discourse because, unlike the logophors across languages, the phrase *šen-i tav-i* in (25) cannot be replaced by a simple pronoun. Furthermore, and most importantly, the only referent denoted by the phrase *šen-i tav-i* in (25) is not a discourse entity but the theme argument of the given verb form *da-m-a-mal-(v)-in-a*, the theme which the speaker wishes to hide.

At first glance, the use of *šen-i tav-i* in example (25) might seem strange because 2-argument verbs in Georgian take the phrase headed by *tav-* “self” as an argument only when the two arguments are co-referential. Otherwise, if the arguments of 2-argument verbs are not co-referential, they are simply coded in the verb form and can be expressed by simple pronouns. These pronouns are optional because of the available pro-drop and can be deleted unless emphasized.

Expressing a non-3<sup>rd</sup> person direct object by a phrase headed by the grammaticalized body-part *tav-* “head”, thus eliminating any reflexive reading whatsoever, is familiar from the so-called *object camouflage* cases (cf. example (27) as well as Harris (1981)). “If a clause contains an indirect object, a first or second person direct object in that clause is realized as a possessive pronoun + *tavi*, where the possessive reflects the person and number of the input form” (Harris 1981, 51).

- (27) *me, masj [šen-i tav-i]<sub>k</sub> da-v-u-xat'-e*  
 I.ERG (s)he.DAT your.SG-NOM self-NOM PV-S1.SG-PRV-draw/paint-AOR  
 “I drew/painted you.SG for him”

The phrase headed by *tav-* in example (25) is not anaphoric at all. It simply behaves as a 3<sup>rd</sup> person NP, which is also reflected in the coding of the arguments. The phrase headed by *tav-* conditions a 3<sup>rd</sup> person theme argument coding in the verb form. As example (28) illustrates, both the phrase headed by *tav-* with 2<sup>nd</sup> person possessive and an obviously 3<sup>rd</sup> person referential expression require the same coding:

- (28) *net'av da-m-a-mal-(v)-in-a me [šen-i tav-i] / devnil-i / t'k'bileul-i*  
 would.that PV-IO1.SG-PRV-hide-TS-CAUS-S3.SG.AOR I.DAT your.SG-NOM  
 self-NOM fugitive-NOM sweeties-NOM  
 “I wish I were hiding you / the fugitive / the sweeties”

In Georgian all non-3<sup>rd</sup> person direct object arguments of 3-argument verbs must be “camouflaged” as 3<sup>rd</sup> person in order to agree properly with the verb; the POSS+*tav-* strategy instead of a personal pronoun is the method used to camouflage a non-3<sup>rd</sup> person NP as a 3<sup>rd</sup> person NP.

It is important to note that object camouflage is obligatory whenever a non-3<sup>rd</sup> person argument functions as a direct object to a 3-argument verb. The number of arguments is important since object camouflage applies to direct objects only when there is also an indirect object in that clause (Harris 1981, 51).

Thus the non-reflexive use of the phrases headed by *tav-* implies the obligatory use of 3-argument verbs. This leads me to conclude that the verb form in (25) must be a 3-

argument verb form, otherwise there would be no need to use the phrase *šen-i tav-i* in this case.

#### 4. Conclusion

We have discussed one synchronic phenomenon in Modern Georgian that illustrates a mismatch between the form of a construction and its meaning. This phenomenon is the use of (n+1)-argument indicative verb forms giving an n-argument reading in the wish formulae that are mostly spread in the Northern dialects of Georgian but also occasionally known from literature. The formulae are characterized by the use of an optative particle, *net'a(v)i*, or are constructed by encliticizing the optative suffix *-mc(a)* to any constituent in the construction except the verb form. The *net'a(v)i* and *-mc(a)* constructions, or wish formulae, are argued here to be derived from hypothetical source formulae having God or some higher power as a subject argument that then disappeared, but the same verb form was retained.

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# Two Types of Relative Clauses in Modern Georgian

Yasuhiro Kojima

The present paper investigates functions of the two types of relative clauses of the Modern Georgian, i.e. relative clauses with a relative pronoun and those with *rom*, paying special attention to syntax and pragmatics of the latter. Apart from the stylistic difference, it has been generally assumed that these two types of relative clauses are freely interchangeable. This is, however, not the case. Relative clauses with a relative pronoun can be used to connect any two clauses having the same argument, whereas the use of relative clauses with *rom* must be pragmatically motivated as well. Relative clauses with *rom* always function as restrictive relative clauses, while those with a relative pronoun may be either restrictive or non-restrictive.

The mood opposition in the relative clause is also discussed in the paper. In relative clauses with a relative pronoun, the use of the subjunctive mood, instead of indicative, is optional; while in relative clauses with *rom*, each of the indicative and subjunctive moods is employed in distinct cases. The position of *rom* hinges on the mood of the relative clause.

## 1 Introduction

Modern Georgian has two types of relative clauses that contain a finite predicate. The first type is a relative clause formed by a relative pronoun, *romelic* ‘which’, *vinc* ‘who’ or *rac* ‘what’. The following is an example of this type of relative clause:

- (1) *c'avik'itxe is c'ign-i, romel-i-c amxanag-ma mirčia.*  
I.read that book-NOM RP:NOM friend-ERG X.recommended.me  
“I read that book which a friend recommended to me.”

The second type is a relative clause formed by the subordinator particle *rom*. Consider the following example:

- (2) *c'avik'itxe is c'ign-i, amxanag-ma rom mirčia.*  
I.read that book-NOM friend-ERG ROM X.recommended.me  
“I read that book which a friend recommended to me.”

Literature dealing with this topic reveals that the first type is predominantly used in a formal style, while the second type is used in a colloquial style (Vogt 1971, 51, 1988, 535; Tschenkéli 1958, 202; Hewitt 1987, 187, 1995, 606; Harris 1992, 401-402).

Thus far, a number of articles have investigated the syntactic structure of these relative clauses; see Aronson (1972), Hewitt (1985; 1987, ch.8), Schmidt (1990/1991) and Harris (1992, 1994). Both Dzidziguri (1973, 216-274) and Harris (1992; 1994) examine the historical development of these constructions. However, little attention has been paid to other aspects of these constructions. Harris (1992, 402) remarks, “beyond this [= the stylistic difference noted above – K.Y.], pragmatic, stylistic, and semantic differences among the different types have not been studied.” This is the very point that I would like to focus on in the present paper.

Apart from the stylistic difference, it has been generally assumed that these two types of relative clauses are freely interchangeable.<sup>1</sup> However, this is not the case. Generally, a relative clause with a relative pronoun can always replace one with *rom*, but not vice versa. Relative clauses with *rom* always function as restrictive relative clauses, while those with a relative pronoun may be either restrictive or non-restrictive.

Section 2 describes formal properties of the two types of relative clauses. Differences in their functions will be discussed in Section 3. I will discuss indicative and subjunctive relative clauses separately because their function differs according to the mood. The important point is that the use of a relative clause with *rom* is pragmatically motivated and its function can be thoroughly understood only in terms of pragmatics. The function of indicative relative clauses with a relative pronoun is, on the other hand, described on the semantic level because they simply connect two clauses having the same argument. Section 4 will briefly examine the position of *rom* in relative clauses.

## 2 Formal descriptions of the two types of relative clauses

### 2.1 Relative clauses with a relative pronoun

The relative pronouns are *romelic* ‘which’, *rac* ‘what’ and *vinc* ‘who’.<sup>2</sup> Among them, *romelic* ‘which’ is most widely used and the most neutral in that it can relativize any noun, irrespective of the human vs. non-human opposition. *Vinc* ‘who’ and *rac* ‘what’ are mainly encountered in headless relative clauses or when the head noun is pronoun *is* ‘(s)he, it, that one,’ or a non-specific expression such as *q’vela* ‘everyone, all’ or *q’velaperi* ‘everything’ (Hewitt 1987, 185). *Rac* ‘what’ may refer to an entire proposition of the main clause (Dzidziguri 1973, 258), as in (3). In this usage *romelic* cannot replace *rac*.

- (3) *xmis upleba axlave unda mivcet, rac k’anon-s ec’inaaymdegeba.*  
 right.to.vote:NOM right.now must we.give:SUBJ RP:NOM law-DAT X.contravenes  
 “We have to give them right to vote right now, which contravenes the law.”  
 (Akaki Tsereteli; cited by Dzidziguri 1973, 258)

Because the difference in behavior of these three relative pronouns is irrelevant to the following discussion, I will not consider *rac* ‘what’ and *vinc* ‘who’ and will only cite examples of *romelic*.

A relative clause with a relative pronoun follows its head noun, though other elements may intervene between them. A relative pronoun occupies the initial position of the relative clause. Relative pronouns can be used in any case and the head noun may have any syntactic role within the relative clause (cf. Hewitt 1987, 185; Kvachadze 1996, 414-415). For example:

- (4) *is aris cnobili mc’eral-i, roml-is c’igne-b-i-c miq’vars.*  
 he/she:NOM X.is famous writer-NOM RP-GEN book-NOM I.love  
 “He/She is a famous writer whose books I love.”

<sup>1</sup> Vogt (1971, 52) notes, “On voit que *rom* peut remplacer toute forme déclinée de *romelic*.” Aronson (1972, 141) also writes, “As a relative it [= *rom*] can replace *romelic*, *vinc*, *rac*, and *sadac*.”

<sup>2</sup> Each of these relative pronouns is composed of an interrogative pronoun *romeli* ‘which,’ *vin* ‘who’, and *ra* ‘what’ respectively and the enclitic *-c*, which elsewhere expresses ‘too, also.’

- (5) *es aris saxl-i, romel-ši-c isini cxovroben.*  
 this X.is house RP-in they:nom they.live  
 “This is the house in which they live.”

## 2.2 Relative clauses with *rom*

The second method of forming a relative clause is the use of subordinator particle *rom*. *Rom* is invariant and takes a position somewhere before the verb in the relative clause (cf. Section 4). Note that in Georgian, the constituent order is largely free on the syntactic level, which is also the case within a relative clause.

A relative clause with *rom* may either precede or follow the head noun (Hewitt 1987, 187-188; Harris 1994, 132-133).

- (6) *amxanagma rom mirčia, is c'igni c'avik'itxe.*  
 (7) *is c'igni, amxanagma rom mirčia, c'avik'itxe.*  
 “I read that book which a friend recommended to me.”

Basically there are again no restrictions on the role of the head-noun in such relative clauses (Hewitt 1987, 188). A resumptive pronoun may appear in the relative clause, though its occurrence often sounds rather awkward. Hewitt (1987, 188) maintains that its occurrence depends on the role of the head noun in the relative clause in the accessibility hierarchy proposed by Keenan and Comrie (1977).

Accessibility Hierarchy

Subject > Direct Obj. > Indirect Obj. > Oblique Obj. > Genitive > Obj. of Comparison

According to Hewitt (1987, 188-190), a resumptive pronoun does not appear when the relativized noun is the subject or the direct object in the relative clause. Its occurrence is optional when the relativized noun is the indirect object and is obligatory for positions on the hierarchy below that of the indirect object, albeit with certain exceptions. In the following examples (8) through (10) taken from Hewitt (1987, 189), the relativized noun is the indirect object, the oblique object, and the genitive complement in the relative clauses, respectively. (Resumptive pronouns are underlined.)

- (8) *k'acma rom (imas) c'igni misca, im kals vicnob.*  
 ‘I know that woman to whom the man gave the book.’  
 (9) *k'acma rom imit katami dak'la, is dana vnaxe.*  
 “I saw that knife with which the man killed the chicken.”  
 (10) *k'acma rom imis kveš p'uri šeinaxa, im magidas vxedav.*  
 “I see that table under which the man kept the bread.”

An exceptional case, Hewitt (1987, 189-190) elaborates, is when the relativized pronoun is “subject-matter” with a predicate verb of “telling.”

- (11) *modis is k'ac-i, kal-i rom gviq'veboda.*  
 X.comes that man-NOM woman-NOM ROM X.was.telling.us  
 “That man about whom the woman was telling us is coming.” (Hewitt 1987, 189)

I, however, will add another exceptional case where a resumptive pronoun does not occur even when the relativized head noun is the (semantically) genitive modifier of a constituent of the relative clause. That is, it does not occur when the modified constituent noun itself implies the existence of its possessor, which is identified with the referent of the head noun. For example, *švili* ‘child (as a counterpart of parent)’ in (12) and *rek’lama* ‘advertisement’ naturally presuppose its semantic complement.

- (12) *is k’ac-i, švil-i rom žarisk’ac-i-a, dyes mova.*  
 that man-NOM child-NOM ROM soldier-NOM-X.is today X.will.come  
 “The man whose child is a soldier will come today.”
- (13) *dato im pirma-ši mušaobs, t’elevizor-ši rek’lama rom vnaxet.*  
 Dato:NOM that company-in X.works TV-in ad:NOM ROM we.saw  
 “Dato works in the company whose advertisement we saw on TV.”

Compare (12) with (14), where *švili* is replaced by *bavšvi*, which means ‘child (as immature person)’ and, hence, does not imply its semantic complement as *švili* does.

- (14) \* *is k’ac-i, bavšv-i rom žarisk’ac-i-a, dyes mova.*  
 (Intended meaning: “The man whose child is a soldier will come today.”)

I assume that the apparent correlation between the occurrence of a resumptive pronoun and the accessibility hierarchy is obtained in an indirect manner. In my view, what is crucial is the completeness of the proposition of the relative clause. The following is an argumentation for this assumption:

If the proposition of the relative clause is conceived by the hearer as incomplete, leaving some expected semantic argument unspecified, the hearer has to seek the lacking argument elsewhere, that is, in the main clause; consequently, the subordinate clause is taken as a relative clause. On the contrary, if the proposition of the relative clause is taken as complete, that is, not lacking any semantic argument, it is likely that the subordinate clause will not be construed as relative clause and the hearer will seek other possibilities of construal, for instance, taking it as temporal clause.<sup>3</sup>

Arguments of the higher position on the accessibility hierarchy are more essential constituents of the clause than those of the lower position. If a subordinate clause does not specify the subject or the direct object, the clause is naturally likely to be taken as a relative clause for the abovementioned reason. When the unspecified argument is a more peripheral constituent of the clause, the proposition of the subordinate clause tends to be conceived as complete. The gap alone does not suffice for the hearer to understand the subordinate clause as a relative clause and some other device becomes necessary to mark the function of the subordinate clause. The resumptive pronoun, which explicitly indicates the function of the head noun in the relative clause, is such a device.

The exceptional cases mentioned above are assumed to be thus explained. When a clause constituent denoting “subject-matter” of the predicate verb “telling” is absent in the clause, or when a complement noun whose existence is implied but not given occurs, the subordinate clause is conceived as incomplete and is readily taken as a relative clause by the hearer; however, these clause constituents occupy lower positions in the accessibility hierarchy.

<sup>3</sup> *Rom* forms various types of subordinate clauses apart from the relative clause, for example, the temporal clause, conditional clause, complement clause, and so on.

### 3 Functions of the relative clauses

In either type of relative clause, the mood of the predicate verb may be indicative or subjunctive. The function of the relative clause is different based on the mood of the predicate. Section 3.1 and 3.2 discuss indicative and subjunctive relative clauses, respectively.

In the following discussion, I will exclude those cases wherein the head noun is modified by a correlative element such as *iseti* ‘such,’ *imdeni* ‘of such quantity, of such amount,’ *imxela* ‘of such size’. Apparently, such examples can sometimes be interpreted as containing a relative clause with *rom*, as in (15). However, the same construction may also form a different type of subordinate clauses with *rom*, as in (16) and (17). In these examples the main and subordinate clauses do not share any common argument.

- (15) *mat saxlši q'oveldye imdeni sač'meli k'etdeboda, **rom** or-sam saxlobas eq'opoda.*  
 “In their house they made so much food everyday that would suffice two or three families.” (Iakob Gogebashvili “Iavnanam ra hkna”)
- (16) *iseti bneli yame iq'o, **rom** k'acs tvaltan mit'anili titis danaxvac ar šeežlo.*  
 “It was so dark night that a man could not see even his own finger before his eyes.”  
 (Kvachadze 1994: 412)
- (17) *darbazši imdeni xalxi iq'o, **rom** ver ševedi.*  
 “There were so many people in the hall that I could not enter.”

According to the points discussed below, too, such examples differ from those with a typical relative clause.

#### 3.1 Indicative relative clauses

The function of the indicative relative clause with *rom* can be put shortly as (18).

- (18) The indicative relative clause with *rom* is employed to help the hearer identify the referent of the head.

For example, in (19), the speaker assumes the referent of *is bič'i* ‘that boy’ is identifiable to the hearer. The speaker, however, considers that, if he refers to the boy simply as *is bič'i* ‘that boy’, the hearer may experience difficulty in identifying its referent or may think of another boy. For this reason the speaker provides the hearer with the proposition of the relative clause to help him/her correctly identify the referent. The relative clause instructs the hearer that he/she must identify the referent of *is bič'i* ‘that boy’ with no other boy but with the one who he/she knows works in a factory.

- (19) *is bič'-i, karxana-ši **rom** mušaobs, avad aris.*  
 that boy-NOM factory-in ROM he.works ill he.is  
 “The boy who works in a/the factory is ill.”

(18) entails that the referent of the head noun of the indicative relative clause with *rom* is assumed to be identifiable to the hearer and that the proposition of the relative clause

is presupposed.<sup>4</sup> When the referent of the head noun is non-identifiable to the hearer, a relative clause with *rom* is not available. (20) is acceptable only when the referent of the head noun is considered as being identifiable to the hearer (hence, translated in English with a definite article).

- (20) *dyes movida k'aci, satvale rom ek'eta.*  
 today he.came man-NOM glasses:NOM ROM X.wore  
 “Today the man came who wore glasses.” (\* “Today a man came who wore glasses.”)

A relative clause with *rom* cannot be used when the head noun is unidentifiable or indefinite, as shown in (21).

- (21) \* *iq'o da ara iq'o ra, iq'o erti moxuci kal-i, švilebi*  
 once.upon.a.time X.was one old woman-NOM children-NOM  
*rom ara hq'avda.*<sup>5</sup>  
 ROM NEG X.had  
 (Intended meaning: “Once upon a time there lived an old woman who did not have a child.”)

The head noun of a relative clause with *rom* is often accompanied by determiner such as *is* ‘that’ and *es* ‘this.’ It is thus explicitly marked as identifiable, although Georgian is devoid of the grammatical system of marking definiteness.

- (22) *exla mibrzanet, vin iq'vnen is kurtebi, gušin dilit rom elap'arak'ebodit?*  
 “Now tell me; who were those Kurds with whom you were talking yesterday morning?” (Mikheil Javakhishvili “Lambalo da qasha”)  
 (23) *maš es dedak'aci, tamros rom hgavs, sandros szali q'opila.*  
 “Then, this woman who look like Tamro appears to be Sandro’s daughter-in-law.” (Mikheil Javakhishvili “Okros kbili”)

The referent of the head noun of relative clauses with *rom* may be identified as a whole class of entities, or generic (cf. Lambrecht 1994, 88). For example:

- (24) *q'oveli k'ac-i, megobar-i rom ara hq'avs, ubeduri-a.*  
 every man-NOM friend-NOM ROM NEG X.has unhappy-X.is  
 “Every person who does not have a friend is unhappy.”

In (24), the head noun has a unique referent and the possibility of its mis-identification by the hearer is eliminated. In such cases, a relative clause with *rom* is not available. (25), if ever used, can be feasible only in a rather unlikely context where the speaker has two or more persons who he/she calls his/her father and the hearer is expected to choose

<sup>4</sup> A proposition is presupposed when the speaker assumes the hearer already knows it or is ready to take it for granted at the time of utterance (Lambrecht 1994, 52). Givón (1990, 646) remarks, “A *restrictive* relative clause involves a proposition that the speaker assumes is known or accessible to the hearer, or otherwise unlikely to be challenged as controversial new information” (italics in original). In this light, relative clauses with *rom* of Georgian is considered a typical case of the restrictive relative clause (see 3.3).

<sup>5</sup> Although Georgian does not have an indefinite article, *erti* ‘one’ may explicitly indicate indefiniteness.

one of them as the referent of the head noun by virtue of the proposition given in the relative clause.

- (25) \* *mamačem-i, šaršan rom avad iq'o, axla k'argad aris.*  
 my.father-NOM last.year ROM ill X.was now well X.is  
 (Intended meaning: “My father, who was ill last year, is well now.”)

The head noun of a relative clause with *rom*, however, can freely be a proper noun, when the speaker considers that the hearer might identify the referent of the proper noun with another having the same name; for example:

- (26) *dyes nino vnaxe, šen rom giq'vars.*  
 today Nino:NOM I.saw you.DAT ROM you.love  
 “I saw Nino who you like.”

Note that the intended meanings of examples (20), (21) and (25), wherein a relative clause with *rom* is unavailable, can be expressed by means of a relative clause with a relative pronoun as in (20'), (21') and (25').

- (20') *dyes movida (erti) k'aci, romelsac satvale ek'eta.*  
 “Today a man came who wore glasses.”
- (21') *iq'o da ara iq'o ra, iq'o erti moxuci kali, romelsac švilebi ara hq'avda.*  
 “Once upon a time there lived an old woman who did not have a child.”
- (25') *mamačemi, romelic šaršan avad iq'o, axla k'argad aris.*  
 “My father, who was ill last year, is well now.”

The pragmatic function given above in (18) pertains only to relative clauses with *rom*, and not to those containing a relative pronoun. Irrespective of its pragmatic function, a relative clause with a relative pronoun can always be used to connect two clauses which share the same argument. A relative clause with a relative pronoun can, therefore, always replace one with *rom*, but not vice versa. In this sense, the use of a relative clause with *rom* must be motivated not only semantically, but pragmatically as well.

### 3.2 Subjunctive relative clauses

The mood of a relative clause may be either indicative or subjunctive. This is true of both types of relative clauses.

Vogt (1971, 202) notes that the subjunctive mood is used when the relative clause describes a quality or property that is desirable, expected, required, and so on. Hewitt (1987, 194-195) remarks that the subjunctive appears “when the relative clause is generic,” drawing on the following example provided by Vogt.

- (27) *vezeb st'udent'-s, romel-ma-c arabul-i-c icodes.*  
 I.look.for student-DAT RP:ERG Arabic-NOM-too X.knows:SUBJ  
 “I am looking for a student who knows Arabic, too.”  
 (Vogt 1971, 202; Hewitt 1987, 195)

However, I reason that these conditions are not sufficient for the use of the subjunctive. We have already seen (24), wherein the head noun of a relative clause is generic, but the

mood of the relative clause is, nevertheless, indicative. In another example, (28), although the head noun is generic and the relative clause describes a preferred property of the referent of the head noun, the subjunctive mood cannot be used.

- (28) *momc'ons 3aɣl-i, romel-i-c xmamaɣla ar q'eps (/ \*q'epdes).*  
 I.like dog-NOM RP:NOM loudly NEG X.barks (X.barks:SUBJ)  
 "I like dogs that do not bark loudly."

(27), on the one hand, and (24) and (28), on the other, differ with regard to whether the existence of the referent of the head noun is implied.

For the choice of the mood in the relative clause, what is crucial is *factuality* of the proposition of the relative clause. When the proposition of the relative clause is presented as factual, then the mood of the relative clause is indicative; otherwise, it is basically subjunctive. Since the situation described by the relative clause includes the referent of the head noun, factuality of the proposition directly correlates with implication of existence/non-existence of the referent of the head noun (cf. Lambrecht 1994, 81-82; Cristofaro 2003, 198). That is, the indicative mood is used when the existence of the referent of the head noun is implied, while the subjunctive mood is used when it is not implied.

The following examples contain a subjunctive relative clause with *rom*. The predicate verbs of the relative clauses cannot be in the indicative mood to express the given meanings.

- (29) *zedmet'i otxi borbal-i ara gakvs, rom gvačuko?*  
 extra four tire-NOM NEG you.have ROM you.present.us:SUBJ  
 "Don't you have four extra tires to present us (= which you will present us)?"  
 (Nodar Dumbadze "Me, bebia, iliko da ilarioni")
- (30) *kalak-ši ar aris rest'oran-i, gemriel sač'mel-s rom ak'etebdes.*  
 town-in NEG X.is restaurant-NOM delicious food-DAT ROM X.makes:SUBJ  
 "There is no restaurant in the town that makes delicious food."
- (31) *ar minaxavs k'aci, rom šenze maɣali iq'os.*  
 NEG I.have.seen man-NOM ROM you-than tall X.is:SUBJ  
 "I have never seen a man who is taller than you."

Note that the head noun of the subjunctive relative clauses with *rom* is not identifiable, and neither is their proposition presupposed, in contrast with indicative relative clauses. The proposition of the relative clause can be focal, as in the following example:

- (32) — *vis ezeb?* "Who are you looking for?"  
 — *vezeb st'udent's, arabuli rom icodes.* "I'm looking for a student who knows Arabic."

A closer look illuminates a slight difference in the manner of mood opposition between the two types. The point to observe is that, when the relative clause is non-factual, the use of the subjunctive mood, instead of indicative, is optional in relative clauses with a relative pronoun, whereas it is obligatory in relative clauses with *rom*.

- (33) *kalakši ar aris rest'orani, romelic gemriel sač'mels [ak'etebds (IND)/ak'etebdes (SUBJ)].*

- (34) *kalakši ar aris rest'orani, gemriel sač'mels rom* [ \*ak'etebds / ak'etebdes ].  
 “There is no restaurant in the town that makes delicious food.”

This is because indicative relative clauses with *rom* indicate that the referent of the head noun is identifiable to the hearer, as has been discussed in 3.1. When the existence of the referent of the head noun is not implied, the head noun cannot be identifiable; hence, the use of an indicative relative clause with *rom* is excluded. A non-factual relative clause with *rom* obligatorily has its predicate in the subjunctive mood.

Table 1 illustrates what has been stated in 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 1. Mood of the relative clauses

|             | Head noun      | with a relative pronoun | with <i>rom</i> |
|-------------|----------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| FACTIVE     | identifiable   | IND                     | IND             |
|             | unidentifiable | IND                     | --              |
| NON-FACTIVE |                | IND/SUBJ                | SUBJ            |

### 3.3 Restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses

Aronson (1975, 141) notes, “Georgian does not have the opposition between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses marked by the relative pronoun as in English” (cf. also Aronson 1991, 288). Hewitt (1987, 185) also remarks, “No distinction is made between restrictive and non-restrictive relatives.” However, it follows from the discussion in 3.1 and 3.2 that relative clauses with *rom* are always restrictive relative clause in that they function to narrow down the (possible) referent of the head noun semantically and/or pragmatically. They never form a non-restrictive relative clause. Relative clauses with a relative pronoun, on the other hand, may be either restrictive or non-restrictive. *Rom* is similar to English *that* in that it forms only restrictive relative clauses, while *romelic* is compared to *which* that may form either restrictive or non-restrictive relative clauses.

Non-restrictive relative clauses provide additional information about the referent of the head noun. (35) and (36) are examples of non-restrictive relative clauses with a relative pronoun. A relative clause with *rom* cannot be employed in its place to express the same meaning.

- (35) *bebia, romelsac mteli am xnis ganmavlobaši titkmis araperi utkvams, ižda da cremlebs čumad ic'mendda saxeloti.*

“Grandmother, who had spoken almost nothing all the while, was sitting and silently wiping tears with her sleeve.”

(Nodar Dumbadze “Me, bebia, iliko da ilarioni”)

- (36) *es sc'ore vak'e aris k'axetis veli, lap'lap'a zoli k'i - mdinare alazani, romelic k'axets hq'ops ors, titkmis tanasc'or nac'ilad.*

“This flat plain is the plain of Kakheti, and the gleaming line - Alazani river, which divides Kakheti into two, almost even parts.”

(Iakob Gogebashvili “Iavnanam ra hkna”)

The stylistic difference between the two types of relative clauses is assumed to be partly correlated with their function. Relative clauses with a relative pronoun can freely be employed to connect two clauses that share the same referent practically in any context and may form a non-restrictive relative clause, which is, generally, characteristic of written language.

## 4 The position of *rom*

Let us now examine the structure of relative clauses with *rom*, particularly, the position of *rom*, more carefully. Some scholars have noted that *rom* does not occur at the beginning of the relative clause, unless the relative clause consists only of *rom* and a predicate verb. Hewitt (1987, 187), for example, writes, “[*rom*], as regularly, avoids clause-initial position and normally stands somewhere between the first constituent of the clause and the verb.”

Dzidziguri (1973, 257), however, states that in the modern language, it is natural for *rom* to take either the clause-initial or the clause-second position. He gives examples (37a, b).

- (37) a. *erti xe aɣar aris, **rom** magis načičkni da nažižgni*  
           one tree:NOM no.more X.is ROM his picked and tortured  
           *ar iq'os.*  
           NEG X.is:SUBJ
- b. *erti xe aɣar aris, magis načičkni da nažižgni **rom** ar iq'os.*  
           “There is not a single tree that has not been picked and tortured by him.”  
           (Dzidziguri 1973, 257)

Harris (1994, 137) controverts Dzidziguri and maintains the ban against clause-initial *rom*. Her examples are (38a, b, c). According to her, example (38a), where *rom* appears clause-initially, was judged ungrammatical by her consultants; in contrast, (37b) and (37c), where *rom* appears clause-internally, were deemed grammatical.

- (38) a. *\*es k'ac-i, **rom** p'ropesor-s c'ign-i mout'ana*  
           this man-NOM ROM professor-DAT book-NOM X.brought
- b. *es k'aci, p'ropesors **rom** c'igni mout'ana*
- c. *es k'aci, p'ropesors c'igni **rom** mout'ana*  
           “This man who brought the book to the professor” (Harris 1994: 137)

She assumes that the ban against clause-initial *rom* is “a new development, perhaps not (yet) shared by all speakers” (Harris 1994, 137).

What has to be pointed out is that the mood of the relative clause is different in the examples Dzidziguri and Harris draw on. It is subjunctive in Dzidziguri's examples in (37), which he provides in order to show that *rom* can take clause-initial position in a relative clause. Harris (1994, 137), however, attempts to demonstrate the ban against clause-initial *rom* with examples wherein the mood of the relative clauses is indicative. In fact, the position of *rom*, at least partially, hinges on the mood of the relative clause. In subjunctive relative clauses *rom* can appear in the clause-initial position as well as in the clause-internal position, while it rarely occurs clause-initially in indicative relative clauses (to repeat, unless the relative clause consists only of *rom* and a predicate verb). Namely, the ban against clause-initial *rom* is effective only in the case of indicative relative clauses.

The question now arises: why is the mood of the relative clause related to the position of *rom*? I reason that the position of *rom* is linked to the pragmatic status of the proposition of the relative clause. In so far as relative clauses are concerned, when the proposition is presupposed, *rom* occurs clause-internally, whereas when it is not presupposed, *rom* may occur clause-initially. However, this is actually a global problem, which concerns every type of subordinate clause formed with *rom*, including

relative clauses; some types subordinate clauses take clause-initial *rom*, while others clause-internal *rom*. To discuss this in full detail is beyond the scope of a brief paper and I do intend to address the subject elsewhere.

## 5 Conclusions

The present paper has discussed the differences between functions of the two types of relative clauses, paying special attention to syntax and pragmatics of the relative clause with *rom*. I have argued:

- Indicative relative clauses with *rom* serve a particular pragmatic purpose. Namely, they are employed to help the hearer identify the referent of the head.
- Mood of a relative clause is subjunctive when its proposition is non-factual and accordingly the existence of the referent of the head noun is not implied.
- In relative clauses with a relative pronoun, the use of the subjunctive mood, instead of indicative, is optional; while in relative clauses with *rom*, each of the indicative and subjunctive moods is used in distinct cases.
- Relative clauses with *rom* always function as restrictive relative clauses, while relative clauses with a relative pronoun may be either restrictive or non-restrictive.
- In indicative relative clauses with *rom*, *rom* tends not to appear clause-initially (unless the relative clause consists of *rom* and a predicate verb only), whereas in subjunctive relative clauses with *rom*, *rom* may appear clause-initially.

As has been noted, the relative clause with *rom* is a type of subordinate clauses formed by means of *rom*. The observations given above require further consideration from this viewpoint in order to deeply understand the nature of subordination by *rom* in Georgian.

## Abbreviations

|     |                 |      |                   |
|-----|-----------------|------|-------------------|
| DAT | dative case     | NEG  | negative particle |
| ERG | ergative case   | NOM  | nominative case   |
| GEN | genitive case   | RP   | relative pronoun  |
| IND | indicative mood | SUBJ | subjunctive mood  |

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Caucasus Studies 2

# **LANGUAGE, HISTORY AND CULTURAL IDENTITIES IN THE CAUCASUS**

Edited by Karina Vamling

The international conference Language, History and Cultural Identities in the Caucasus, 17-20 June 2005, hosted by the School of International Migration and Ethnic Relations (IMER) at Malmö University (Sweden), brought together Caucasian and Western scholars with diverse disciplinary backgrounds – social anthropology, linguistics, literature, social psychology, political science – who focus on the Caucasus in their research. The present volume is based on papers from this conference.

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