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Conventional model of interaction between government and society in the Republic of South Ossetia

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Abstract: The article is devoted to a comprehensive analysis of the conventional model of interaction between government and society in the Republic of South Ossetia. Attention is focused on ideological meanings and processes of transformation of political reality in this Transcaucasian state. It was ideological meanings and the new political reality that radically transformed after the August 2008 war that contributed to the formation of a conventional model of interaction between government and society. The article also analyzes the role of the current President of South Ossetia A.I. Bibilov in the formation and consolidation of the conventional model of interaction.

The South Ossetian conventional model of interaction between government and society has a number of features, the key of which is an obvious vision of the future and progressive movement towards public consensus. The image of the future formed by the current President A.I. Bibilov and the United Ossetia party headed by him provides for the entry of South Ossetia into Russia.

The model of interaction between the government and society provides for a clear regulation prescribed by the United Ossetia political party, which was outlined by the current President of South Ossetia in the framework of two election campaigns. The program of the current President of the Republic of South Ossetia A.I. Bibilov "Five steps to Russia" is part of the conventional model of interaction between government and society. Thus, the conventional model of interaction in South Ossetia also has the function of a regulator of public relations, providing an explanation of the current political reality, as well as movement towards a new political status, which provides for joining Russia.

Keywords: conventional model, effective interaction, government, society, South Ossetia, political reality, image of the future.

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Introduction

The term “conventional model” is not new¹. In some cases, it is presented as a matrix or a generally accepted way to explain political reality². The whole matter is about not to describe the event, but to reveal its ideological meanings with the help of commonly used political methods of explanation.

For example, since a certain time³ it has become a generally accepted rule to explain victories over the enemy in South Ossetia not by the valor of individual commanders, but to a greater extent by the selfless devotion of the people. And after 2008 the shaping of the statehood that took place in South Ossetia is largely attributed to the correct civilizational choice of the Ossetian people, who voluntarily linked their fate with the Russian Orthodox civilization in the XVIII century. It was this choice that was made more than two centuries ago that predetermined a favorable outcome in the decades-long confrontation between the Ossetians and the Georgian state. Thus, the heads of the Republic of South Ossetia, E. J. Kokoity, L. Kh. Tibilov and A. I. Bibilov emphasize that the established South Ossetian statehood is the fruit of the valor of individual commanders, the feat of the people and the consequence of allied relations with Russia. Scholars point out that “conventional interactions are becoming a daily practice” (Osmuk 2004). In the course of the policy pursued by the current President of South Ossetia A. I. Bibilov, the issue of the entry of South Ossetia to Russia became a daily practice.

Materials and methods

As the study materials we used A. I. Bibilov’s “Five steps to Russia” program as empirical materials - reports, analyses, results of public opinion surveys, interviews, mass media, documents relating to the practices of interaction between the authorities and society in South Ossetia, conceptual insights about modeling as a scientific method and theoretical insights about the “political reality”. The main method is modeling, which allows us to study conventional models based on taking into account the role of two main actors that form the conventional model - the government and society. The convention is understood as something additional, balancing in relation to communication, as an additional layer, the meaning of which is to be revealed. A conventional model is one of the ways to define a situation, one of the generally accepted explanations that can determine the significance of an event or the realism of a policy’s course. The author, using the presented methodology to analyze the current political reality, states that there are no other models in this situation, there are only different levels of interaction.

1 A number of researches have found out typology of interaction, providing the following models of interaction “antagonism”, “consensus”, and “agon”. Also they revealed paternalistic, partnership, and “model of architecture”.

2 A.Y. Sungurov Models of interaction of cultures in the civil society and bodies of power : Russian experience. URL: http://www.civisbook.ru/files/File/Sungurov_modeli.pdf

3 During the post Soviet period after the collapse of the USSR and formation in Georgia illegal armed forces, which formed the vanguard of military and political pressure on South Ossetia.

Results

Conventional models: theory, concept, practice

Political reality, sealed as part of the narrative, is the basis, the foundation of the established conventional model of interaction between the authorities and society in modern independent South Ossetia.

A special attention is to be paid to the term “political reality”, which in most cases is considered as:

Obvious, which does not require special explanations. The real thing is what took place or what exists, what can be observed, empirically revealed and identified (Pushkareva 2013, p. 92).

Political reality and the conventional model are related phenomena. In particular, the explanation of political reality, the disclosure of its ideological meanings is possible with the help of a conventional model of interaction between government and society. Analysis of the established and existing conventional model in the Republic of South Ossetia cannot be carried out without identification (analysis) of the existing political reality in this state.

In modern conditions, the importance of the institution of presidential power is growing in South Ossetia. The analysis of the conventional model of interaction between the government and society in South Ossetia is impossible without due attention to the institute of presidential power in the context of the policy of the United Ossetia party. It can be argued that the personal influence of President A. I. Bibilov on legitimizing the conventional model of interaction between government and society was strengthened by his party status.

The formation of the current conventional model of interaction between the authorities and society in South Ossetia was launched in 2014. It was then that the chairman of the party “United Ossetia” A. I. Bibilov published the election program of the party “Five steps to Russia”. The goal of the program is for the Republic to become a part of Russia as a new subject of the Federation. “We must resolve this issue once and for all. Only joining Russia can provide us with complete security.”⁴. A new initiative of one of the most respected politicians, the head of the leading party A. I. Bibilov, has formed a new ideological motivation in South Ossetia (Shkirchak 2012). The main message formed by the president is security. In the face of global challenges and threats caused by the influence of the West on Georgia's politics, security can only be guaranteed by Russia.

The new ideological motivation outlined by the United Ossetia party in 2014 helped shape the image of the future of South Ossetia, as an integral part of Russia. And here it should be noted that “In the modern global order, the position of a particular state is clearly determined not only by the factor of its ownership of a particular material asset. The national competitiveness of a country also depends on the ability of its leadership to correctly formulate a strategy for positioning the state outside, to adequately identify niches where the use of existing assets could become the basis for improving competitiveness in

⁴ Anatoli Bibilov: [«Prishlo vremya deistvovat»]. URL: <https://ugo-osetia.ru/obshhestvo/anatolij-bibilov-prishlo-vremya-dejstvovat>

the future “ (Sergeev, Alekseyenkova, Koktysh et al. 2010, p. . 3). The main political actors in South Ossetia demonstrate an understanding of the importance of South Ossetia’s positioning strategy in the context of shaping the security architecture in Transcaucasia.

It is obvious that in the context of existing global challenges and threats for South Ossetia, the strategy of positioning the state as a potential part of Russia is a model of the future, including explaining the current political reality.

But it is worth noting that, when we talk about conventional models, we are not referring to political reality only. The concept of “conventional model” is broader. In our opinion, political reality is only one of the specific modifications of the conventional in politics. The conventional model of interaction also has the function of regulating social relations, ensuring the production of any detailed explanation: it can include any images, metaphors, concepts, not necessarily, by the way, ideological ones. In this regard, it is opportune to consider the program of A. I. Bibilov “Five steps to Russia” in more detail:

The first step is that United Ossetia initiates a referendum on joining the Russian Federation. The second step is to directly hold a referendum on the entry of South Ossetia into the Russian Federation as a new subject of the federation. The third step is the appeal of the Republic’s Parliament to the President, Government and Federation Council of the Russian Federation with a request to consider the issue of the Republic of South Ossetia joining Russia. The fourth step provides for the establishment of an intergovernmental working group for the transitional period. We will ensure that it includes representatives of the South Ossetian public. Everything is to be transparent, under the control of the public. The new authorities (already Russian) are not to include people who are involved in embezzlement of funds, who are guilty of incessant devastation. Corrupt officials should not get into the new government. We will monitor this very closely. And finally, the fifth step is the adoption of a new Constitution of the Republic, the transition to the legislation of the Russian Federation and the virtual integration. It is very important that the new Constitution is adopted with all the nation-wide debates taking place, so that the interests of all groups of the population⁵are taken into account.

The conventional model of interaction between the government and society is too significant, and therefore no discussion concerning the political future of South Ossetia goes unnoticed for South Ossetia. The fact that this discourse, updated by the leader of the United Ossetia party A. I. Bibilov in 2014, is a key issue of Russian - Ossetian relations points to the established conventional model of the regulator of public relations. It is with the help of this issue, which is of key importance for the South Ossetian society, that the real contours of domestic and foreign policy are formed, and consequently, the political reality.

The idea of South Ossetia joining Russia is a negative and obscure phenomenon for an external observer only. As is well known, the Georgian political elite is an external observer of the process of forming conventional models. The entry of South Ossetia into Russia became the foundation of a conventional model of interaction between government and society. This issue is the reason for a broad, legitimate discussion, in which both opponents

⁵ Interview of Anatoli Bibilov to TV channel “Russia 24”. URL: <http://gtrkir.ru/news/intervju-anatoli>

and supporters of the entry of South Ossetia into Russia are actively involved. Thus, for the first time in many decades, South Ossetia is the venue of the discussion not of the past of the republic, but the image of the future of South Ossetia. It should be noted that this discourse at the political level was initiated by A. I. Bibilov after the international recognition of its being legal subject in 2008.

We cannot but pay attention to the fact that the conventional model of interaction between government and society, as a rule, is formed in conditions of relative freedom⁶. In addition, it does not have a strictly formal implementation, since it is similar to mental matrices, rather than compositional stencils.

The conventional model of interaction between government and society implies a very significant and, one might even say, necessary socio-political increment. In this case, we do not mean a sample, but what has become common place, an integral element of the language of politics, a fundamental content aspect of communication in a particular community. It is the conventional models that are the most important elements and manifestations of the live world, the self-evident thing that a researcher should analyze. Experts state that the “Bibilov model” for South Ossetia, which provides for the implementation of the “5 steps to Russia” program, is the most acceptable and conventional. One of the reasons for the relevance of this thesis is a very important indicator – 99% of residents of South Ossetia are Russian citizens (Kachmazova 2013). That is, in fact, the “Bibilov model” should legitimize the process that has actually taken place. Thus, if this model is generally accepted and implemented according to some agreement, then it follows that we understand the role of the two main actors that form the conventional model - the authorities and society.

Thus, A. I. Bibilov is the most consistent politician who has taken the course of conventionally consolidating the course of rapprochement between South Ossetia and Russia. President A. I. Bibilov points out that:

This issue is very relevant. In 1920–1921, Ossetia was divided into Northern and Southern: the Southern part became part of the GSSR, and the Northern part became part of the RSFSR. Since then the struggle of the Ossetian people for the restoration of historical justice and the inclusion of South Ossetia in Russia began. In fact, every 10 years we have been trying to convey the opinion of the people of South Ossetia to the top leadership, so that South Ossetia would become part of Russia. Unfortunately, so far we have what we have. There is no doubt that there are opportunities – this issue is still being discussed. I think that the future of South Ossetia in any case is in the structure of the Russian Federation⁷.

It is necessary to explain that convention is something additional, balancing relative to communication, some additional layer, the essence of which is to be revealed. For example, it is usually important for a politician to narrate the disasters of a particular land

⁶ The famous Russian political scientist A.Y. Sunkurov indicates in his works that proceeding from the available approaches, also from the systematized presentations, in the first approach it is possible to imagine three versions of interaction of bodies of power and civil service: cooperation, absence of cooperation and (ignoring) and confrontation.

⁷ Anatoli Bibilov : “I think the future of South Ossetia in the RF PΦ URL: <https://www.interfax.ru/interview/587633>

which suffered from enemies' activities, in order to be understood. In other words, it is important for a politician not only to describe the situation, but also to give it an explanation, to assume the role of a subject interpreting the events. It is this evaluating dominant of his message that it is to be conveyed to the surrounding people, while charging them with his highest emotions, ideas, his he generates infecting them with his moods, his ideas, his enthusiasm.

The President of South Ossetia, A. I. Bibilov, managed to act as an interpreter of the events, to convey the dominant assessment of his political message to society, and infect it with his ideas and moods. An additional justification for the course of strengthening relations with Russia is being formed by President A.I. Babilov, which completely contradicts the vision and position of the Georgian political leadership.

Of course, the President of South Ossetia is right in pointing out that

The peoples of Abkhazia and South Ossetia have made their choice. We want to live in independent states, and Georgia must respect our will. Once again, we have to repeat that if the current Georgian authorities really want to establish peaceful relations with the South Ossetian and Abkhazian peoples, they must recognize the facts of the genocide of Ossetians and Abkhazians based on the existing realities. They must recognize the independence of our republics, which has already been recognized by a number of UN member states, and sign guarantees on the non-use of force against South Ossetia and Abkhazia. There is nothing new in our requirements⁸

The President, highlighting the position of the Georgian political leadership, reinforces his message about the inevitability and necessity of closer integration of South Ossetia into the Russian civilizational space.

Judging by the reaction of the population to the initiatives of the party "United Ossetia" and its leader A. I. Bibilov, formed in the republic South Ossetia is a conventional model⁹ of interaction between the government and society, and is a real mechanism for consolidating society.

Meanwhile, it should be noted that conventional legitimation is necessary to form an effective model of interaction between the government and society. Additional communicative level (conventional legitimation) (Cimiris 2020, p. 38) is designed not only to transmit information, but also to fully integrate representatives of society into the approved order, making it an adept of a certain way of thinking and a kind of interpreter. The conventional model is not a ready-made model, but a clearly defined space of self-determination, an area of freedom realization. Almost the entire period of A. I. Bibilov's presidency is devoted to the integration of the South Ossetian society into the legitimate Russian political, scientific and intellectual space. In this clearly defined space of self-

⁸ Anatoli Babilov : Georgian authorities turn the rostrum of the UN into an arena for their mendacious rhetoric URL: <http://parliamentrso.org/node/123>

⁹ Late in May 2018 at the Petersburg international economic forum President of South Ossetia A.I. Bibilov stated that, that the Republic was prepared to hold a referendum on joining Russia «literally to-morrow», however voting is possible after the settlement of conflict in Donbas. If South Ossetia makes a decision to reject their independence as a separate state, there is alternative of uniting with Russia, stated Bibilov.

determination, the President of South Ossetia A. I. Bibilov provides space for the creative and scientific intelligentsia of the republic.

Cooperation in higher education is one of the most successful Russian-Ossetian integration projects. So, with the assistance of President A. I. Bibilov in June 2017, V.B. Tedeev, rector of the South Ossetian State University named after A. A. Tibilov and A.A. Alexandrov, rector of The Moscow State Technical University named after Bauman signed a treaty on cooperation.¹⁰

On the eve of the signing, a working meeting of the rectors of the South Ossetian State University and the Bauman Moscow State Technical University Tedeev V.B. and Alexandrov A.A. was held with the assistance of the President of South Ossetia.

We were primarily interested in cooperation with the Bauman University in the field of information technologies. Two of our compatriots, young employees of the Department of Informatics of the South Ossetian State University Alan and Alexander Dzhioevs, will be writing dissertations at the Moscow State Technical University. I am sure that they will represent our university with dignity. In addition, the entire Department of Informatics and Computer Engineering of the South Ossetian State University will undertake advanced training courses in information technology at the Bauman Moscow State Technical University. A special professional development program will be developed for them. We will not just focus on one area (information technology), but will cooperate in other areas¹¹ as well.

For the South Ossetian State University, after its restoration as a consequence of the Georgian attack on it, the cooperation with one of the leading universities in Russia was a kind of scientific breakthrough. Separate concrete projects on cooperation between individual organizations of the two states, initiated by the President, have a very positive impact on the integration of the South Ossetian society into the legitimate Russian political, scientific and intellectual space.

A year earlier, in 2016, the political leadership of South Ossetia supported the initiative initiated by the Rector of the South Ossetian State University, V. B. Tedeev, signed a cooperation agreement between the Moscow State University named after M. V. Lomonosov and the South Ossetian State University named after A. A. Tibilov¹². The Rector of the Moscow State University named after Lomonosov, also supported specific projects of the South Ossetian State University in the framework of training highly qualified specialists in postgraduate and doctoral studies at a leading university in the country. This form of integration certainly strengthens the current conventional model

¹⁰ Rector of SOSU about treaties with other higher schools. There are results. URL: https://news.rambler.ru/education/37350613/?utm_content=news_media&utm_medium=read_more&utm_source=copylink

¹¹ Rector of SOSU about treaties with other higher schools. There are results. URL: https://news.rambler.ru/education/37350613/?utm_content=news_media&utm_medium=read_more&utm_source=copylink

¹² Delegation of SOSU headed by Vadim Tedeev visited MSU with a working visit. Делегация URL: <http://osinform.org/55784-delegaciya-yuogu-vo-glave-s-rektorom-vadimom-tedeevym-posetila-mgu-s-rabochim-vizitom.html>

of interaction between the authorities and society in South Ossetia, as it implements the main message of the current President A. I. Bibilov to strengthen Russian-Ossetian relations.

It is an obvious fact that the variety of conventional models depends on specific historical variations alternatives. At the same time, the bearer of any cultural or political community always has a wide choice when reproducing ways of interpreting events, institutional prescriptions, norms, and deviations from them. However, the conventional model proposed by the political party "United Ossetia" under the leadership of A. I. Bibilov is aimed at intensifying integration processes with Russia in all areas.

Taking into account the fact, that to some extent, the conventional model can relate to both a living belief and the observance of certain standardized rules related to faith in God. Thus, in the historical memory of the Ossetians, the legend of the adoption of Christianity in the X century took root¹³. This concept is used in his politics and public rhetoric by the current President of South Ossetia A. I. Bibilov, confirming the thesis that Ossetia-Alania is an outpost of Russia and Orthodoxy in Transcaucasia.

So, one of their first meetings on the post of President of South Ossetia A. I. Bibilov met with Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All¹⁴Russia. Of course, the issue of South Ossetia joining Russia is connected with a whole range of problems, including religious ones.

Currently, this is one of the most painful issues for South Ossetia, as the canonical territory of the autocephalous Orthodox Church does not often coincide with the territories of state entities. This is one of the most serious religious and political problems of the post-Soviet space. The issue of ecclesiastical guidance the Orthodox population in South Ossetia by the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church is among the most difficult ones subjected to solving.

Despite the established statehood, modern South Ossetia belongs to the canonical territory of Georgia. The fact that the current geopolitical landscape does not coincide with the canonical territory of the Georgian Orthodox Church is a question-a problem that, in the opinion of A.I. Bibilov, the problem can be solved within the framework of a conventional model of interaction between government and society.¹⁵

In 2017, in a personal conversation with the author of the article, A. I. Bibilov noted that in order to solve the problem ecclesiastical guidance of the Orthodox Christians in South Ossetia by priests of the Russian Orthodox Church, the consent of not only the political elites, but also the South Ossetian public is required. As the attitude towards

13 Ossetia Alaniya - stronghold of Russia on North Caucasus. URL: <https://pravoslavie.ru/136182.html>

14 Holy Patriarch Kirill met the President of South Ossetia. URL: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/4968569.html>

15 In 2017 in his personal conversation with the author of the article the president A.I. Bibilov noted that for solution of the problem of ecclesiastical guidance of Orthodox Christians in South Ossetia by the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church the consent is needed not only on the part of the political forces but also South Ossetian society. As there is quite a negative attitude in South Ossetia towards the Georgian Orthodox Church as well as towards its Patriarch Ili the second, the religious issue is positioned by South Ossetian society as a political problem, the solution of which depends on civil authorities rather than religious ones.

the Georgian Orthodox Church and its Patriarch Ilia II in South Ossetia is extremely negative, the religious issue is positioned by the South Ossetian society as a political problem, the solution of which depends not on religious, but on secular authorities.

In this context, it is opportune to pay attention to one of the functions of the conventional model, which is targeted to establish conformities and to get rid of undesirable violations and consequences in the course of communication (Neusykhin 1994. P.641.). That is, if the adopted conventional model allows for a solution in case of the political future of the Republic, then the religious problem in South Ossetia in the context of “ROC-GOC” relations is not yet solvable.

Based on this, the political leadership of South Ossetia is building relations with the Moscow Patriarchate of the Russian Orthodox Church. The most complex religious issue, which has led to an internal national religious split, has a possible prospect of solution within the framework of a conventional model of interaction between the authorities and society, which provides for the implementation of the policy of joining Russia. If the republic becomes part of Russia, the issue of ecclesiastical guidance of the Orthodox Christians of South Ossetia would possibly be resolved¹⁶.

The fact that the South Ossetian conventional model is already being accepted as a model by many, indicates to the voluntary conventionality and transparency, the evidence of the existing conventional model of interaction between government and society. The researchers point out that to a large extent such a model remains “ideal” in the sense what M. Weber had in mind.(1994, p. . 101), in this case, the most probable and correct type of understanding is programmed.

Thus, the model, from this point of view, is not something forcibly introduced, tested, but replicated. Of course, the implementation of a particular model occurs differently. Sometimes because of the influence of the official elite or because of a one-sided ideological initiative, sometimes spontaneously. Often, even the bearers of a socially approved convention find it difficult to determine what caused it, and then the legitimation mechanism described in the classic book by Berger and Lukman’s “Social Construction of Reality” comes to the rescue (Berger, Lukman 2013).

The mechanism of legitimizing the South Ossetian conventional model of interaction between government and society also provides for a certain social order. The social order to which the members of the community belong, is gradually being perceived naturalistically, as something taken for granted, as part of the natural order, as an objective given.

Due to the purposeful, historically and politically grounded position of the United Ossetia party and its leader A. I.Bibilov, the idea of integrating South Ossetia into Russia explains, justifies and forms, and complements the political reality. President of South Ossetia A. I. Bibilov updated his mission in the following format:

16 At the present time many Orthodox Christians in South Ossetia in order to participate in Liturgy on Saturdays and Sundays go to the Alaniya Theophany convent of South Ossetia-Alaniya, which is located along the border of South Ossetia of Alagirsky area.

I do not and will not abandon the national idea of joining Russia. For me, this is an incentive for life and a goal that I would like the people of South Ossetia to achieve. I would like to see Ossetia in the Russian Federation¹⁷.

By the year 2022 this presidential message remains the main direction and development for South Ossetia, which indicates its relevance and significance for the South Ossetian society. Moreover, the foundation of values of this political reality (movement to Russia) has been formed precisely with the help of the conventional model of interaction between government and society that has been developed and practically already fixed in the minds of the society.

Features of the “Bibilov conventional model”

Thanks to the activities of leading political actors, the model of interaction between government and society developed in South Ossetia has become a general cultural national phenomenon. It seems that the study of this general cultural national phenomenon is not fraught with anything unusual, and in methodological terms it is not a particular problem. But the first impression is deceptive, since there is every need to pay attention to the peculiarities of building a model of interaction between government and society in the State of Alania¹⁸. To identify the features of the South Ossetian model, it is opportune to pay attention to the genesis of this model.

Prior to the recognition of statehood in the Republic of South Ossetia, there was an irreducibility of the main national paradigms to the real challenges and threats. The rhetoric and model of confrontation with a stronger actor - the Georgian state, leveled the discussion of the prospects and image of the future of the South Ossetian statehood. Due to regular military and political provocations on the part of Georgia, there was no global vision of the future in South Ossetia. The image of the future of the Republic partly was not formed due to constant and regular threats from the Georgian authorities. That is, the active policy of pressure on the economy and politics of South Ossetia by Georgia did not allow any discussion of the image of the future. The political class needed to deal with security issues on a daily basis.

The printed and electronic media, and social networks focused on the need to prepare for a military confrontation with the Georgian state. The image of the future of South Ossetia in those conditions was connected exclusively with the possible reflection of a military attack by Georgia in the future.

But this rhetoric was an obstacle to the development of a more promising South Ossetian project, aimed at the future, rather than looking back to the past. The Georgian agenda was the dominant factor in the Ossetian society of South Ossetia, so the level of

¹⁷ The president of South Ossetia called joining Russia “A national idea”. URL: <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/25/08/2018/5b813bfc9a7947e98e121c82/>

¹⁸ According to the constitution of the South Ossetia the second name of the Republic is the State of Alaniya.

tension emanating from Georgia hit its record. For the established statehood in South Ossetia statehood, a new narrative was needed, aimed at consolidating the message that the people of South Ossetia are the winners who have defended their right to independence¹⁹. It was this message that gave rise to the positioning of a new image of the future of South Ossetia as a more integrated republic in the Russian civilizational space.

Naturally, after the recognition of the statehood of South Ossetia in 2008, economic, political, social, and public laws began to be vested with a new being and formed a new political reality. The leading political force in South Ossetia, the United Ossetia party, has become the main “vesting operator”. Thus, the model, dominating for decades in the Southern part of the in South Ossetia, as the model of permanent confrontation with Georgia has faded into the background. This result was the fruit of political, intellectual and social creativity of the United Ossetia party and its leader A. I. Bibilov. As a result, a conventional model of interaction was formed, in which a special complex of agreements (conventions) was legitimized, which was created on the basis of shared values, traditions, and customs.

We are to ascertain that the Ossetian society deals with images, that obtained an all-Caucasian sounding (mainly in the Georgian society), about Ossetians as a non-indigenous Caucasian people - an alien who seized Georgian lands.

This was complicated by the fact that post Shevardnadze Georgia is a country with unpredictable political Ossetia-phobic indices. This resulted in the actualization and political capitalization of hatred towards Ossetians on the part of President Saakashvili M.N.

Under these conditions, the population in South Ossetia acquired a large amount of information from Georgian sources. In response, the issue of the Ossetian genocide in 1920 was added to the Ossetian narrative with a new impetus. Even proverbs, historical memory, ignorance, and military-political confrontations, accumulated and were incorporated into everyday life. It should be noted here that the line of demarcation separating an action from a semantic source runs along the border of the conscious/unconscious and affects the degree of intent.

Thus, the Georgian context (statements by politicians and public figures, military and political provocations) was the determining motive for the domestic Ossetian agenda.

This situation was a problem, since it hampered the South Ossetian issue from being disseminated not only beyond the boundaries of the region, but also to the South Ossetian society itself. Often, politicians operate with assumptions, and in these conditions, the role of information grows, which gives room for hypothetical constructions. Realizing this, the Georgian side manipulated the South Ossetian public opinion.

¹⁹ [Polotolog:] A Status of winner must be fixed for South Ossetia. URL: <https://sputnik-ossetia.ru/20170905/4811607.html>

Discussion

Thus, the political leadership of the Republic of South Ossetia faced a non-trivial and very complex task – to construct a model that could neutralize the policy of forming a negative image of South Ossetia and oppose it with a new political reality with the help of a conventional model of interaction.

Here it was already necessary to consistently form a system of statements, a situational context, which, as a rule, did not coincide with the established stereotype image of South Ossetia. A conventional model, as a rule, is constituted through the gradual discovery of its undisclosed sides. And the more complex is, the more potential horizons can be opened to the perceiver. That is why new political and economic meanings and constructions were introduced into everyday life. In particular, the image of Ossetians as a victorious nation has become more professionally exploited.

We understand that the result of forming a conventional model is not a statehood or society, but only what is read and recognized as important and significant for various reasons. It should be taken into account that the conventional model is adopted selectively, because it is a very complex construction, which is the result of co-creation of the political elite, creative intelligentsia and leaders of civil society institutions. Actors who introduce a conventional model, as a rule, rely on its understanding and for this purpose they strive to build a system of labels, special markers that would allow them to correctly relate to the product produced. The political elite of South Ossetia was engaged in building this system of labels. South Ossetian public opinion leaders have consistently turned their message into information, ensuring proper its understanding. First of all, this technology consolidated the positive image of Russia as a state-civilization with its own special mission.

Conclusions

The South Ossetian elite, first of all President A. I. Bibilov and the United Ossetia party headed by him, realized that communication with society is very important for the formation of a conventional model. This method is used by agreement, on the basis of an unspoken understanding. The positive image of Russia in South Ossetia is also the fruit of an agreement between the authorities and society.

This kind of activity is unthinkable without a well-coordinated, coordinated action that presupposes common relevance, evidence of the live world. In this regard, we should pay attention to the activity of the President of South Ossetia A. I. Bibilov, who strengthens the interaction of the authorities and society not only in South Ossetia, but also beyond its borders. This means that the formation and consolidation of Bibilov's conventional model in South Ossetia is influenced by his activities outside the State of Alania. Attention should be paid to his work in the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics. The fact that South Ossetia was the first to recognize the statehood of these republics contributed to the expansion of the South Ossetian political reality, and consequently to the legitimization of the current conventional form of interaction between the authorities and society. Thanks to personal

contacts at the level of the heads of the republics of South Ossetia, the DPR and the LPR, the Georgian foreign policy context was almost completely replaced by the Russian, Donetsk and Luhansk ones. In particular, this was reflected in the incorporation of the concept of “Russian World” into the South Ossetian political discourse.

Thus, it is safe to say that the conventional model of interaction between the authorities and society in South Ossetia at the present stage supports and develops Russia's global civilizational mission in Transcaucasia by developing a course of integration with Russia. The key actor in this process is the President of South Ossetia A. I. Bibilov and the United Ossetia party headed by him.

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