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The scientific concept involves the publication of scientific papers, including research insights and scholarly results, discussion articles and reviews, in the field of political science, sociology, world economy, cultural studies. The substantive and thematic profile of the journal includes topics reflecting international and regional processes, political, economic, social, cultural aspects of international relations, interstate and intercultural communications, international security and sustainable development

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## EDITOR-IN-CHIEF FORWARD

Dear readers!

The first issue of our journal in 2024 contains our authors' own scientific research, as well as research materials from the National Research Institute for the Communications Development (NIIRK, publisher of the journal "Russia&World: Scientific Dialogue"). These materials reflect the results of the annual monitoring of communication regimes in post-Soviet countries and the results of research by participants of the international academic mobility program, which is annually organized by NIIRK for young scientists from foreign countries.

The issue opens with an article by V.V.Komleva, the Head of Monitoring communication regimes. The author analyzes the overall rating of post-Soviet countries based on the results of 2023 and focuses attention on the dynamics of friendliness of communication regimes in the countries of the South Caucasus. The article contains quantitative indicators and qualitative characteristics of the friendliness profiles of Abkhazia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, South Ossetia, on the basis of which conclusions are drawn about their relations with Russia. The author shows that a common communication space with Russia is being formed in South Ossetia and Abkhazia; the pragmatic approach is being strengthened and the role of the economic factor in communications with Russia in Azerbaijan and Georgia is increasing; there are attempts by the political elite of Armenia to form an unfriendly position for the country in the absence of a deep anti-Russian position in the consciousness of the Armenian society.

The analysis of the problems of communication modes continues in the article by N.A.Skvortsova and D.A.Abazova. The authors examine factors in the development of relations between Russia and Georgia, noting a number of features of Georgia's communication regime in the absence of official diplomatic relations and in the situation of contradictions around South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The authors show the main challenges and threats to communication between the two countries, latent problems of the communication regime of Georgia, draw attention to the polarization of the country's political forces and the increasing role of extra-regional actors influencing the Georgian political discourse regarding Russia.

The potential of Russian-Georgian cooperation became the subject of an expert discussion held by NIIRK. The most interesting materials are presented in the collective article by N.Sh.Tsikhelashvili, G.V.Gikashvili, A.T.Sikharulidze, A.A.Khotivirshvili, G.Tsopurashvili, G.Rtskhiladze. As factors contributing to the development of friendly communications, the authors consider the deep spiritual ties between Georgians and Russians, the historical and cultural conditionality of Russian-Georgian relations. At the same time, the authors of the article note that under the influence of Western ideologies, a large part of modern Georgian youth have no idea about the commonality of the Russian and Georgian peoples. The article contains a number of proposals for the development of civil and business communications between Georgia and Russia.

Issues of development of a joint South Ossetia and Russia communication space are discussed in the article by A.L.Gagieva and V.V.Komleva. On the example of cooperation in the education sphere, the role of Russia in strengthening the human potential of South Ossetia is shown, problems which solution is necessary for the innovative development of the country are discussed. The authors believe that international educational and scientific communications are one of the tools for expanding international communications for South Ossetia.

In the process of monitoring the communication regime of the Republic of Azerbaijan, an article by D.S.Ayvazyan was prepared, devoted to the analysis of the country's foreign policy communications. Considering the main foreign policy partners of Azerbaijan (Russia, Turkey, Iran, USA, and European Union), the author comes to the conclusion that Azerbaijan's foreign policy towards Russia is economically pragmatic. The country is interested in regional transport communications and intensifying economic cooperation with its closest neighbors. The author noted that in the field of security and military-political cooperation, relations with the Republic of Turkey are deepening. The formation of a common political space with Turkey is supported by the ideology of brotherhood and unity of the cultural and civilizational basis.

Let us note that almost all post-Soviet countries use this technique to justify their foreign policy. From these positions, the articles of a member of the editorial board of our journal V.K.Egorov and the Belarusian author P.A.Barakhvostov are very interesting. In search of deep, spiritual, cultural foundations for the transformation of social reality, in understanding the role and meaning of reproducing archetypes, scientists turn to civilizational theories, concepts of actualizing archaism.

V.K.Egorov examines the dominant approaches to understanding the phenomenon of actualization of the archaic in Russian humanitarian studies. He critically analyzes concepts that focus on the search for universal key factors that determine the development trends of countries, peoples, and civilizations; concepts that consider the actualization of the archaic as part of the actualization of the cultural-historical, cultural-national heritage of peoples, taking into account the uniqueness of their cultural and civilizational development. Within the framework of these approaches, the modernization of cultural heritage values, including archaics, in politics, economics, and the social sphere; and the ethno-confessional and civilizational characteristics of different regions of the world that influence on these processes are comprehended. Of particular interest are the author's reflections on the most promising ways of developing the phenomena under consideration.

P.A.Barakhvostov focuses on the civilizational differences between East and West, interest in which has intensified against the backdrop of geopolitical transformations in recent decades. One of explanations for these differences appeals to the split of the Christian Church into Roman Catholic and Orthodox. The author argues with representatives of this point of view, according to which religion is isolated from the social system and analyzed as the primary factor that triggers the formation of a type of civilization. The author proposes to consider the emergence of a new civilization from the perspective of an institutional approach, "as a process of formation of a complex institutional structure consisting of a complex of interconnected and interdependent economic, political, socio-cultural institutions, including religion." Using the example of a split in the united Christian world, the author examines this process using institutional and matrix approaches. He argues for both the need to strengthen dominant institutions in the institutional core and the creation of balancers (complementary institutions) for the sustainable development of civilization.

As already mentioned, in this issue of the journal we present a number of articles prepared within the framework of the NIIRK international academic mobility program. While in Moscow, program participants were able to work at scientific institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow State University, and the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with leading Russian researchers.

In an article by program participant from Armenia A.A.Karapetyan discusses the features of online and/or offline communication preferences, reasons for choosing social networks, motivation for online communications. The article contains materials from the author's sociological

survey of Armenian users of social networks. Another participant in the academic mobility program from Armenia V.A.Poghosyan conducted a study of the influence of the Cold War on the state of Afghan society. In the presented article, the author concludes that the "Cold War" of the superpowers had a direct impact on the internal political development of Afghanistan. The internal political unity of Afghan society did not develop, since the Afghan elite was unable to form an ideology of national unity, and some of its parts preferred to serve the interests of one or another player without supporting the national interests of Afghanistan.

Young Abkhaz researcher K.D.Kobakhia focused on the complex issue of the influence of Stalin's repressions on socio-political processes in Abkhazia (Abkhazian Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic) in the 1930s–1940s. The article examines the state of the political and cultural elite of Abkhazia, changes in the ethnic composition of the population, Georgian-Abkhaz interaction during this period.

Historical research was also presented by A.N.Odinaev, a participant in the mobility program from Tajikistan. His article is devoted to the analysis of the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 and the key role of the orientalist A.L.Kun in the preparation of the "Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition" by Mirza Mullah Abd ar-Ra Haman, son of Muhammad Latif Mustajir. The Iskanderkul expedition and A.Mustajir's "Diary" are significant sources for the study of history, ethnography, spiritual culture and socio-economic aspects of the upper reaches of Zarafshan in the second half of the 19th century. The author emphasizes the relevance of cooperation between Russian and Tajik researchers for the study and preservation of the cultural heritage of Central Asia.

Dear readers!

The editorial board of the journal hopes that the materials of the issue will arouse your interest and that you yourself will become one of our authors in the future. Following the mission of the journal, we continue to publish joint research by Russian and foreign authors and invite you and your colleagues to share the results of such research on the pages of our journal.

Sincerely,  
Academician of the Russian Academy  
of Sciences  
Vitaly Naumkin

# INTERNATIONAL, GLOBAL AND REGIONAL PROCESSES

International relations  
Global and Regional Studies

*...In countries moving towards unfriendly relations, the negativity of Russia and Russians is initiated not by the population, but by the ruling political elite. Political decisions are determined by corporate and personal interests, predilections and elite ideas about the "ideal type" of the country's political development.*

**V.V.Komleva**

Dynamics of Friendliness of Communication Regimes in the South Caucasus Countries

*The communication regime of Georgia... is influenced by external control centers seeking to globalize the sphere of communications and overcome national borders.*

**N.A.Skvortsova, D.A.Abazov**

Communication Regime in Georgia: Dialogue in the Context of Severed Diplomatic Relations

*...The agenda of regular foreign policy negotiations between Russia and Azerbaijan at the bilateral and multilateral level is: delimitation of maritime borders and oil and gas resources of the Caspian Sea, economic activities in the Caspian Sea; resolution of the conflict over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh.*

**D.S.Ayvazyan**

Foreign Policy Directions of the Republic of Azerbaijan...

*The sphere of education is an example of the successful development of integration processes between South Ossetia and Russia for many other areas.*

**A.L.Gagieva, V.V.Komleva**

Russia and South Ossetia: Factors Influencing Cooperation in the Field of Education

RUSSIA & WORLD: SCIENTIFIC DIALOGUE

**РОССИЯ  
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# Dynamics of Friendliness of Communication Regimes in the South Caucasus Countries

Valentina V. Komleva✉

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**Abstract.** The article presents a Rating of the friendliness of the communication regimes of post-Soviet countries for 2023. The author focuses on the countries of the South Caucasus, shows the trends in the development of communication regimes, the degree of their friendliness towards Russia. The communication regime is defined as a system of rules, norms, conditions and opportunities for communication between state and non-state actors. To determine friendliness, the legal, political, and socio-cultural conditions for the development of 12 types of cross-country communications are analyzed. The strengthening of the formation of a common communication space with Russia in South Ossetia and Abkhazia is argued. In Azerbaijan and Georgia, the strengthening of a pragmatic approach to the development of communications with Russia and the strengthening of the role of the economic factor are being recorded. The example of Armenia shows how the political elite strengthen the movement towards unfriendliness in conditions when there is no deep anti-Russian position in the consciousness of the Armenian society. The author has compiled profiles of the friendliness of communication regimes for each country and reveals their features. The article uses the materials of the annual monitoring of the communication regimes of post-Soviet countries. Monitoring is provided by the National Research Institute for the Communications Development (Moscow) under the guidance of the author of this article.

**Keywords:** communication regime, friendly countries, friendship rating, South Caucasus, Russian-Georgian relations, Russian-Azerbaijani relations, Russian-Armenian relations, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, international communications, international cooperation

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## Introduction

Development of information society, digitalization of socio-political processes, information and cognitive wars make analysis and forecasting of the dynamics of norms and rules of communication within a particular country and with other countries crucially

important for taking managerial decisions, and above all, decisions concerning foreign policy. The concept of communication regimes was developed at the National Research Institute for the Communications Development as a new approach for the analysis and forecasting of intra- and inter-country communications. Starting in 2020, The Institute has published a number of scientific articles [4, 7-9], conducted pilot monitoring, held a series of scientific discussions, and presented a particular number of analytical reports.

The communication regime is considered as a system of norms, rules, conditions and opportunities for inter-country communications between state and non-state actors. Monitoring communication regime friendliness involves the analysis of legal, political, organizational and other opportunities and conditions of communication with Russia, and also the analysis of the information contents, public and political discourse regarding Russia.

The friendliness of the communication regime is expressed in the presence of legal, political and socio-cultural conditions for non-conflict development of various types of cross-country communications, for free and fair exchange of information between state and non-state actors. Friendship mainly presupposes mutually benevolent relations between countries based on mutual respect, principles of friendship and good neighbourly relations, mutual interests and values of peaceful coexistence in a multipolar world.

In 2021, The Institute conducted the first monitoring of communication regimes in 14 post-Soviet countries and published the First Rating of communication regimes friendliness. In 2022, The Institute conducted the second monitoring and compiled the Second Friendliness Rating. In 2023, The Institute expanded the sample of countries and conducted a monitoring of partially recognized states: the Republic of Abkhazia, the Republic of South Ossetia. Additionally, a special type of communication regime in Transnistria was analyzed. Besides, in 2023, the list of indicators for assessing the friendliness of countries' communication regimes was expanded.

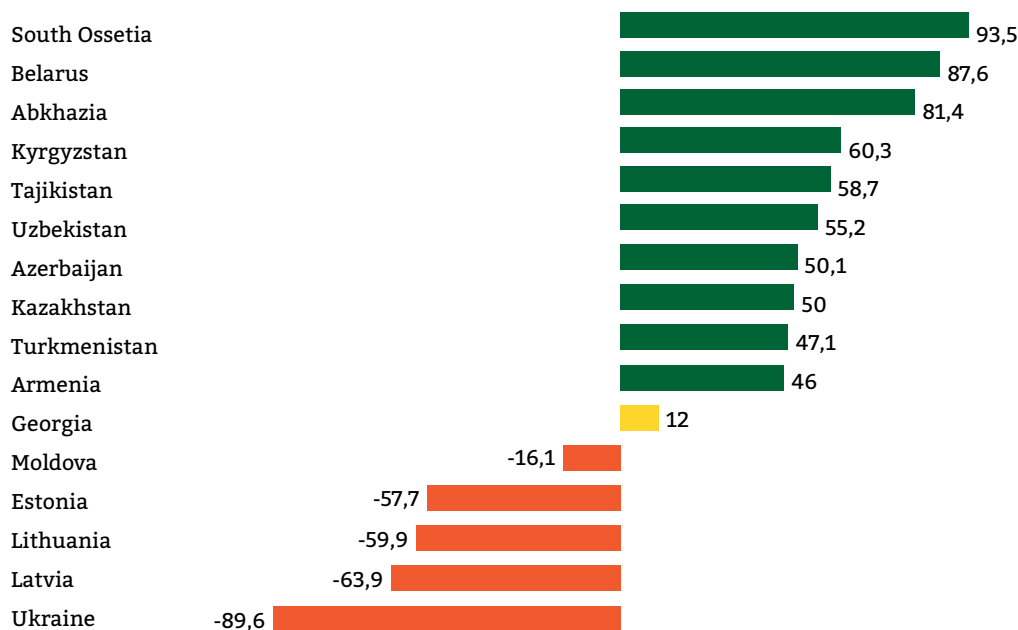
Considering that this issue of the journal "Russia and the World: Scientific Dialogue" is dedicated to the South Caucasian countries, this article presents the results of monitoring in Abkhazia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, South Ossetia.

## Materials and methods

While preparing the article, materials for monitoring the communication regimes of post-Soviet countries, conducted under the guidance of the author of this publication, were used. The monitoring methodology is described in the The Institute reporting materials [10]. 12 communication groups were analyzed and evaluated according to 74 indicators. The article analyzed foreign policy, economic, interregional, educational, scientific, cultural, youth, religious and inter-religious communications, media communications, NGO communications, attitudes towards the Russian Federation, Russians, ethnic Russians within the studied countries, the peculiarities of the visa regime and foreign citizenship.





**Figure 1.** Quantitative indicators of the Rating of friendliness of communication regimes of post-Soviet countries by the end of 2023 (in points from +100 points (the most friendly) to -100 (the most non-friendly))

The empirical base consists of normative legal acts, state strategic documents, speeches, statements by heads of state, current practices (decisions and actions) of communication participants; traditions, customs, familiar patterns and narratives reproduced in modern conditions, materials from country mass media and social networks; statistical data, results of sociological surveys, and expert interviews. The main methods were document analysis, content analysis, event analysis, and expert polling. We analyzed hundreds of government documents, dozens of speeches by government officials, and interviewed 225 foreign experts, 50 Russian experts, and 78 participants in scientific discussions conducted by The Institute. The materials of scientific discussions were used in the preparation of this article, in particular, the materials related to the countries of the South Caucasus [2, 5, 13].

## Results

According to the results of monitoring in 2023, 10 post-Soviet countries entered the group of friendly communication regimes, including South Ossetia (first place in the Rating of friendliness), Abkhazia (third place), Azerbaijan (ninth place), Armenia (tenth place). Not a single state of the South Caucasus was included in the group of unfriendly communication

**Table 1.** Dynamics of friendliness of communication modes

Place	Country	Rating points (max 100) 2023	Rating points (max 100). In brackets – place in rating 2022	Dynamics
Friendly communication regimes				
1.	South Ossetia	93,5	–	
2.	Belarus	87,6	88,4 (1)	≈
3.	Abkhazia	81,4	–	
4.	Kyrgyzstan	60,3	60,6 (2)	≈
5.	Tajikistan	58,7	57,9 (6)	≈
6.	Uzbekistan	55,2	59,3 (3)	≈
7.	Azerbaijan	50,1	57,0 (7)	↓
8.	Kazakhstan	50	58,4 (4)	↓
9.	Turkmenistan	47,1	47,1 (8)	=
10.	Armenia	46	58,3 (5)	↓
Relatively friendly/non-friendly communication regimes				
11.	Georgia	12	24,2 (9)	↓
Non-friendly communication regimes				
12.	Moldova	-16,1	8,3 (10)	↓
13.	Estonia	-57,7	-51,8 (13)	↓
14.	Lithuania	-59,9	-49,0 (12)	↓
15.	Latvia	-63,9	-45,8 (11)	↓
16.	Ukraine	-89,6	-83,6 (14)	↓

regimes, although Georgia is as close to this group as possible in terms of foreign policy communications. However, Georgia was assessed as a relatively friendly/unfriendly state.

The overall rating of friendliness based on the results of monitoring is shown in Figure 1.

Dynamics of friendliness / non-friendliness of communication regimes in 2022 и 2023 (shown in Table1).

The results of monitoring in 2023 showed that Russia was considered an ally and partner in friendly countries. Russia was unconditionally regarded as a strategic ally in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Other countries of the South Caucasus considered it mainly as a partner.

Georgia continues to view Russia as a threat in terms of foreign policy. The unfriendliness of Armenia has increased. In 2023, both Armenia and Moldova were indicative as examples of the split between the position of society and the position of the

countries' authorities (the majority of the population continues to advocate the preservation of friendly relations with Russia). Realizing this, the governments increased censorship of media content, limited the work of information channels presenting alternative views, increased the number of pro-government media and tried to inculcate anti-Russian narratives and stereotypes into the public awareness. In fact, in 2023 in Armenia, we could see not an information war, but a cognitive war against their own population.

Next, we will take a closer look at the friendliness profiles of communication regimes in each country and give a brief summary on each of them. A detailed description for each country is provided in the full NRICD report on the results of monitoring in 2023 (the report is posted on the website NICRUS.ru).

### The friendliness profile of the communication regime in South Ossetia

In 2023, the Republic of South Ossetia participated in monitoring friendliness of communication regimes for the first time. The country took the first place in the Ranking (93.5 points out of 100 possible). The image of the friendliness profile shows that for all communication groups, the estimates of South Ossetia are close to maximum values.

The communication regime of South Ossetia is the friendliest of all post-Soviet countries. The norms and rules of communication are largely synchronized with Russian approaches and are developing towards the formation of unified information, socio-economic, cultural and historical space, based on mutual foreign policy support and allied relations. South Ossetia has decided to send volunteers to Special Military Operation and is providing full support to Russia.

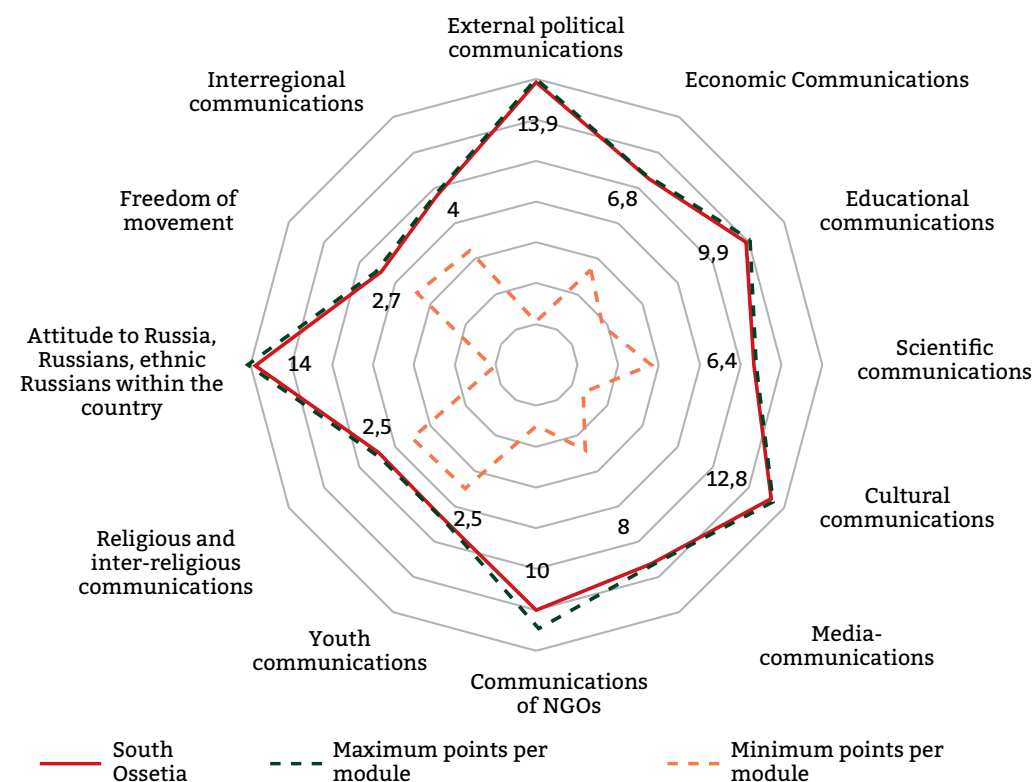
The accumulated experience of establishing its statehood, legal and material base created in cooperation with Russia; make it possible to set new tasks: development of internal resources, beneficial use of geo-economic potential, activation of South Ossetia's human capital to increase the efficiency of using the country's potential. Educational and scientific communications of South Ossetia are the instruments to enter into a wide range of international communications, but for the full use of these tools, a qualitative improvement in the base and human resources of scientific and educational institutions of the country is required.

The analysis of political leaders' speeches, as well as the analysis of projects and plans for the development of the country allows us to predict strengthening of the development of a common socio-political and socio-economic space of South Ossetia and Russia in 2024, and also strengthening cooperation within the framework of Russia and Belarus Union State and other interstate formats where Russia also participates.

### The friendliness profile of the communication regime in Abkhazia

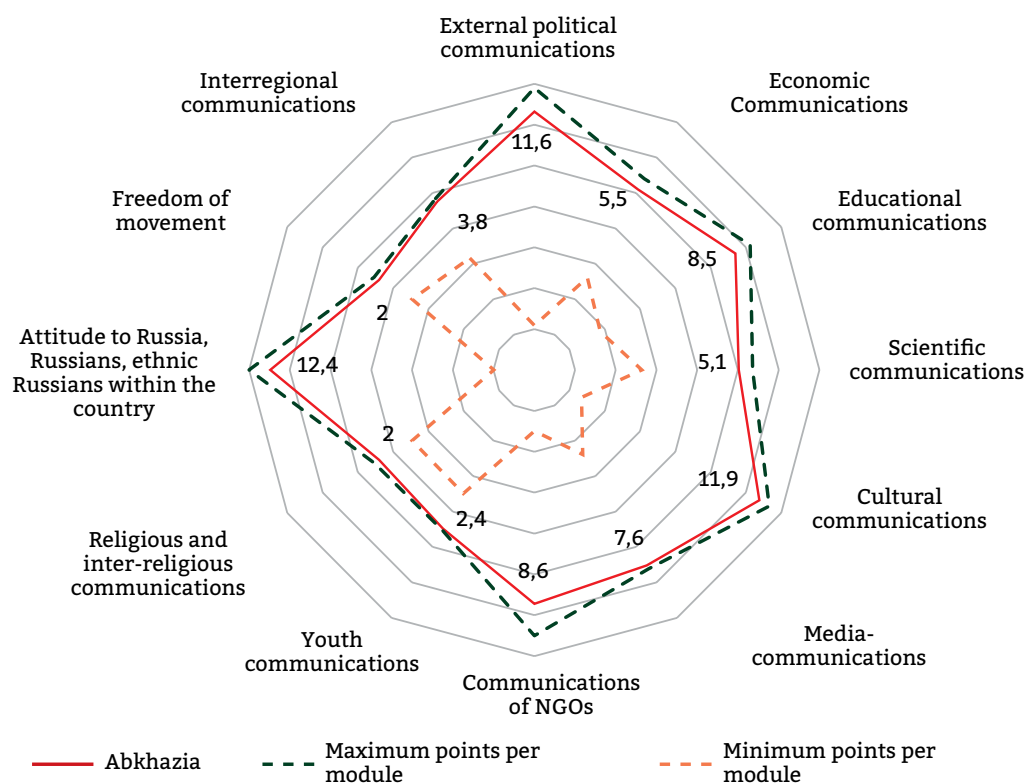
The Republic of Abkhazia, like South Ossetia, participated in monitoring friendliness

**Figure 2.** The profile of the friendliness of the communication regime of South Ossetia (in points)



of communication regimes for the first time in 2023 and took the third place (81.4 points out of 100 possible). In almost all communication groups, the estimates of Abkhazia are close to maximum values.

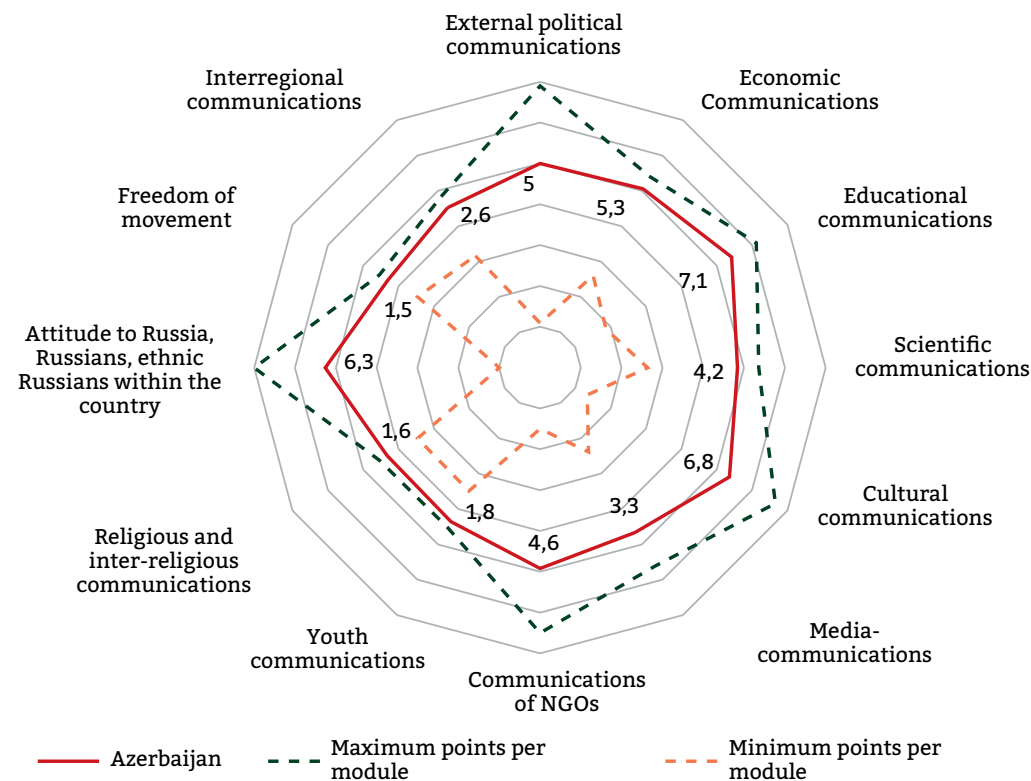
The norms and rules of communication that have developed in Abkhazia are in many ways similar to those in Russia and contribute to the formation of a common economic, informational, humanitarian, and political space of Abkhazia and Russia. Being one of the countries of the Black Sea region, Abkhazia would like to use this potential more profitably and build relations not only with Turkey, but also with the Black Sea countries of the EU. Trying to put this idea into force, Abkhazia comes across a firm position of non-recognition from the EU countries. The EU considers Abkhazia an "occupied territory", as well as South Ossetia, which poses a threat of external expansion onto the territory of these countries. Negotiations within the framework of the Geneva discussions still can't bring the desired results. Expanding the range of international communications is possible for Abkhazia within the framework of scientific and educational international projects, but this requires strengthening the material base and human resources of scientific and educational institutions of the country.

**Figure 3.** The profile of the friendliness of the communication regime of Abkhazia (in points)

The content analysis of statements and foreign policy documents of Abkhazia in 2023 shows an increase in anti-Western rhetoric. Changes in the communication regime in 2023 concerned strengthening control over NGOs with foreign financing, expanding the range of Russian-language media resources (portal "Abkhazia.rf", the newspaper "Bulletin of Abkhazia"), increasing opportunities for Russian-Abkhazian youth communications. In 2024, there is a high probability of greater integration with Russia and greater involvement in cooperation within the framework of the Union State of Russia and Belarus and other interstate formats with the participation of Russia

### The friendliness profile of the communication regime of the Republic of Azerbaijan

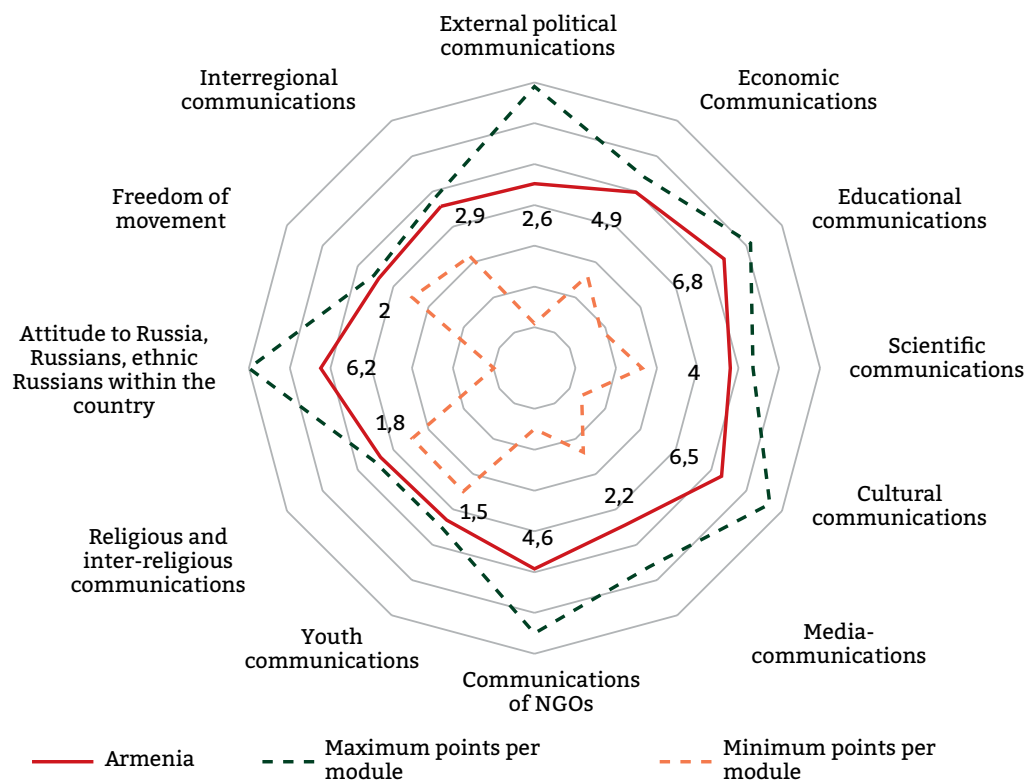
The Republic of Azerbaijan took the seventh place (50.1 points out of 100 possible) in the Rating of communication regime friendliness. The visualization of the friendliness profile in Figure 4 clearly demonstrates which communication groups in the country are

**Figure 4.** The friendliness profile of Azerbaijan's communication regime (in points)

granted the most favourable conditions. These are economic, interregional, religious, and youth communications. Freedom of movement is generally appreciated, although there were cases of restrictions on the entry for some persons of Armenian nationality.

The analysis of the situation in 2023 showed that Azerbaijan's communication regime is more synchronized with Turkey than with Russia. The comparison of Azerbaijan's cooperation projects and programs with those countries shows Azerbaijan's purely pragmatic policy and strategic allied relations with Turkey. The attitude towards Russia and Russians fluctuated in 2023 and in some cases was determined by the events in Nagorno Karabakh.

Foreign policy communications were the most dynamic and controversial. The regime of Azerbaijan's foreign policy communications began to change due to changes in the South Caucasus region. Azerbaijan's clear understanding of its place and role in the civilizational strategic partnership with Turkey, the countries of the region and the countries of the Turkic world gave ground to cultural, educational and informational communications in 2023. There is a high probability that regime changes will affect these areas of communication in 2024.

**Figure 5.** The friendliness profile of Armenia's communication regime (in points)

### The friendliness profile of the communication regime in the Republic of Armenia

The Republic of Armenia took the tenth place (46 points out of 100 possible) in the Rating of friendliness of communication regimes. Armenia's communication regime shows the greatest dynamism of all post-Soviet countries. From fifth place in 2022, the country moved to tenth place in 2023, increasing unfriendliness in the field of foreign policy communications with Russia.

According to the results of monitoring in 2022, Armenia was classified as a friendly but fluctuating regime. We predicted the country's shift towards unfriendliness, while noting the absence of a deep "anti-Russia" background in the consciousness of the Armenian society. In 2023, the forecasts were confirmed.

The analysis of the documentation base and communication practices showed that there were cases of imposing restrictions in the sphere of cooperation through media, NGOs, and cultural communications in 2023. The control over international communications of Armenian universities was also strengthened. Situational outbursts of anti-Russian

sentiment in connection with the war in Nagorny Karabakh were noted. But deep negative, anti-Russian sentiments in the Armenian society were not detected.

Nevertheless, in 2023, Armenia became a vivid example of how the ruling elite can change the regime of communication even in spite of the public position by using the power resource. We are talking about the introduction of new rules for the communication regime to follow: blocking information in the top-rated media that do not comply with the government's position; restricting the work of Russian media which publish an alternative point of view; restricting the entry of public opinion leaders from Russia into the country; strenuous accusations of Russia of the problems in Armenia, which actually arose due to the mistakes and miscalculations of the Armenian authorities themselves. The conditions and opportunities for communication with Russia changed based on the narrow corporate concepts of the elites about the ideal vision of these communications. At the same time, the Armenian society showed whether it can quickly change its mind under the influence of massive information attacks.

During the monitoring, it was revealed that Armenia is characterized by several splits: 1) the split between the society and the elite in assessing the correctness of the chosen foreign policy priorities; 2) the split within the society in their attitude to Russia and to the decisions of the Armenian government; 3) the split within business in assessing the economic benefits of the chosen foreign policy priorities; 4) the split within the security forces, as well as the split between the security forces and the political elite in assessing the real capacity (and the desire) of new foreign policy partners to ensure Armenia's security. It is highly likely that these splits will contribute to inconsistency and discrepancy of Armenia's communication regime in 2024.

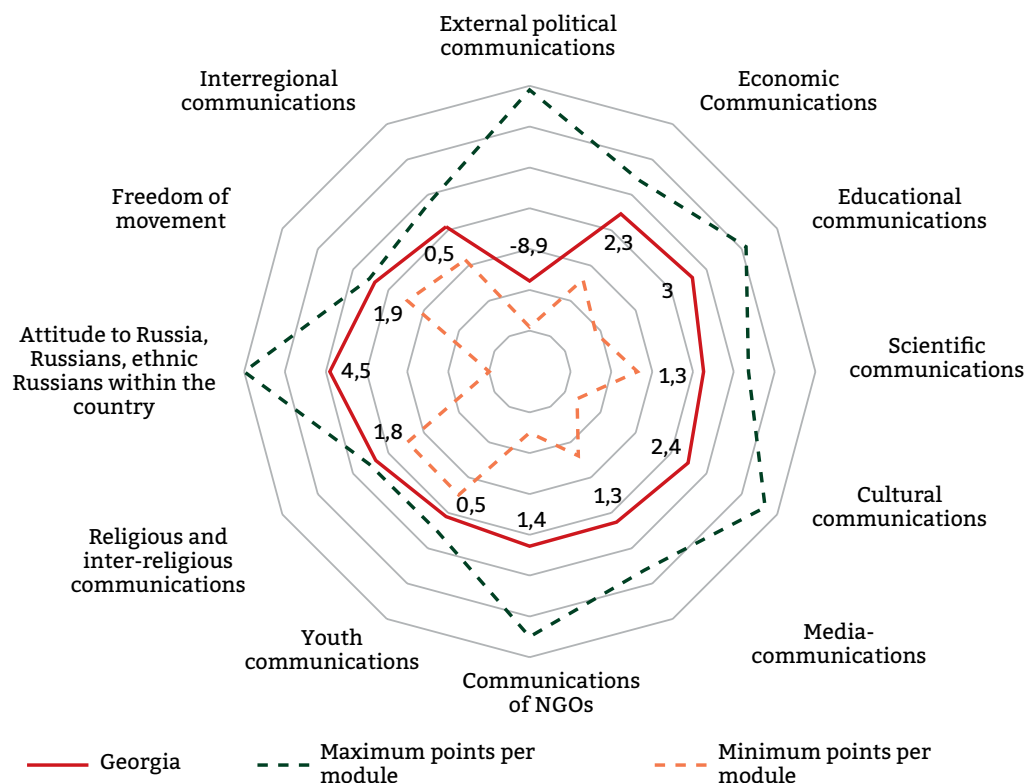
### The friendliness profile of the communication regime in Georgia

Georgia took the eleventh place (12 points out of 100 possible) in the Rating of friendliness of communication regimes. For the second year in a row, Georgia's communication regime demonstrates duality and cannot be completely classified as either friendly or unfriendly.

On the one hand, the country can be classified as unfriendly, since all types of communications are significantly limited due to the severance of diplomatic relations with Russia. Georgia remains committed to European integration, makes steps to align itself with NATO and condemns Russia's foreign and domestic policies. Georgia's anti-Russian rhetoric on international platforms only intensified in 2023.

On the other hand, trade and economic relations with Russia continued to develop in 2023 (despite Western recommendations to reduce the "dependence" of Georgian economy on Russia), transport and logistics projects were being discussed. Diaspora contacts and religious communications were not prohibited, and collaborative cultural projects appeared. Part of Georgian youth were interested in participating in Russian youth projects and receive education in Russian universities. In this regard, Georgia balances between unfriendly and friendly communication regimes and does not fully relate to either the first or the second.



**Figure 6.** The friendliness profile of Georgia's communication regime (in points)

As can be seen in Figure 6, foreign policy communications are in the negative field, the conditions are not favorable enough for the development of media communications and NGO communications. At the same time, the regime of economic and civil communications improved due to the increase in trade turnover, cooperation of business missions, launching of air flights, etc. There was observed a split in the assessments of the political and economic expediency in relations with Russia among the Georgian political elite and business. In this regard, the elections in Georgia in 2024 acquire particular importance for the dynamics of the communication regime of state and non-state actors in Russia and Georgia.

## Discussion

The dynamics of communication regimes friendliness of the South Caucasus countries partially reflects the dynamics of all post-Soviet countries, but also has its own specifics. This specificity, which was frequently identified in 2023 monitoring, is associated

with “inter-state competition” [11], imbalance in the region [1, 6, 12], a number of territorial disputes and conflicts. All this reduces the possibility of developing mutually acceptable rules for cross-country communications. A number of special public expectations were formed regarding Russia, concerning its role in ensuring regional security, as well as its economic role for the countries of the South Caucasus region. Communication regimes are being formed and communications between state and non-state actors are being built with regard to these features.

Among the general trends in the development of communication regimes characteristic of all countries of the post-Soviet space (with varying degrees of depth and intensity), we note the following:

Firstly, new generations of citizens and elites have a peculiar worldview and it is becoming more and more obvious. They have no experience of life in the USSR, they have limited and politicized knowledge about the contribution of the Russian Empire and the USSR to the development of their countries, minimized information about the mutual exchange of different cultures and religions among the Soviet people and a stereotypical (based mainly on knowledge from the media, from expatriate communities and migrants) understanding of modern Russia. The new political elite of these countries, replacing the old one, are representatives of the same generation. They did not participate in the formation of the post-Soviet model of relations in the 1990s, they don't bear any responsibility for previously reached agreements and in some cases reconsider them, leaving their “mark in the history.” The year of 2023 became very significant in this aspect. The contradictions and inconsistencies of political decisions in a number of countries, the multi-vector nature bordering on confusion are largely due to the differences in worldviews of old and new generations, old and new elites.

Secondly, the growth of competition among cultural-civilizational worlds has been revealed. All countries of the South Caucasus continue to preserve elements of Russian civilization and the Soviet past (with a greater or lesser presence). However, the analysis of their state policies regarding cultural and linguistic environment, religion and historical memory shows trends towards integration in the formats of: 1) Russian civilization (South Ossetia, Abkhazia); 2) Turkic civilization (Azerbaijan); 3) Western civilization (Georgia, partly Armenia). A similar situation arose in the countries of Central Asia [7]. It manifests itself revealing the features of its own specifics in the countries of Eastern Europe as well.

Thirdly, strengthening of the mass media role in the legitimization practices of political actors, strengthening of the media mediation in public relations (including political ones) have been confirmed. The role of media in shaping perceptions of reality is increasing. In fact, we are talking about a special type of collective memory – media memory. The most striking example was the events in Nagorny Karabakh and the position of Russia presented differently in the media of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia itself and in the media of other countries. From a theoretical point of view, the concept of media memory developed in the research of D. S. Artamonov [3], is quite interesting for further analysis and forecasting of the friendliness of communication regimes.

Fourth, the growing importance of economic communications is obvious. Relations between the post-Soviet countries are becoming more pragmatic and rational, especially in conditions of scarcity of resources and investments, and restrictions to access markets in other countries. Economic projects and cooperation plans have strengthened ties with Russia in a number of countries and consolidated Russia's position as an economic partner. According to foreign experts (from the countries studied), in the near future it is economic communications that will determine the foreign policy vectors of post-Soviet countries. This is likely to be typical even for countries oriented towards military-political blocs hostile to Russia.

## Conclusions

The communication regimes of the South Caucasus countries demonstrated a wide range of levels of friendliness in 2023. The formation of a single communication space between Russia and South Ossetia and Abkhazia, pragmatization of the communication regime in Azerbaijan and Georgia, a decrease in the level of friendliness and growth of irrational, elite-oriented decisions in Armenia (which was characterized by situational, emotional, corporate dominance of political decisions with extremely weak consideration of objective facts in 2023) became obvious.

The comparison of the results of monitoring communication regimes (2021-2023) in countries moving towards unfriendliness shows that the judgements of Russia and Russians is initiated not by the population, but by the ruling political elite. Political decisions are determined by corporate and personal interests, preferences and views of the elites on the "ideal type" of the country's political development. Initially, these decisions do not reflect the interests and needs of the people in these countries. Moreover, in most cases, they discriminate and abuse a number of social groups. But as the information pressure through the media increases, restrictions on communication with Russia and Russians are imposed; some people fall silent under the fear of persecution, and some turn radical. People try to flee from the countries if they have the opportunity. To erase historical memory at the individual level, to change people's worldview, the tools of cognitive wars are used, which involve not only the media, but also institutions of socialization.

Monitoring of 2023 showed that communication regimes (despite their socio-cultural foundations and the role of civil institutions in shaping the rules and conditions of communication) transform into the embodiment of political regime, infringing on people's rights to objective information, freedom of speech, movement, religion, historical memory, etc. Public institutions are playing an increasingly smaller role in shaping the norms and rules of communication, both within the country and between countries.

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## Contribution of the author

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# Communication Regime in Georgia: Dialogue in the Context of Severed Diplomatic Relations

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**Abstract.** This article presents the results of a research on the information and communication situation in Georgia, the role and importance of national and foreign communication resources, conducted by the annual monitoring of the friendliness of communication regimes of the National Research Institute of Communication Development (NRICD). The authors examined the main challenges and threats in the communication regime of the two countries. The article reveals the latent problems of the communication regime, including the concentration of media in the hands of a narrow circle of individuals and political forces, as well as the increasing politicization of information. The article examines the peculiarities of presentation of news materials that shape anti-Russian rhetoric and agenda. The communication regime between the two countries is largely determined by the continuing tension around the Tskhinvali region and Abkhazia, as well as the instability of the internal political situation. The increasing fragmentation of Georgian society, the extreme polarization of various political forces, and the growing role of non-regional actors have a great impact on Georgian political discourse and official rhetoric and serve as a facilitator for the complication of bilateral relations.

The article uses the materials of the annual monitoring of the communication regimes of post-Soviet countries. Monitoring is provided by the National Research Institute for the Communications Development (Moscow).

**Keywords:** communication regime, Georgia, information field, national interests, humanitarian cooperation

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## Introduction

Russian-Georgian interstate relations are a complex political, humanitarian and information system. Historical, cultural and geopolitical factors determine the nature of bilateral relations.

Political factors. The history of Russian-Georgian relations lasts for many centuries, during the period of the Soviet Union. The Georgian SSR was part of the USSR, which had a significant impact on the formation of their political interaction. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Georgia gained independence, which led to a new stage in relations between Russia and Georgia. Despite the restoration of diplomatic ties, tensions arose after the escalation of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict, the so-called “five-day war” in August 2008. Subsequent years were characterized by attempts to normalize relations, but the resolution of the issue of recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia remains a source of misunderstanding. Political differences over the status of the republics remain a limiting factor in the development of full-fledged cooperation.

Humanitarian factors. The humanitarian aspects of Russian-Georgian relations determine the importance of cultural and educational ties between the countries. The exchange of cultural values, language programs and student exchanges contribute to deepening mutual understanding at the civic level. However, tensions in political relations have an impact on humanitarian exchanges. Discussions continue on the preservation and protection of cultural heritage, including monuments and monuments in areas that have been subject to conflict.

Information factors. Information influence plays an important role in shaping public opinion in both countries. The media, including television and the Internet, have become a platform for the formation of the “enemy image” in the person of the Russian state and influence the perception of political events.

## Materials and Methods

The methodological foundation for the study of communication regimes is focused on concepts developed by Russian scientists from the National Research Institute for Communication Development (NIIRK). Within the framework of the article prepared by V. I. Gasumyanov and V. V. Komleva, the communication mode is considered as a separate entity in the field of political science. This concept is understood as a controlled system, including formal and informal norms, rules, traditions, actors and tools that regulate communication processes in a specific space [1:45].

In this study, the communication mode is conceptualized as a system that has its own set of explicit and implicit (hidden) principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which the expectations of participants are formed.

The process of monitoring the communication regime covers four main stages: 1) collection of empirical information, including 12 groups and a total of 74 indicators; 2) processing of primary information and its transformation into a small database; 3) analysis of the obtained data; 4) interpretation and presentation of results.

In the process of scientific research, various methodological approaches were used, including methods of content analysis and event analysis, structural-functional method, as well as a systems approach. Additionally, discourse analysis of news materials provided by news agencies was used.

The empirical basis of the study is represented by legal acts that establish the framework for the functioning and regulation of communications in the country; strategic documents of the state; speeches by representatives of the executive and legislative branches, as well as civil organizations. Additional materials include information provided by the media, as well as the results of public polls revealing attitudes towards Russians and Russia.

## Discussion

The study was conducted to determine the communication regime of Georgia with the Russian Federation. To achieve the set objectives, the regulatory framework regulating the activities of the media was studied, news collection and discursive analysis of the media space of Georgia was carried out. Additionally, an analysis was carried out of the history of Georgian-Russian relations, which is the context for formulating the conditions of communication.

The value of the study lies in the enrichment of methodological and practical aspects. The effectiveness of the tools used is confirmed by testing the methodology developed by the National Research Institute for Communication Development. The results allow specific conclusions to be drawn on a wide range of communication-related issues. It was possible to create an objective picture of communication between Georgia and Russia. Negative, neutral and positive aspects of relations between countries are highlighted, which is important for understanding and analyzing the complex dynamics of their communicative interactions. This study provides specific practical recommendations and clarifications.

It is important to emphasize the limitations associated with openness and access to data. It is physically impossible to carry out a complete analysis of all Georgian media, so public television, opposition and pro-government media were selectively examined. Difficulties have arisen with access to some statistical data, since the Georgian Statistics Service, for example, does not keep records of statistics on interethnic marriages. In such cases, the expert assessment method was used. This made it possible to compensate for the lack of specific data by using expert opinion to analyze and interpret the information.

This work contributes to the understanding of communication between Georgia and Russia, providing fundamental data that can be used for further analytical research in the field of political science and international relations, where significant attention should be paid to studying the possibilities and limitations of public diplomacy in the absence of diplomatic relations.

## Regulatory framework affecting Georgia's communications regime

Legislation in the field of television and radio broadcasting in Georgia is formed on the basis of several key regulations, including the Constitution of Georgia<sup>1</sup>, international treaties, organic law "Electoral Code of Georgia"<sup>2</sup>, as well as laws "On national regulatory bodies"<sup>3</sup>, «Об авторском праве и смежных правах»<sup>4</sup> и закон «О вещании»<sup>5</sup>. This legislative body is the basis for regulating activities in the field of television and radio broadcasting.

An important element of the system is the Communications Commission<sup>6</sup>, which serves as the permanent national regulatory body. It has the legal status of public law and is independent from other government bodies. The legal status of the Commission is determined by the laws "On Electronic Communications"<sup>7</sup> and current legislation of Georgia. The members of the Commission and its apparatus are independent in the performance of their functions and are subject exclusively to the law. Any unlawful interference in their activities is prohibited, and decisions taken under the influence of such interference are considered invalid.

The Commission has the authority to develop legal acts in accordance with its competence. Such acts include resolutions, decisions and orders of the Chairman of the Commission. The decisions of the Commission have normative force and are adopted in accordance with this Law and other legislative acts.

The Commission also actively participates in the formation of government policy in the field of television and radio broadcasting, based on the results of public opinion and the market. It oversees the implementation of its proposals, determines licensing conditions, controls the use of the frequency spectrum, takes measures to ensure competition and oversee compliance with safety standards and the free circulation of products. One of the important functions of the Commission is also to regulate the amount and procedure for payment of licensing and regulatory fees. In addition, it introduces legal acts, including codes of conduct, and authorizes broadcasting activities.

The communications regime in the country is not only formed under the influence of legal control by the communications control center, but is exposed also to external control centers seeking to globalize the sphere of communications and overcome national boundaries. The European Union actively encourages the standardization of the legal

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2 The Electoral Code of Georgia. 2011. Available from: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ru/document/view/1557168?publication=78>.

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framework for its members, creating a common regulatory framework governing the activities of the media within the EU.

Georgia's desire to integrate into the European Union provides Brussels with an opportunity to influence the communication order in the country<sup>8</sup>. Influential EU representatives are promoting the idea that the media in Georgia are insufficiently independent.

As part of the 12 recommendations for obtaining candidate status for EU membership, European directives are given that provide for mandatory reforms as Georgia strives to promote European integration<sup>9</sup>. Unlike recommendations and comments, directives are mandatory, which is reflected in statements by international organizations and EU representatives.

After reviewing the Law on Television and Radio Broadcasting and related laws at the end of 2022, Council of Europe experts presented a number of recommendations to the Georgian Parliament on key issues<sup>10</sup>. However, the country's parliament only partially took into account these recommendations.

Having analyzed the regulatory framework of the Georgian media, it should be noted that in the process of developing this policy document in June 2023, in order to fulfill one of the mandatory requirements for obtaining EU candidate status (namely, ensuring media freedom), the Parliament of Georgia approved significant changes in Law "On Television and Radio Broadcasting". These changes included a number of measures aimed at resolving problematic issues identified in the recommendations presented by Council of Europe experts<sup>11</sup>.

### **Political parameters in assessing the Friendliness of Georgia's Communication Regime: Official Discourse and Civilizational and Value foundations**

Since 2008, Georgian-Russian relations have undergone complex changes. In official circles in Georgia, the Russian Federation is not considered a partner in foreign policy; on the contrary, in a number of strategic documents it is considered a potential threat to national security<sup>12</sup>.

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9 Varhelyi: Three of the 12 EU Recommendations Have Been Addressed in Georgia, 3/9 in Moldova and 2/7 in Ukraine. Georgia Today. 2023. Available from: <https://georgiatoday.ge/varhelyi-in-the-direction-of-de-oligarchization-georgia-has-achieved-limited-progress/>.

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11 The Parliament of Georgia (June 30, 2023). On amendments to the Law of Georgia "On Television and Radio Broadcasting" – III hearing. Available from: <https://info.parliament.ge/file/1/BillReviewContent/335021>.

12 The concept of National Security of Georgia. Available from: <https://mfa.gov.ge/national-security-concept>; Georgia's Foreign Policy Strategy. Available from: <https://mfa.gov.ge/Foreign-Policy-Strategy>.

Discussion of the civilizational community between Russia and Georgia has become the object of widespread public debate. Within the official discourse, the Georgian elite seeks to return to European society (since the official and dominant discourse in Georgia conveys Georgia's belonging to European civilization, current integration into European structures is understood as an act of return), viewing Russia as an "Oriental despotism"<sup>13</sup>. This civilizational ambivalence manifested itself in the views of representatives not only of liberal circles, but also of conservative ones, which emphasize the commonality of Georgia and Russia in the context of the Christian paradigm and traditional values. Complex political dynamics, civilizational ambivalences and the problem of divided regions make this region an extremely important object of study.

Among the ruling elite, there are key figures who exert institutional influence on political decisions. Georgia, as an established parliamentary republic, completing the process of full transition in 2024, has the following heads of state structures: the prime minister, the chairman of parliament and the president. The most ardent and active critic of Russia is Georgian President Salome Zurbashvili<sup>14</sup>. Prime Minister I. Garibashvili<sup>15</sup> and Chairman of Parliament Sh. Papuashvili<sup>16</sup> make statements hostile towards Russia under pressure, on memorable dates or on international platforms.

Georgia seeks integration into Euro-Atlantic structures, considering Russia as a potential threat to national security. A multi-vector foreign policy has never been characteristic of Georgia since it gained sovereignty in 1991. Consequently, regional projects and initiatives involving cooperation with Moscow are not a priority for Tbilisi<sup>17</sup>. The situation with Abkhazia and South Ossetia remains a key problem. Georgia views Russia as an occupier who has violated international law, while Russia considers recognition of these republics a settled issue. Even with the rhetoric softening after the change of government, the problem persists at the doctrinal level and on international platforms<sup>18</sup>, but at the same

13 The Constitution of Georgia. 1995. Available from: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ru/document/view/30346?publication=36>.

14 Statement by Salome Zurbashvili. The First Public Channel. 2023. Available from: <https://1tv.ge/lang/ru/news/salome-zurbashvili-na-protjazhenii-vekov-my-postojanno-nabljudаем-zagressiej-rossii-nash-otvet-na-politiku-rossii-tolko-odin-jeto-evropa-mir-i-mir-v-evrope/>; "I do not welcome the restoration of flights to Russia!" – Statement by Salome Zurbashvili." Mtavari Archi. 2023. Available from: <https://mtavari.tv/news/110201-ar-mivesalmebi-rusetan-prenebis-aghdgenas-salome>.

15 Garibashvili's speech at the Munich security Conference. Rustavi 2. 2023. Available from: <https://rustavi2.ge/ka/news/249237>.

16 Papuashvili's statement at the session of the International Parliamentary Union. Interpressnews. Available from: <https://www.interpressnews.ge/ru/article/155638-shalva-papuashvili-okkupatsia-i-avliaetsia-instrument-rossii-dlia-postoianno-destabilizatsii-regiona-etovyzov-dlia-gruzii-regiona-i-globalnoi-bezopasnosti/>; "A year has passed since the aggression of the Russian Federation brought chaos, destruction and pain to Ukraine and the Ukrainian people," Papuashvili said. Rustavi 2. 2023. Available from: <https://rustavi2.ge/ka/news/249724>

17 Georgian Foreign Ministry: Tbilisi will not participate in the 3+3 meeting. Available from: <https://civil.ge/ru/archives/564994>.

18 Irakli Garibashvili – The de-occupation of the regions occupied by Russia remains the main task of our state, I believe that the future belongs to the unity and peace of Abkhazians and Georgians. The First Public Channel. 2023. Available from: <https://1tv.ge/lang/ru/news/iraklij-garibashvili-deokkupacija-okkupirovannykh-rossiej-regionov-ostaetsja-glavnoj-zadachej-nashego-gosudarstva-javerju-chto-budushhee-prinadlezhit-edinstvu-i-miru-abkhazov-i-gruzin/>.

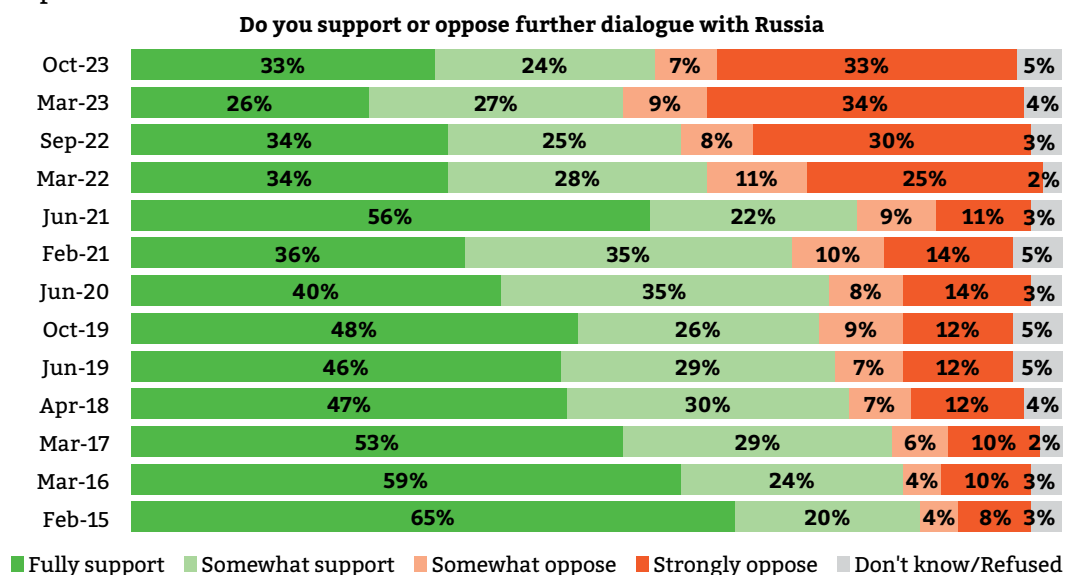
time, government representatives are trying to soften criticism of Russia, pointing out that the conflict could have been avoided.

The civilizational community between Russia and Georgia is the subject of public debate. The understanding of the commonality of the two countries is not only characteristic of liberal groups known as “pro-European”, it is present in conservative movements, albeit with a rejection of the neoliberal agenda. Some conservative circles seek to unite with Western conservatives in the Christian paradigm, where the fundamental values of Europe are faith in God, adherence to traditional values and the maintenance of national identity. The other part, also sharing traditional values and trying to move away from the neoliberal agenda of Western associations, reveals the similarities between Georgia and Russia, justifying this with a common Orthodox identity. Historical and cultural ties and the experience of joint state existence for almost two centuries support this discourse.

### Russia: enemy or partner?

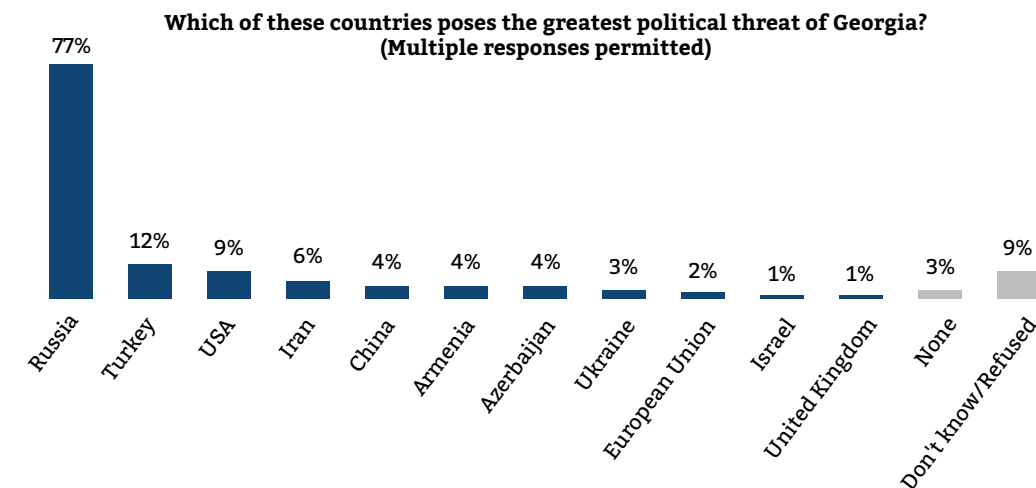
There are no official state media in the Republic of Georgia. Instead, there is a public broadcaster, in particular Channel One (Pirveli Archi), oriented towards the European model of governance, where management is carried out by a board elected by the Communications Commission. The editorial policy is maintained in a fairly neutral manner, avoiding

**Figure 1.** International Republican Institute (IRI) poll (dialogue with Russia). September-October 2023



Copyright © 2023. Public opinion poll in Georgia. The International Republican Institute. Available from: <https://www.iri.org/resources/georgian-survey-of-public-opinion-september-october-2023/>

**Figure 2.** International Republican Institute (IRI) poll (greatest political threat to Georgia). September-October 2023



Copyright © 2023. Public opinion poll in Georgia. The International Republican Institute. Available from: <https://www.iri.org/resources/georgian-survey-of-public-opinion-september-october-2023/>

coverage of events that could discredit the country or provoke civil protests. However, the public broadcaster in Georgia lacks popularity among the local population<sup>19</sup>.

From the point of view of the information situation, Georgia is divided into two camps. On the one hand, there are pro-government media, such as the Imedi and Rustavi 2 TV channels, whose owners are affiliated with government officials or their proxies. “Imedi” occupies a leading position among TV channels in terms of popularity and trust of viewers [2:432]. On the other hand, there are three TV channels – “Mtavari Arkhi”, “TV Pirveli” and “Formula”, which are affiliated with various opposition forces. “Mtavari Arkhi” takes second place in popularity and trust of viewers regarding news and political information<sup>20</sup>.

There is no direct criticism of Russia either in the public broadcaster or in the pro-government media, but it can arise depending on the situation, for example, events on the border with South Ossetia<sup>21</sup> or the death of Georgian citizens in Ukraine fighting as part of the illegal armed formation “Georgian Legion”. The lack of direct criticism creates a negative context in which Russia is portrayed as an aggressor, violating international norms and ignoring its obligations<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> National Public Opinion Survey of Residents of Georgia. Available from: <https://www.iri.org/resources/national-public-opinion-survey-of-residents-of-georgia-march-2023/>.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> F.ex.: 2 citizens of Georgia were illegally detained by the representatives of the occupation forces in the occupied territory near the village of Koshki – according to the locals, they were illegally detained in the so-called Tskhinvali. He was taken to the pre-trial detention center. Available from: <https://rustavi2.ge/ka/news/245918>.

<sup>22</sup> “I don’t see this issue as very tragic” – Zakaria Kutsnashvili on closing the occupation line with South Ossetia. Available from: <https://rustavi2.ge/ka/news/245920>.

Social polls in Georgia indicate a negative attitude towards Russia among citizens, although some respondents (from 12% to 17%) express a positive opinion. 65% of respondents support dialogue with Russia. According to 77% of respondents, Russia poses the greatest threat to Georgia (Figures 1, 2).

In Georgia, attitudes toward the Russian government and Russians are different, especially before the events in Ukraine. In social surveys, respondents are asked about their attitude toward the country, not the people, which serves as an indicator of Georgians' attitudes toward the Russian government and Russians. This is also confirmed by the absence of domestic conflicts between Georgians and Russian visitors.

Regarding the status of the Russian language, it is important to note that Georgia has one official language – Georgian. However, the Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civic Equality is actively working to preserve and disseminate the languages of the various peoples living in the country. Russian remains one of the most common: in Tbilisi, 91% of respondents speak Russian, in large cities – 92%, in villages – 82%<sup>23</sup>.

### Trade and economic relations: trade, business and sanctions

In a situation of confrontation in the global political arena, issues of economic interaction between Georgia and Russia acquire key importance. Analysis of data from recent years indicates the complexity of this interaction and the influence of anti-Russian sanctions imposed by the US and EU. Georgia has created a favorable environment for the functioning of foreign business, defined at the legislative level<sup>24</sup>. However, difficulties arise for Russian companies under the sanctions regime imposed by the US and EU due to the risk of indirect sanctions against Georgian companies cooperating with Russian sanctioned entities.

At the same time, in recent years, despite the circumstances, trade and economic relations between countries have been improving. Trade turnover for the first half of 2023 compared to the same period in 2022 increased by 32%, amounting to \$1.2 billion<sup>25</sup>. Russia's share of Georgia's total trade rose to 12.4%, the highest in the last 16 years.

In January–June 2023, imports from Russia increased by 31% and amounted to \$927 million. The share of imports from Russia in Georgia's total imports is 12.9% (Figure 3).

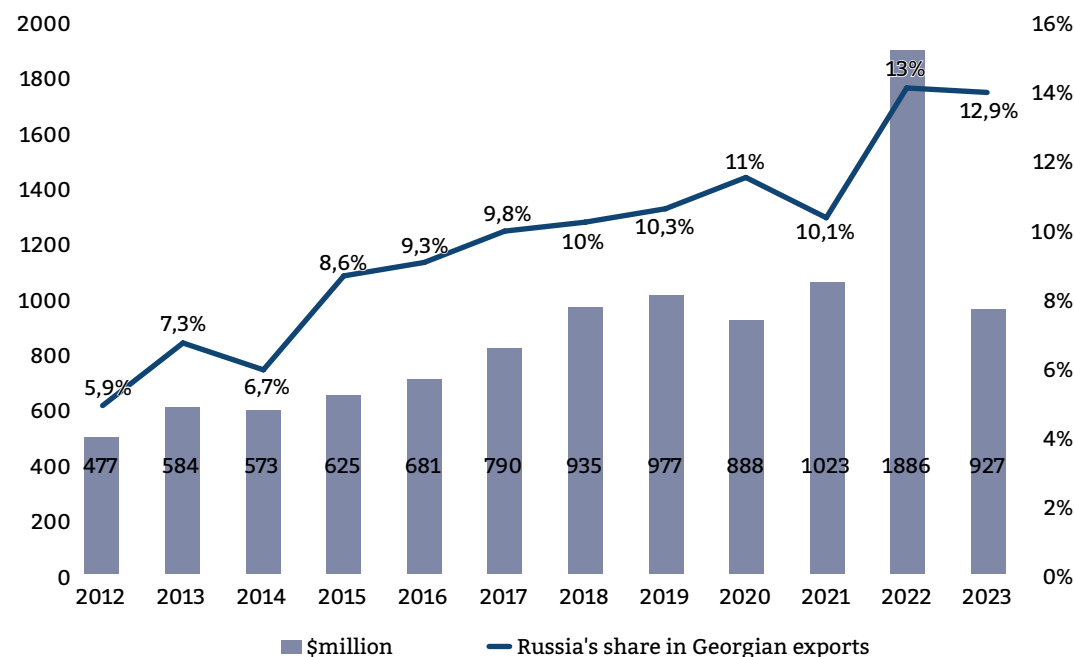
In the first half of 2023, petroleum products were the leader in Russian imports – \$321 million, followed by natural gas – \$78 million (Figure 4).

<sup>23</sup> Taking Georgians' pulse. Findings from August 2022 face to face survey. National Democratic Institute. 2022. Available from: <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Taking%20Georgians%E2%80%99pulse%20Findings%20from%20August%202022%20face%20to%20face%20survey%20%28English%29.pdf>.

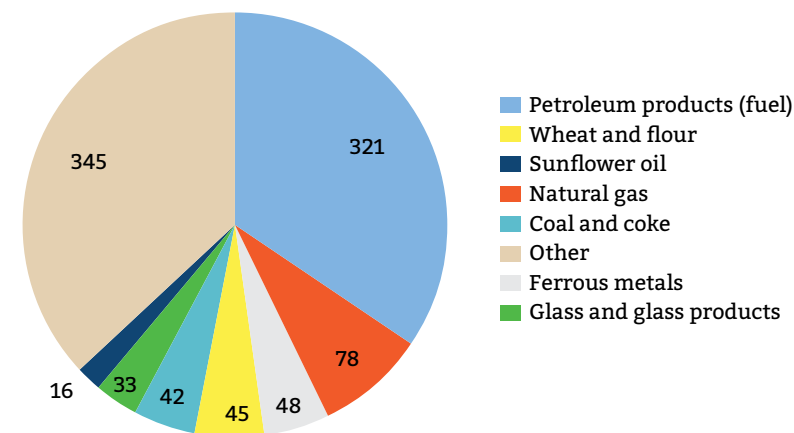
<sup>24</sup> The Law of Georgia on Entrepreneurs. Available from: <https://matsne.gov.ge/en/document/download/28408/49/ru/pdf>; Russian business in Georgia. Radio Liberty. Available from: <https://www.svoboda.org/a/ne-nuzhno-nichego-boyatsya-rossiyskiy-biznes-v-gruzii/32364929.html>.

<sup>25</sup> The National Statistical Office of Georgia. Foreign trade in goods. 2023. Available from: <https://www.geostat.ge/en/modules/categories/765/external-merchandise-trade>.

**Figure 3.** Import of Russian goods to Georgia



**Figure 4.** Import of goods from Russia to Georgia by commodity groups



Traditionally, Georgia has been dependent on imports of energy resources (electricity, gas, oil products) and baking raw materials (wheat, flour) from Russia. During the reporting period January–June 2023, the volume of imports of wheat and flour from Russia increased by 26 thousand tons (21%), which accounts for up to 75% of wheat consumption in Georgia. Imports of natural gas from Russia also increased by 119%, amounting to 422 million cubic meters. Thus, the share of Russian natural gas in Georgia's domestic consumption increased

to 24%. Over the 6 months of 2023, the import of petroleum products (fuel) from Russia increased the most – by \$137 million (by 75%)<sup>26</sup>.

In the first half of 2023, exports of Georgian products to Russia increased by 34%, reaching \$344 million (Figure 5).

Russia's share in Georgia's total exports amounted to 11.3%, increasing by 1.3 percentage points compared to 2022<sup>27</sup>. Among exported products in the first half of the year, wine took first place, reaching \$82 million, which is 41% more than in the same period last year. The Russian market share in total Georgian wine exports also increased and reached 65%, the highest since 2013, following the return of Georgian wine to the Russian market. Soft drinks came second with \$66 million, followed by passenger vehicle exports with \$53 million. (Figure 6).

In 2023, developing trade and economic relations became more difficult when the EU and the US began to strengthen anti-Russian sanctions and put pressure on the Georgian government due to the improving economic dynamics between the countries.

The sanctions regime that American and European politicians are trying to implement affects Russian-Georgian trade relations, since Russia's disconnection from the international payment system and sanctions against Russian banks and companies affect the prospects for cooperation with them by Georgian banks and entrepreneurs who fear indirect sanctions. The sanctions affected not only the banking and business environment in Georgia, but also directly affected a profitable industry in trade relations between countries – on September 26, the export and re-export of European cars from Georgia to Russia and Belarus was banned<sup>28</sup>.

Representatives of the ruling party and a number of experts believe that sanctions against Russia will greatly harm the national interests of Georgia and hit the citizens of the country<sup>29</sup>. According to Georgian experts, if the country were to join anti-Russian sanctions in 2022, instead of double-digit economic growth, the country's economy would experience an 11% decline in terms of trade, remittances and investment.

### The humanitarian dimension of communication friendliness: the absence of diplomatic relations and the presence of so-called “red lines”

In promising youth communications in Russia and Georgia, the Russian side is often the initiator, since Russia has financial, human and other resources and can provide platforms on its territory. The initiative and formation of the agenda most often comes from Russia, and the Georgian side only participates in the events.

<sup>26</sup> Transparency International Georgia. Georgia's Economic Dependence on Russia Continues to Grow: January–June 2023. Available from: <https://transparency.ge/en/post/georgias-economic-dependence-russia-continues-grow-january-june-2023>.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Georgia prohibits the re-export of cars imported from the EU to Russia and Belarus. Civil.ge. Available from: <https://civil.ge/ru/archives/561104>.

<sup>29</sup> An expert on the effect of joining the current sanctions against Russia. Available from: <https://rustavi2.ge/ka/news/247995>; Арчил Талаквдзе про санкции. Available from: <https://rustavi2.ge/ka/news/248310>.

Figure 5. Export of Georgian goods to Russia

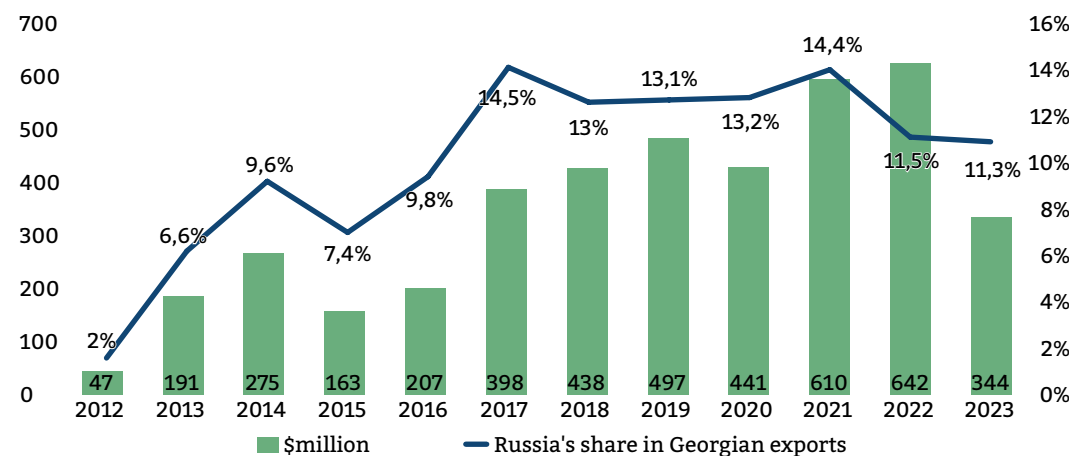
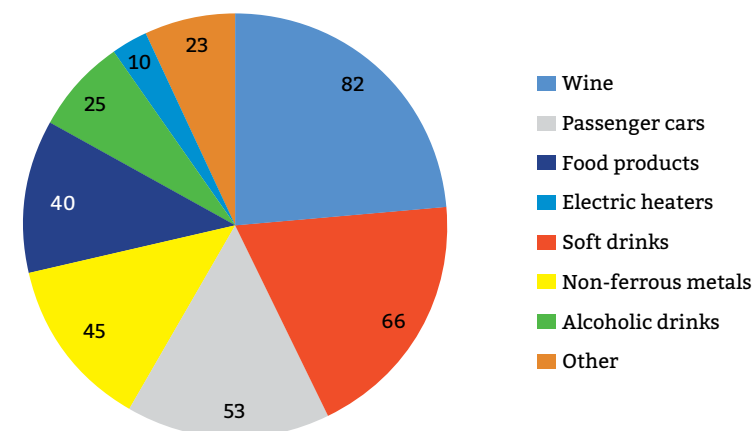


Figure 6. Export of Georgia goods to Russia by commodity groups



Various forms of youth interactions include forums, festivals, workshops, trainings, summer and winter schools. A notable event in 2023 was the summer school organized at the North Caucasus Federal University from July 2 to July 9<sup>30</sup>.

The interest of Georgian youth in cooperation and Russian projects remains small, which is explained by individual and objective factors. The events promise participants a Chatham House format, but in practice meeting materials are often not published, which is important for Georgian youth who are ready for dialogue and cooperation, but prefer to avoid public discussions in the first stages of interaction. Often access to these events is

<sup>30</sup> The North Caucasus Federal University gathers historians of the Greater Caucasus at the International Youth School. Available from: <https://www.minobrnauki.gov.ru/press-center/news/mezhdunarodnoe-sotrudnichestvo/69914/>



limited, they are not sufficiently covered in the media, and they are ineffectively organized.

In Georgian-Russian intercultural relations, it is worth highlighting such public and cultural organizations as the Tbilisi State Academic Russian Drama Theater named after A. S. Griboedov<sup>31</sup>, "Russian Club in Georgia"<sup>32</sup> and the organization of Russian compatriots "KSORS", Georgian-Russian Public Center named after E. M. Primakov.

Despite the lack of interstate relations in the field of culture, in the Republic of Georgia there are such symbolic memorial places as Victory Park, the Arch of Friendship of Russia and Georgia, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, burial places that attract the attention of residents, monuments to Russian poets, including A. S. Griboedov, in the center of Tbilisi, which is significant for Georgian-Russian relations.

An important aspect of public interaction is common memorial dates for Georgians and Russians, primarily Victory Day. In Georgia, May 9 is officially celebrated as Victory Day over Fascism.<sup>33</sup>, while in Russia this day is Victory Day in the Great Patriotic War. Discussions about this memorable date in Georgia are related to the question of the possibility of celebrating Victory Day and Europe Day simultaneously on May 8. Some part of society expresses the opinion about the need to abandon the celebration of May 9 in favor of May 8, which distances Georgia from the Russian discourse on World War II, while supporters of tradition insist on preserving the celebration of Victory Day on May 9, emphasizing the importance of honoring the memory of veterans and fallen Georgian soldiers. This is not necessarily related to sympathies towards Russia, since national identity and anti-Soviet sentiments of Georgian society often prevail. This is due to the anti-Russian and nationalistic interpretation of historical events presented in school textbooks and the lack of consensus on key historical events.

In the scientific communications of scientists from Georgia and Russia, despite the lack of formalized relations, such interaction exists. These contacts, as a rule, are initiated and supported by the Russian Federation: participation in scientific conferences, expert forums and discussions aimed at dialogue and joint research.

Scientists from Russia and Georgia interact both on the territory of Georgia and in Russia, but more often, these meetings are limited to personal contacts, which allow colleagues to invite each other to various scientific events, but do not receive systematic development. For example, Russian scientists can be invited to conferences of ethnographers and Caucasian studies at Tbilisi State University, and Georgian researchers can take part in forums dedicated to the 240th anniversary of the Treaty of Georgievsk<sup>34</sup>, academic sessions at the Primakov Readings and events of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

<sup>31</sup> The Russian Drama Theater named after A. Griboedov. Available from: <https://www.griboedovtheatre.ge/>

<sup>32</sup> The Russian club. Available from: <http://www.russianclub.ge/>

<sup>33</sup> May 9 is Victory Day over Fascism. Satellite Georgia.2023. Available from: <https://sputnik-georgia.com/20230509/9-pashizmze-gamarjvebis-dge-277475941.html>.

<sup>34</sup> International round table "Russia and Georgia: 240 years of the St. George's Treatise". Available from: <https://sfedu.ru/press-center/news/72391>.

## Conclusions

Russian-Georgian relations represent a complex sociocultural context in which political, humanitarian and informational dimensions interact, shaped by the historical, cultural and geopolitical heritage dating back to the times of the Russian Empire. The events of 2008 became a source of tension and issues of political disagreement, especially regarding the status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, are currently an obstacle to the development of cooperation between states. On the other hand, humanitarian aspects, including cultural exchange, emphasize the importance of deepening mutual understanding, despite the presence of political tensions in various aspects of sociocultural relations. In this context, the information dimension plays a key role in shaping public opinion and can both increase and decrease tensions. It is important to strive for objectivity in information campaigns to establish trust and promote mutual understanding and cooperation.

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## Contribution of the authors

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# Foreign Policy Directions of the Republic of Azerbaijan

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**Abstract.** The article examines the key directions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The main foreign policy partners of Azerbaijan (Russia, the Republic of Turkey, Iran, the USA and the European Union) were identified, and current issues of interaction with these countries were analyzed. A conclusion is drawn about the multidirectional nature of Azerbaijan's foreign policy and the desire for pragmatic economic cooperation at the regional and macro-regional levels. In the field of security, military and military-technical cooperation, Azerbaijan, in followup the 44-day war in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 and then the dissolution of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, after January 1, 2024, strengthens cooperation with the Republic of Turkey. For Azerbaijan, the importance of creating regional transport communications and intensifying economic cooperation with its closest neighbors has increased.

**Keywords:** Republic of Azerbaijan, foreign policy, economic cooperation, military cooperation of Azerbaijan, transport corridors, Nagorno-Karabakh

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## Introduction

The Republic of Azerbaijan, due to its geographical location and historical conditions (the territory of Azerbaijan was previously part of the Ottoman, Persian and Russian empires), is located at the crossroads of civilization. Since the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan has developed as a multi-vector policy aimed at pragmatically building economic cooperation with interested parties. Based on the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement, which Azerbaijan joined in 2011, Azerbaijan's foreign policy did not aim to join military-political alliances in the medium or long term. At the same time, in the status of a newly formed independent republic after the collapse of the USSR, Azerbaijan formulated and defended its national interests in foreign policy.

The key issue in Azerbaijan's foreign policy was the resolution of the issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

In connection with current changes in the military-political situation in the South Caucasus region (fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh on September 19-20, 2023 and the signing on September 28, 2023 by the President of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic S. Shahramanyan of the decree "On the dissolution of all state institutions and organizations of the Nagorno-Karabakh republic until January 1, 2024"), as well as the early presidential elections that took place on February 7, 2024 in Azerbaijan, following which the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan I. Aliyev was re-elected for a fifth term, the analysis of the continuity of key directions of the foreign policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan is significant. Within the framework of the multi-vector foreign policy of Azerbaijan, the article examines the main foreign policy partners of the Republic and identifies the agenda for interaction between them.

## Materials and methods

Research materials: state documents in the field of foreign policy of Azerbaijan, materials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, analytical and news materials posted on the information resources of the authorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan and its main foreign policy partners.

Current dissertation research [1, 10, 12, 14–15, etc.], materials from publications in scientific journals [2–9, 11, 13, etc.], results of monitoring communication modes of post-Soviet countries conducted by the National Communication Development Research Institute were analyzed (NIIRK).

When preparing the article, methods of content analysis and event analysis were used to identify key current issues of interaction between Azerbaijan and its foreign policy partners.

## Discussion

Since the formation of the modern Republic of Azerbaijan (the constitutional Act "On State Independence of the Azerbaijan Republic" was adopted on October 18, 1991), Azerbaijan has been actively interacting with its large neighbors – Russia, Turkey, Iran. Taking into account the deepening cooperation of the Republic of Azerbaijan with Turkey, we can consider the dynamics of Azerbaijan's relations with neighboring Armenia and Georgia. In addition to the immediate regional environment of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a significant vector of its foreign policy is relations with countries outside the South Caucasus region and the Greater Middle East – the United States, the European Union.



## Interaction between Azerbaijan and Russia

Russia has traditionally been a significant foreign policy partner for Azerbaijan. The countries are connected by a common land border, a maritime border in the Caspian Sea (the length of the border between Azerbaijan and Russia is 390 km), a common historical past (Azerbaijan was part of the USSR, the territories were part of the Russian Empire following the results of the Russian-Persian wars and the conclusion of Gulistan (1813) and Turkmanchay (1828) peace treaties<sup>1</sup>).

Starting from the collapse of the USSR and up to the present, the agenda of regular foreign policy negotiations between Russia and Azerbaijan at the bilateral level and in a multilateral format is: delimitation of maritime borders and oil and gas resources of the Caspian Sea, economic activity in the Caspian Sea (convening regular Caspian summits with the participation of heads of coastal Caspian states – Russia, Kazakhstan, Iran, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan; meetings at the level of the foreign ministries of the Caspian states. The last meeting of the foreign ministers of the Caspian states took place on December 5, 2023<sup>2</sup>, and the last Caspian summit was in June 2022 in Ashgabat); settlement of the conflict around the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, in which Russia at all stages played an active mediating role both as part of the OSCE Minsk Group and at the level of regular trilateral negotiations between the heads of state of Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan and bilateral negotiations between the heads of state of Russia and Armenia, Russia and Azerbaijan. From November 2020, a Russian peacekeeping contingent was introduced into Nagorno-Karabakh following the Statement of the Heads of State of Russia, Azerbaijan and Armenia dated November 9, 2020. In 2023, under the new conditions of the dissolution of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, Russia continued its mediation in the difficult process of normalizing relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan with the prospect of signing a peace treaty between them<sup>3</sup>. Russia is developing trade, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation between Russia and Azerbaijan.

In 2023, trade and economic cooperation between Azerbaijan and Russia developed. According to the State Customs Committee of Azerbaijan, from January 1 to November 30, 2023, Russia took first place in imports to Azerbaijan (18.14%), second and third places, respectively, China (17.43%), Turkey (13.23%). Russia accounts for 33.09% of Azerbaijan's non-oil exports (first place), Turkey – 24.02%, Georgia – 9.88%<sup>4</sup>. The structure of Russian

1 About the country. The Republic of Azerbaijan. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Available from: [https://mid.ru/ru/maps/az/?PAGEN\\_1=28COUNTRY\\_CODE=az&](https://mid.ru/ru/maps/az/?PAGEN_1=28COUNTRY_CODE=az&)

2 On the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Caspian Littoral States. 05.12.2023. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Available from: <https://mid.ru/ru/maps/az/1919237/>

3 Comment by the official representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry, M. V. Zakharova, in connection with the Joint statement of the Administration of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Office of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia confirming the mutual intention to normalize relations and conclude a peace treaty between the two countries. 08.12.2023. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Available from: <https://mid.ru/ru/maps/az/1919806/>

4 Customs Statistics of Foreign Trade of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Reporting period: 01.01.2023-30.11.2023. State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. P. 36-37. Available from: [https://customs.gov.az/uploads/foreign/2023/2023\\_11.pdf?v=1702901673](https://customs.gov.az/uploads/foreign/2023/2023_11.pdf?v=1702901673)

exports to Azerbaijan is mainly formed by grains, wood products, ferrous metal products, food products, paper and cardboard, equipment and vehicles, fuel and petroleum products<sup>5</sup>. In terms of exports to Azerbaijan, Russia took fifth place (3.44%), the first four places were taken, respectively, by Italy (45%), Turkey (16.20%), Israel (4.40%) and Greece (4.02%)<sup>6</sup>.

## Interaction between Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey

After the collapse of the USSR, Azerbaijan developed allied relations with Turkey in the security sphere. It should be noted the cultural closeness of the two countries – the Azerbaijani and Turkish languages belong to the Oghuz group of Turkic languages; both countries are secular, with the majority of the population in Azerbaijan and Turkey professing Islam (in Turkey – Sunni, in Azerbaijan – Shiism), Azerbaijan and Turkey are members of the Organization of Turkic States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. During the conflict over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, Turkey supported Azerbaijan's position and in April 1993, among other things, blocked the land border with Armenia. In September 2010, the parties created a High-Level Council for Strategic Partnership in Istanbul<sup>7</sup>.

After the 44-day Karabakh war 2020, Turkey and Azerbaijan signed the Declaration “On allied relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan” on June 15, 2021 in the city of Shusha. In accordance with the Declaration, the parties agreed to hold joint consultations and provide each other with the necessary assistance in accordance with the UN Charter in the event that “in the opinion of one of the parties, there is a threat or aggression from a third state or states against its independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, inviolability or security of internationally recognized borders”<sup>8</sup>. Turkey and Azerbaijan also agreed to strengthen “mutual cooperation in order to increase the competitiveness of the East-West Middle Transport Corridor passing through the territory of the two countries”<sup>9</sup>. In addition to Turkey, Israel is a significant partner of Azerbaijan in the field of military-technical cooperation, in particular, the purchase of various types of weapons. As V. Sazhin notes, “over the past 10–14 years, the military forces of Azerbaijan have been almost entirely equipped with Israeli UAVs, and only in the last year (2023 – author's note) the situation

5 Interview of the Russian Trade Representative for Sputnik Azerbaijan news agency. 27.12.2023. Trade Representative Office of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Azerbaijan. Available from: [https://aze.minpromtorg.gov.ru/news?id=3b22d\\_ba1-454d-40a0-bfbb-d9400ce8535e](https://aze.minpromtorg.gov.ru/news?id=3b22d_ba1-454d-40a0-bfbb-d9400ce8535e)

6 Customs Statistics of Foreign Trade of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Reporting period: 01.01.2023-30.11.2023. State Customs Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan. P. 36-37. Available from: [https://customs.gov.az/uploads/foreign/2023/2023\\_11.pdf?v=1702901673](https://customs.gov.az/uploads/foreign/2023/2023_11.pdf?v=1702901673)

7 Bilateral diplomatic relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Türkiye. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Republic of Azerbaijan. Available from: <https://mfa.gov.az/en/category/europe/turkey>

8 №: 724/23, Press release on Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov's meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan. Available from: <https://mfa.gov.az/az/news/no72423>

9 The Shusha Declaration on Allied Relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey. June 16, 2021. The official website of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev. Available from: <https://president.az/ru/articles/view/52122>

began to change somewhat towards the diversification of foreign, primarily Turkish, sources of drones”<sup>10</sup>.

The Shusha Declaration can be considered as “the beginning of a new stage of relations aimed at deepening cooperation” between the two countries [8:860]. On January 29, 2024, President of Azerbaijan I. Aliyev received a delegation led by the Chairman of the Parliamentary Commission on National Defense of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, former Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Turkey Hulusi Akar. The parties emphasized the importance of the Shusha Declaration and, among other things, noted the importance of joint military exercises<sup>11</sup>. Türkiye also links the further normalization of relations with Armenia with the prospect of signing a peace treaty between Azerbaijan and Armenia<sup>12</sup>.

Georgia participates in infrastructure corridors connecting Turkey and Azerbaijan [2:124]. Among them are the Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum gas pipeline (South Caucasus gas pipeline), the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan oil pipeline, and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway.

### Interaction between Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Iran

The following can be identified as significant factors of interaction between Azerbaijan and Iran:

- about 15–20% of Iran’s population are Azerbaijanis<sup>13</sup>, who live mainly in the north-west of Iran [4:722], and in areas densely populated by Azerbaijanis, the Azerbaijani language is also widespread (it has no official status)<sup>14</sup>;
- the common maritime border of Iran and Azerbaijan lies in the Caspian Sea, which required both parties after the collapse of the USSR to resolve disputes over the delimitation of the southern part of the Caspian Sea, including regarding the exploration and development of Caspian oil and gas resources. Iran has signed but not ratified the Convention on the Legal Status of the Caspian Sea (2018).

Since the Second Karabakh War (2020), negotiations have been ongoing between Azerbaijan and Armenia on the delimitation of their borders, accompanied by military incidents between them, Iran opposes geopolitical changes in the South Caucasus region<sup>15</sup> – changing the borders of the sovereign states of the South Caucasus, including by force, entails particular risks for the territorial integrity of Iran.

<sup>10</sup> Sazhin V. The visit of the President of Israel to Azerbaijan – results. 08.06.2023. International life. Available from: <https://interaffairs.ru/news/printable/40745?ysclid=ism8v41id224022694>

<sup>11</sup> İlham Aliyev received a delegation headed by the Chairman of the National Defense Commission of the Turkish Parliament. The official website of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev. Available from: <https://president.az/ru/articles/view/63403>

<sup>12</sup> Political relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey. Available from: <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/relations-between-turkiye-and-azerbaijan.ru.mfa>

<sup>13</sup> The Islamic Republic of Iran. About the country. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. Available from: <https://mid.ru/Pu/maps/ir/>

<sup>14</sup> The Islamic Republic of Iran. General information. The Consulate General of the Russian Federation in Washington. Available from: [https://rasht-iran.mid.ru/ru/ob\\_irane/obshchie\\_svedeniya/](https://rasht-iran.mid.ru/ru/ob_irane/obshchie_svedeniya/)

<sup>15</sup> Iran FM meets Armenian president in Davos says Tehran advocate peace in Caucasus. 18.01.2024. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamic Republic of Iran. Available from: <https://en.mfa.gov.ir/portal/newsview/738515>

Despite the tension in diplomatic relations between Iran and Azerbaijan in 2023 (on January 27, 2023, an armed attack was carried out on the Azerbaijani embassy in Iran<sup>16</sup>), Economic cooperation remained between the parties. On October 6, 2023, a ceremony was held to lay the foundation of a road bridge and border-customs infrastructure between Azerbaijan and Iran in the area of the village of Agband, Zangilan region, in accordance with the “Memorandum of Understanding between the governments of Azerbaijan and Iran on the creation of new communication links between the East Zangezur economic region of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic through the territory of Iran”, signed by Azerbaijan and Iran in 2022 in Baku<sup>17</sup>. Transport routes connecting Azerbaijan with the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic, passing through Iran, serve as an alternative to the transport corridor through Armenia (Syunik region), connecting Azerbaijan and the Nakhichevan Autonomous Republic: Armenia and Azerbaijan have not yet reached mutually beneficial agreements on the issue of its creation and operation.

### Azerbaijan’s interaction with the United States and the European Union

After the collapse of the USSR, the import of Azerbaijani energy resources is important for the European Union (Azerbaijani oil and gas reserves are located on the shelf and adjacent waters of the Caspian Sea). The United States supported the construction of oil and gas pipelines designed to transport Azerbaijani oil and gas to the European market as part of the policy of diversifying energy supply sources, which is consistently pursued by the European Union. Azerbaijan participates in the European Neighborhood Policy, as well as in the Eastern Partnership program, without setting membership in the European Union as a long-term goal. According to the European Commission, the European Union accounts for about 52% of Azerbaijan’s trade, the share of Azerbaijan’s exports to the EU is 66%, and the share of imports from the EU is 16%. The commodity structure of Azerbaijan’s imports to the EU consists mainly of mineral fuels and lubricants<sup>18</sup>.

The United States and the European Union, along with Russia, acted as mediators throughout the settlement of the conflict over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh (the OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs are Russia, France and the United States), and then the negotiations on the relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. On January 23, 2023, the European Union decided to establish a civilian mission in Armenia with the aim of ensuring stability in the border areas of Armenia, strengthening confidence directly on the border between Armenia

<sup>16</sup> Press Release of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the results of 2023:1-2. Available from: <https://mfa.gov.az/files/Annual%20Press%20Release%20%282023%29-ENG.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> EU trade relations with Azerbaijan. Facts, figures and latest developments. European Commission. Available from: [https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/azerbaijan\\_en](https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/azerbaijan_en)



and Azerbaijan<sup>19</sup>. On December 11, 2023, the EU Council of Foreign Ministers decided to increase the number of people in the civilian mission from 138 to 209<sup>20</sup>.

Diplomatic tensions in relations between the European Union, the United States and Azerbaijan are associated with the prospects for negotiations to normalize relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia. The European Union as a whole stands for a peaceful course of negotiations and, in particular, against violations of the territorial integrity of Armenia<sup>21</sup> in conditions when Armenia and Azerbaijan are still negotiating to consolidate new borders between them and the prospects of unblocking transport corridors in the South Caucasus region after the 44-day Karabakh war (2020) and the cessation of the existence of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic from January 1, 2024.

On October 5, 2023, the European Parliament, with 491 votes in favor, 9 votes against, and 36 votes abstaining, adopted a resolution that, in accordance with the traditionally significant human rights agenda for the EU, drew attention to the humanitarian component of the conflict over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh: Members of the European Parliament condemned the military actions of Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh on September 19, 2023, after which about one hundred thousand ethnic Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh were forced to leave it. In the resolution, members of the European Parliament called on the EU to reconsider the EU's relations with Azerbaijan<sup>22</sup>.

Resolutions of the European Parliament are non-binding, but contain recommendations to the EU executive authorities. Azerbaijan did not send an invitation to the European Parliament to observe the early presidential elections (February 7, 2024). On December 26, 2023, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan declared two employees of the French Embassy in Baku persona non grata and ordered them to leave the republic within 48 hours<sup>23</sup>. As a retaliatory measure, France also declared persona non grata on December 27, 2023 and expelled two employees of the Azerbaijani Embassy in Paris<sup>24</sup>.

Azerbaijan also refused to hold a meeting on November 20, 2023 in Washington at the level of the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia<sup>25</sup> after the speech of US Assistant Secretary of State D. O'Brien on November 15, 2023 during a hearing in the US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs on the future of Nagorno-Karabakh. D.

19 EU relations with Azerbaijan. European Council. Available from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/azerbaijan/>

20 Bulletin Quotidien Europe, 2023. № 13312, 13.12.

21 Bulletin Quotidien Europe, 2024. № 13334. 24.01

22 European Parliament resolution of 5 October 2023 on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh after Azerbaijan's attack and the continuing threats against Armenia (2023/2879(RSP)). Available from: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0356\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0356_EN.html)

23 №:741/23, Press release on the designation of two employees of the Embassy of the French Republic to the Republic of Azerbaijan as personae non-gratae. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Azerbaijan. Available from: <https://mfa.gov.az/en/news/no74123>

24 Baku and Paris suffered a diplomatic scandal with an "agent accent". EurAsia Daily. Available from: <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2023/12/28/baku-i-parizh-postig-diplomaticheskij-skandal-s-agenturnym-akcentom>

25 №:654/23, Commentary in response to groundless remarks by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State James O'Brien at the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Europe hearing. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Azerbaijan. Available from: <https://www.mfa.gov.az/en/news/no65423>

O'Brien noted, in particular, that the United States insists on ensuring access to the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, and the approximately 100 thousand Armenians who left the region must be provided with reliable information about the possibility of returning to their places of residence in Nagorno-Karabakh if they do so choose. On the issue of the transport corridor, he noted that the corridor should be created only with the consent of Armenia and without the use of force<sup>26</sup>.

## Conclusion

Azerbaijan's foreign policy after the collapse of the USSR consistently developed as a multi-vector one. In the energy sector (oil and gas transportation), Azerbaijan consistently interacts with Russia, Turkey, and the European Union. Georgia acts as a transit country for the transportation of Azerbaijani oil and gas. Transport communications between Azerbaijan and Armenia did not operate until the issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh was resolved by Azerbaijan in 2023, and became the agenda of bilateral relations after the 44-day war in Nagorno-Karabakh in 2020 and then the dissolution of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic on January 1, 2024. On the key issue for Azerbaijan – the creation of a transport corridor through the Syunik region of Armenia, connecting Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, Armenia and Azerbaijan have not yet reached agreements. As an alternative, cooperation between Azerbaijan and Iran has intensified to create transport communications between the East Zangezur economic region of Azerbaijan and the Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic through the territory of Iran.

In the security sphere, in particular, in resolving the issue of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh until September 2023, and then within the framework of the negotiation process to normalize relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan interacts with the main mediators – Russia, the USA, France (in 2023 Azerbaijan negatively assessed France's mediation in this issue), the European Union. In the field of military and military-technical cooperation, cooperation between Azerbaijan and the Republic of Turkey and Israel has consistently developed. Diplomatic tension in relations between Azerbaijan, the EU and the United States in the new conditions of the military-political situation in the South Caucasus after 2020 and September 2023 is associated with the further progress and potential results of the negotiation process between Azerbaijan and Armenia on the signing of a peace treaty between the parties and, in particular, settlement of humanitarian issues that arose after the cessation of the existence of the unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. In general, the need to develop regional transport communications and intensify economic cooperation with its closest neighbors has increased in Azerbaijan's foreign policy.

26 The future of Nagorno-Karabakh. House Foreign Affairs Committee. 11.15.2023. Available from: <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/hearing/the-future-of-nagorno-karabakh/>

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# Russia and South Ossetia: Factors Influencing Cooperation in the Field of Education

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**Annotation.** The article analyzes Russian-South Ossetian cooperation in the field of education, in which great importance is paid to integration and internationalization. Characteristics are given to the official documents that make up the legal framework of this cooperation. The role of ministries and departments in the development of international educational interaction is shown. Various forms of cooperation are considered: scientific projects, the opportunity to enter Russian universities, joint Olympiads, competitions, conferences. The article pays more attention to the role of South Ossetian State University in the development of educational, scientific and social cooperation. The article reveals the role of interuniversity interaction in the development of Russian-South Ossetian cooperation. Non-governmental organizations and their projects play an important role in this process. Russian-South Ossetian cooperation demonstrates a wide range of opportunities and the growing potential for mutually beneficial activities in the field of education.

The article uses the materials of the annual monitoring of the communication regimes of post-Soviet countries. Monitoring is provided by the National Research Institute for the Communications Development (Moscow).

**Keywords:** Russia, South Ossetia, integration, education, humanitarian cooperation, interuniversity cooperation

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## Introduction

In 2023, it was 15 years since the Russian Federation recognized the state independence of the Republic of South Ossetia and established diplomatic relations between the two states. A Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance was signed between the Republic of South Ossetia and the Russian Federation. In addition to the Russian Federation, South Ossetia was recognized by Nicaragua, Venezuela, Nauru, and Syria.

South Ossetia has long-standing allied relations with Russia. Being a part of the Russian Empire since 1774, the Ossetians have established strong Russian-Ossetian relations. Throughout its historical path, Ossetia has remained a loyal ally of Russia. Many South Ossetian experts believe that being part of Russia is a historical choice. At scientific events<sup>1</sup>, dedicated to the 250th anniversary of Ossetia's entry into Russia, the transformations that contributed to the integration of the Caucasus region into the all-Russian space and the formation of a national intelligentsia and socio-cultural environment were analyzed.

Currently, the RF and the Republic of South Ossetia have more than 130 interstate, interdepartmental and intergovernmental agreements in various areas of cooperation in accordance with the long-term national interests of both countries.

Modern South Ossetia adheres to the same approaches as Russia in assessing the international situation and actions in international politics. On most foreign policy issues, South Ossetia and Russia demonstrate complete solidarity. South Ossetia is an ally of the Russian Federation in the Northern Military District and helps in the successful implementation of the military operation both with people and by regularly sending humanitarian aid to Donbass. Today, Russian and Ossetian military personnel and volunteers are fighting together on the battlefields of the Northern Military District. This allied support from the leadership and people of South Ossetia was especially noted by the President of the Russian Federation V. Putin.

One of the most important areas of cooperation is the field of education, on which the development of human potential, innovative development and competitiveness of the Republic of South Ossetia depend. Our article presents an analysis of factors influencing educational cooperation between the two countries.

## Materials and Methods

In preparing the article, regulatory and legal sources, statistical data from the Office of State Statistics of the Republic of South Ossetia, analytical materials and reports of

<sup>1</sup> The annexation of Abkhazia-Ossetia to Russia: collection of scientific papers of the International Scientific and Practical Conference. On the 250th anniversary of the entry of Ossetia into Russia, Vladikavkaz, October 27-28, 2023. Vladikavkaz: K. L. Khetagurov North Ossetian State University, 2023:360. ISBN 978-5-8336-1086-2. – EDN OBEOLG.

the Government, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of South Ossetia, information materials of the South Ossetian Research Institute named after. Zakharia Vaneeva, South Ossetian State University named after A. A. Tibilova. World Bank reports on the modernization of the higher education system were analyzed.

Publications by South Ossetian and Russian researchers were also analyzed. The conceptual approaches chosen by the authors of the article were compared with approaches to the analysis of unrecognized states (A. G. Bolshakov [3], S. M. Markedonov [16], I. K. Dzhioeva, A. V. Tekhov, S. V. Bekoev [5], M. V. Bratersky, A. S. Skriba, A. I. Sapogova [4], etc.).

Scientific research into cooperation between the Republic of South Ossetia and the Russian Federation in the field of education, although not numerous, is still being conducted (Bukulova [15], M. R. Dzagoeva [7], E. V. Dumina [8], L. P. Ermolenko [20], A. K. Kardanova [9], S. A. Kovalenko [11], Zh. G. Kochieva [15], O. A. Oberemko [11], A. A. Tuaeov [7, 15], K. A. Tskhovrebova [20], O. I. Shafranov [20], etc.). The materials from these studies were used to analyze specific factors (specific to the Republic of South Ossetia) influencing cooperation with the Russian Federation.

In identifying general factors characteristic of most countries of the world, studies in the field of globalization, internationalization, and liberalization of education systems were analyzed. The greatest influence on the author's position was exerted by works that reveal the contradictions of these trends and works arguing the need for the development of national education systems based on the strategic priorities of the country's development (M. V. Boguslavsky [1, 2], A. M. Dzhurinsky [6], P. I. Kasatkin [10], V. V. Komleva [12–14], P. N. Osipov, I. M. Sinagatullin [17], T. M. Tregubova, V. M. Filippov [18]). Foreign studies were also analyzed that consider educational cooperation as a tool of “soft power” by H. de Wit, J. Knight and others [19, 21].

When preparing the article, methods of content analysis of documents and materials of official media, event analysis of cooperation practices, and systematization of materials from previously conducted research were used. A secondary analysis of data from monitoring communication regimes in post-Soviet countries conducted by the Communications Development National Research Institute (NIIRK, Moscow) was carried out.

## Results

Analysis and systematization of processes in international cooperation of South Ossetia in the field of higher education allows us to identify two groups of factors that determine its features. Both general factors characteristic of all countries of the world and factors specific to South Ossetia have an influence. General factors include processes associated with globalization; internationalization; liberalization. Private factors are associated with the non-recognition of South Ossetia by most countries of the world; the need to increase human potential, investment in the social sphere; the need for investment

in the national education system; the need to increase the country's scientific potential; preservation of the Russian language as the language of the educational space; the need to educate a generation capable of preserving and reproducing the spirit of patriotism and love for the Motherland, fraternal relations with Russia. Let us take a closer look at both groups of factors.

### General factors common to most countries

**Globalization.** The development of economic globalization has had an impact on the formation of the global labor market, the unification of requirements for the qualifications and competencies of specialists, the unification of standards for a number of economic sectors and industries, and the service sector. As a consequence, universalization and homogenization of education systems emerged (for example, by expanding Western education standards throughout the world, increasing funding for education and science in connection with the needs of the global labor market, which is changing from a technological and economic point of view, etc.). Russia also became involved in these processes. However, at present, in the context of the globalization crisis, regionalization processes are becoming more and more obvious. There is a clustering of educational systems competing with each other. For example, the cluster of the Bologna education system, the Russian system, the American system and others of a general order, characteristic of most countries<sup>2</sup>. Turkey is increasingly promoting its education, especially within the borders of the Turkic world. In 2023, Saudi Arabia introduced a national system for assessing the performance of universities, becoming the sixth Arab country to develop its own university ranking (previously Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Iraq and Jordan did this).

Russia, having one of the most competitive and effective education systems, is actively involved in these processes. Indicators of this inclusion are internationally oriented programs and projects. For example, the priority project “Export of Education” (2017–2025) aims to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of Russian education in the international market of educational services and increase non-resource exports of the Russian Federation. Periodic reforms of the Russian education system<sup>3</sup> are determined not only by internal, but also by foreign policy reasons. Reforms of the education system of the Russian Federation were carried out in the 1990s in connection with the collapse of the USSR and new directions in the development of society; in the 2000s after the Russian Federation joined the Bologna Agreement in 2003; currently – after the Russian Federation leaves the Bologna system in 2022. In accordance with the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation “On some issues of improving the higher education system” dated May 12, 2023, a pilot project will be implemented in the 2023/24 and 2025/26 academic years aimed at changing levels of professional education.

<sup>2</sup> Komleva V. V. International competition of state policies in the field of higher education. Russia's position. Observer. 2018. №1 (336):69-87.

<sup>3</sup> The development of the export of Russian higher education: the main contradictions. Questions of political science. 2020. Vol.10. 6 (58):1899-1907.



Russian approaches to education underlie clustering within the CIS, EAEU, SCO (network universities are developing) and various consortia. South Ossetia is also included in these processes. For example, South Ossetian State University became part of the Greater Caucasus consortium (the agreement was also signed by the North Caucasus Federal University, Abkhaz State University, and the National University of Architecture and Construction of Armenia). The entry into this consortium of the University of Armenia, which has not recognized the statehood of South Ossetia, helps to expand the instruments of international contacts of the Republic of South Ossetia.

The education system of South Ossetia is integrated into the Russian one and, accordingly, follows the same changes as the Russian one. However, the pace of these changes is significantly lower than in Russia, based on the insufficient material, technical and personnel potential. In this regard, Russia's investments in the education system of South Ossetia are critical for its renewal and compliance with modern requirements for the quality of personnel training.

**Internationalization.** The national education systems of almost all countries of the world have been transformed under the influence of internationalization processes. The concept of internationalization was developed within the framework of globalizing education systems to rapidly unify educational standards and graduate competencies. The concept was mainly implemented in the higher education system. Internationalization involves a process of interaction and mutual influence between individual countries, national higher education systems, educational organizations and individuals. The result of this "exchange" is the development of joint educational programs, the implementation of international educational standards and projects, the introduction of a common teaching language, an increase in the proportion of foreign students and teachers, the adaptation of the university environment to interaction with foreign partners, etc. In a unipolar world, internationalization essentially led to "Angloization" and the expansion of the influence of the American and Bologna education systems on other educational systems. After some time, governments realized that internationalization could lead to the loss of the identity of national systems and, along with its advantages, has significant disadvantages. The disadvantages are associated with the loss of control over the competencies developed by graduates, the outflow of talented youth to other countries as a result of the implementation of joint training and exchange programs, and the introduction of ideological narratives into national education systems, sometimes incompatible with the public values and national interests of countries. Concepts of internationalization have begun to be adapted to each specific country context. As a result, we can say that education systems are currently moving from internationalization to "nationalization." Currently, the state policy of most countries, which have their own rich experience in building effective educational systems, is aimed at strengthening education for the priority tasks of the country's development, and not at ensuring the global labor market. Particular attention is paid to branches of knowledge that affect the scientific and technological sovereignty of countries and their international competitiveness. Russia is also following this path.

The influence of these trends on the education system of South Ossetia was minimal due to its weak involvement in international processes (due to the non-recognition of the Republic of South Ossetia by states competing with each other in the international educational space). The consolidation of national priorities and values of the education system is happening together with the Russian Federation. For example, when forming a state order for the training of qualified specialists with higher education, the Republic of South Ossetia is based on the needs in priority areas of development of the republic. The priorities are: economics, agriculture, tourism (especially in connection with the development of the Mamison resort complex). At the same time, the Republic did not avoid the risks of trained specialists not returning to the country.

**Liberalization.** National education systems have been influenced by the liberalization of higher education. The main idea of liberalization is to introduce market principles and reduce government intervention in education (including government spending on education), develop freedoms for participants in the educational process, introduce the principles of a "knowledge economy" and train people capable of adapting to a market economy. From these positions, international institutions have developed recommendations for Russia. The World Bank's 2005 analytical report, in addition to recommendations, also contains assessments of Russian education, stating that Russia has already achieved significant results in reforming the "successful in many respects, but inflexible, overly centralized and conservative education system inherited from the Soviet Union"<sup>4</sup>.

Trends in the liberalization of the Russian education system have manifested themselves in greater freedom of financial and economic activities of educational institutions; increasing variability (refusal of unification in education, in curricula, most of the content of which began to be determined by universities themselves); development of academic rights and freedoms of students and teachers, independence in choosing foreign and Russian partners. Education was decentralized and government spending was reduced; market principles of competition have been introduced and rules that impede the development of competition in education (in particular, freedom of choice) have been weakened. According to M. V. Boguslavsky "the innovative wave of reforming Russian education during the very controversial 1990s was carried out on an ideological Westernizing-liberal basis, which was dominated by the interpretation of Russian education as an organic part of the global world" [1:9]. Currently, the Russian education system is built on neo-conservative axiological principles. As P. I. Kasatkin notes, it is impossible to exclude the educational process from education and one cannot refuse the educational component associated with the general humanitarian cycle, which provides knowledge about national culture, spiritual and moral life [10]. Currently, Russia is significantly revising the principles of development of the educational system, based on the strategic goals of the country's development.

<sup>4</sup> Modernization of Russian education: achievements and lessons. Analytical report of the World Bank group of experts. Available from: <https://www.hse.ru/news/1163613/1123251.html>

South Ossetia also did not escape the liberalization of the educational system. In particular, the Law of the Republic of South Ossetia "On Education" 2017 introduced a number of concepts and provisions that correspond to trends in Russian education (freedom of choice, academic rights and freedoms, a combination of state and contractual regulation of relations in the field of education, inadmissibility of limiting or eliminating competition in the field education, etc.)<sup>5</sup>.

The influence of the above factors on the Russian and South Ossetian education systems had contradictory consequences. Along with the negative consequences, it cannot be denied that the processes of liberalization, internationalization, and globalization contributed to the modernization of education in new socio-economic conditions; provided an opportunity to compare the advantages of different educational systems competing at the global level; allowed to realize their competitive advantages and the need to develop educational systems from the point of view of national interests and priorities.

### Private factors characteristic of South Ossetia

The integration of the educational system of the Republic of South Ossetia into the educational space of the Russian Federation is due to a number of factors specific to the Republic.

**Non-recognition of the statehood of South Ossetia by most countries of the world.** Interstate cooperation of the Republic of South Ossetia in the field of education is limited by its status as a partially recognized state. Of the educational systems of countries that have recognized the Republic, only the Russian system is of high quality and competitive, taking into account modern requirements for the training of specialists. The Russian Federation is a major provider of educational services at the international level (the Russian Federation ranks 6th in the world in terms of the number of foreign students). In fact, the education sector of South Ossetia is integrated into the educational space of Russia. Integration processes with Russia are supported by legal acts in the field of science and education – treaties and agreements. Since 2017, an intergovernmental agreement on mutual recognition of education, qualifications and academic degrees of the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia has been in force. For the Republic, cooperation with the Russian Federation not only provides an opportunity to improve the quality of its education, but also to solve more complex problems, first of all, expand international contacts by establishing connections with educational institutions of friendly countries. In essence, an additional tool for promoting the Republic at the international level is emerging. For example, through the university consortium "Greater Caucasus", the Union State of Russia and Belarus, the participation of South Ossetian State University in the work of the Eurasian Association of Universities, the development of cooperation with Russian universities that have many foreign partners.

<sup>5</sup> The Law of the Republic of South Ossetia "On Education". Adopted by the Parliament of the RSO on January 30, 2017. № 101. Available from: <https://parliamentrso.org/node/1299>

**The need to increase the human potential of the Republic and invest in the social sphere.** It is about developing opportunities for education and self-development. The development of the Republic depends on the quality of human potential (education, health, activity, creativity, ability to work of the population). Confirmation that adequate conditions for the development of human potential are still insufficient is the high level of migration from South Ossetia, especially among young people<sup>6</sup>. The need to solve these problems determines the fact that the Russian Federation has become involved in the process of training personnel for South Ossetia. Every year, the Government of the Russian Federation allocates quotas for foreign citizens to study at Russian universities, including South Ossetia. In addition, several relevant departments and organizations in South Ossetia form government orders and send citizens to Russian universities to train qualified specialists with higher education. Since 2015, school graduates in South Ossetia with Russian citizenship can take part in the Unified State Exam throughout the Russian Federation. If they pass successfully, then they can count on admission to Russian universities. Cooperation with Russia allows us to solve the most important problem of South Ossetia – the shortage of qualified personnel. During the period from 2003 to 2019, more than 2,000 South Ossetian graduates became students of the best universities in the Russian Federation.

In 2023, direct partnerships and network interactions developed between organizations carrying out educational activities in the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia, including advanced training for teachers, specialists, psychologists and professional retraining of speech therapists, for example, under the program of the North Ossetian Republican Institute for Advanced Training of Education Workers<sup>7</sup>.

The South Ossetian State University named after A. Tibilov, which is the scientific, educational and cultural center of the Republic, plays a major role in the development of human potential in South Ossetia. The University has signed more than 70 cooperation agreements with leading universities of the Russian Federation. These include Lomonosov Moscow State University, Bauman Moscow State Technical University, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia and others. Within the framework of the concluded agreements, experience is exchanged, various events, scientific and practical conferences, and advanced training of university employees are held (at Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, the State Medical Institute, the Institute of Integrated Programs of Higher and Postgraduate Education of Pyatigorsk State University, etc.). The agreements signed with leading universities of Russia make it possible to improve the level of educational, methodological and scientific training of teachers and students of South Ossetia. Every year, a group of university employees undergoes advanced training courses at the Institute of Integrated Programs of Higher and Postgraduate Education of Pyatigorsk State University in various

<sup>6</sup> Doroshenko S. V., Jabiev V. V. Demographic development of the Republic of South Ossetia: trends, risks, strategic priorities. *Regionalism*. 2023. Vol. 10; 4:29-48.

<sup>7</sup> Federal Service for Supervision of Education. Available from: <http://obrnadzor.gov.ru/novosti-regionov/respublika-severnaya-osetiya-alaniya-ministerstva-obrazovaniya-i-nauki-severnoj-i-yuzhnoj-osetij-podpisali-memorandum-o-namereniyah>

modules. The university staff actively participates in Russian scientific conferences and publishes in Russian publications.

For the development of human capital, education and, in general, society, the Republic “needs a socio-economic policy of the state, determined by a set of verified methods that contribute to improving the quality of life of the population, since the existing model of economic growth, which is 85% dependent on Russian investment, cannot contribute to the effective growth of the economy of the Republic of South Ossetia”<sup>8</sup>. In this regard, what is needed is not just investments, but consultations on the most optimal models for the country’s development and strengthening of human potential.

**The need for investment in the national education system of the Republic of South Ossetia.** To develop the education system, we need, at minimum material resources, human resources, modern teaching technologies, textbooks and educational and methodological developments. The state budget of the Republic of South Ossetia provides for an increase in spending on education<sup>9</sup>, however, these funds are not enough. Russia provides assistance in all necessary areas of educational development, including the renovation of premises, the acquisition of modern equipment, the provision of textbooks, advanced training, etc. The creation of socio-economic conditions for the development of education is facilitated by an agreement with the Russian Federation on promoting the implementation of the State Program for Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of South Ossetia for 2022–2025<sup>10</sup>.

Russia is also making a great contribution to the digitalization of education and the formation of the basis for the digital economy. With the support of Russia, the Republic of South Ossetia began implementing a large-scale project – the creation of innovative IT projects in South Ossetia (including the development and implementation of a state program for the development of the digital economy). At the same time, some experts note the problem of the lack of high-speed Internet, which hinders this project. “There are only two cities in the region (Tskhinvali and Kvaisa). The remaining populated areas of the country, including small ones, are either villages or ancient villages, mountainous areas, where rural residents do not have the opportunity to use modern communication services. This is where high-speed Internet is required” [8]. At this stage, Russia is the only and major investor in the formations of South Ossetia.

**The need to increase the country’s scientific potential.** Agreements in the field of science with Russia, Russian scientific organizations and foundations are considered

<sup>8</sup> Dmitrichenko L. I., Chausovsky A. M., Dzhioeva I. K. The concept of transformation of the economic system of the Republic of South Ossetia: the main directions of implementation. Bulletin of the K. L. Khetagurov North Ossetian State University. 2023;4:152. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.29025/1994-7720-2023-4-149-159>

<sup>9</sup> Statistical collection for January-September 2023. Republic of South Ossetia:86. Available from: <https://ugostat.ru/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/spravochnik-yanv-sent-2023-novyj.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation dated June 15, 2022 No. 1558-r “On signing an Agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of South Ossetia on assistance in the implementation of the State Program for Socio-Economic Development of the Republic of South Ossetia for 2022-2025.

as a guarantor of the development of the scientific potential of South Ossetia. Currently, the only scientific institution in South Ossetia engaged in research activities is the South Ossetian Research Institute named after Zakharia Vaneeva. It was created on the basis of the South Ossetian Scientific and Literary Society established in 1922. The founding day of the “Scientific and Literary Society” (February 1) is the state National Science Day of South Ossetia.

The South Ossetian Research Institute is actively developing cooperation with leading scientific institutions of a similar profile in Russia and a number of other countries. South Ossetian scientists maintain close ties with the North Ossetian Institute for Humanitarian Research. V. I. Abaev, North Ossetian Institute of History and Archeology, Vladikavkaz Scientific Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Abkhaz Institute for Humanitarian Research named after. D. Gulia, Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of World Literature named after. Gorky Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Archeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Autonomous University of Barcelona, etc.

Scientists of the Republic take part in Russian scientific events, in particular, in 2023 – in the XV Congress of Anthropologists and Ethnologists of Russia.

The development of the scientific potential of South Ossetia is facilitated by a Cooperation Agreement with the Russian Foundation for Basic Research (2009). Over 15 years, 110 projects were implemented, 80 of them jointly with the Russian fund, 30 on a republican scale. Such cooperation is an effective support for fundamental scientific research, a quick and simple way to implement scientific tasks, creates conditions for the integration of South Ossetian and Russian science, the development of common scientific approaches and interpretations, and an increase in the interest of scientists and scientific organizations. But there is a downside – the “grant” system leads to a gradual reduction in that part of the scientific community that remains outside the system and does not stimulate independent scientific initiatives well. From these positions, along with Russian scientific grants, in the near future it would be advisable to develop a concept for the scientific policy of South Ossetia with the aim of developing the country’s scientific potential, information bases (scientific libraries, archives, museums, etc.), creating conditions for the development and relevance of young scientific personnel, scientific support for management decisions and projects of the Republic.

Thus, the scientific community of South Ossetia is integrated into a single scientific space with the Russian Federation. Russia helped the scientific sphere of South Ossetia to overcome the period of stagnation and begin its revival. To continue this process, it is necessary to determine the foundations of the scientific policy of the Republic, to specify the directions and targets for the development of the scientific sphere.

**Preservation of the Russian language as the language of the educational space.** The basis for the integration of educational spaces in South Ossetia and the Russian Federation is the Russian language of instruction. According to the national statistical

services of the CIS, the number of schoolteachers of Russian language and literature (in post-Soviet countries) is 83.3 thousand people. The largest share of them falls on South Ossetia, Armenia and Abkhazia. One of the indicators of the quality of school education and knowledge of the Russian language is the increase in the number of students taking part in Russian Olympiads and competitions, in which they achieve good results. Since the entire territory of South Ossetia does not have the same knowledge of the Russian language, in 2023 in the Leningorsky district (where a significant part of the population does not speak Russian) a Center for Open Education in Russian was opened. Residents have access to both entry-level courses and advanced programs designed for those who subsequently want to enroll in a Russian university.

South Ossetian State University became part of the Greater Caucasus consortium, which involves the development of scientific, educational, cultural and humanitarian cooperation in the field of studying and teaching the Russian language in South Ossetia. A decision was made to implement projects to teach Russian literature and language, including with the help of IT technologies.

Scientific publications of South Ossetia are published in Russian, incl. "Russian Word in South Ossetia", contacts are maintained with Russian scientific and educational centers.

One of the significant events in the development of humanitarian ties between South Ossetia and Russia was the opening of the Russian Center in Tskhinvali. The center was created based on South Ossetian State University on the initiative of the rector of the university V. Tedeev with the support of the Russian Embassy in South Ossetia and the representative office of Rossotrudnichestvo. The Russian Center is an international project created by the Russkiy Mir Foundation in collaboration with leading educational and educational structures in different countries. A network of Russian centers is being created to promote the Russian language and popularize Russian culture, disseminate knowledge about Russia. At the center they not only study the Russian language, but also gain access to Russian online libraries, are acquainted with Russian art, Russian films, participate in a variety of cultural events and meetings with interesting people<sup>11</sup>.

The Republic hosts Days of Slavic Literature and the Russian Language, the international festival "Ossetia – Russia: Common Cultural Heritage", numerous exhibitions and anniversaries of Russian writers and poets, the organization of mass dictations, concerts of famous Russian masters of the performing arts, film festivals, tours of creative groups in the Russian Federation. South Ossetia, at the invitation of the Committee of Press and Mass Communications of North Ossetia, takes part in the book fair in North Ossetia and in Moscow on Red Square; the best works of South Ossetian writers are presented at the stands.

**The need to educate the younger generation.** The youth of South Ossetia takes an active part in forums held by the Russian Federation: the All-Russian Forum "Russia

<sup>11</sup> Rector of South Ossetian State University on cooperation with NGOs and the status of the Russian language. Available from: <https://www.kavkazsky-pozitiv.com/post/ректор-югор-о-сотрудничестве-с-нко-и-статусе-русского-языка/>

is a Country of Opportunities", the All-Russian Youth Educational Forum "Tavrida", the North Caucasus Youth Forum "Mashuk", the Interregional Youth Forum "Native Harbor", the International Youth Educational Forum "Eurasia", All-Russian Forum of Youth Self-Government Bodies "Youth Team of the Country", "International Volunteer Forum", "International Festival-Competition of Russian Culture "Origins", etc. Representatives of the youth of South Ossetia take part in seminars in the following areas: social design, increasing the competence of workers in the field of youth policy, international cooperation, etc. In 2024, 150 people from South Ossetia take part in the World Youth Festival in Sochi.

The talented youth of South Ossetia actively participates in Russian competitions, festivals, scientific and practical conferences: for example, the scientific and practical conference "Kolmogorov Readings", the Shegren International Student Readings, the Zvezda Engineering Olympiad, the international "Caucasian Mathematical Olympiad", the international summer project school "Zond" on the basis of the children's technology park "Kvantorium" in Vladikavkaz (as part of the all-Russian project "Campus of Youth Innovations"), the All-Russian festival "Christmas tree "Cossack Circle". In February 2020, schoolchildren from South Ossetia became prize-winners of the V All-Russian competition in mental arithmetic. 520 talented children from 23 Russian cities took part in the competition in Moscow. 11 children performed from South Ossetia.

At the invitation of the Russian Children's Fund, schoolchildren from South Ossetia visit Moscow and take part in events dedicated to International Children's Day. The "I Want to Believe" Foundation introduces children to Orthodox values shared by the population of South Ossetia. According to established tradition, schoolchildren from South Ossetia are invited to the Kremlin Christmas tree in Moscow.

Positive dynamics are observed in the field of children's recreation; for the third year now, about 100 children from South Ossetia have visited such largest children's centers as "Artek" and "Orlyonok". For the first time, "South Ossetia Day" was organized in "Artek". Schoolchildren from various parts of South Ossetia demonstrated to the audience the cultural achievements of their native land.

The demand for youth communications is high from both South Ossetian and Russian youth. The opportunities that Russia creates for South Ossetian youth are a condition for future fraternal relations and a condition for the development of the human potential of the Republic

## Conclusions

Being in a single educational space with the Russian Federation, the South Ossetian education system is undergoing the same changes as the Russian one. Cooperation with Russia provides enormous benefits to the country for inclusion in innovative projects and programs, projects for the development of children and youth and improving the quality of personnel for South Ossetia. The most effective instruments of cooperation are programs and projects developed at the state level, as well as interschool and interuniversity agreements



and contacts. Joint projects with Russia, Russian investments in schools, universities, and science made it possible to overcome post-war stagnation.

At the same time, the Republic of South Ossetia, like Russia, is faced with new challenges for the education system related to the development of new technologies. We are talking about the digitalization of education, the influence of the ChatGPT neural network on school and university education, and the training of personnel for high-tech sectors of the economy. The second group of challenges is associated with cognitive wars, under the influence of which the consciousness, especially of young people, changes, and their behavior becomes radicalized, and their values change.

In this regard, a qualitatively new stage of cooperation between the two countries is predicted, aimed at creating conditions for the technological development of the education system and new models of educational work with youth.

It is advisable to train specialists with a focus on priority sectors of the economy stated in the State Program of Socio-Economic Development for 2022-2025, for example, to create competitive agriculture focused on environmentally friendly products, or the creation of tourism clusters.

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# CHANGING SOCIETY

Social Structure

Social Institutions and Processes

*Elements of the archaic order “live” and “behave” differently now in different national cultures... and manifest themselves differently in different spheres of public life and activity.*

**V.K.Egorov**

On the Actualization of Archaics

*...The majority of Armenian users of social networks, namely 60%, express distrust of the information received from this source. 32% of respondents trust social networks in certain cases.*

**A.A.Karapetyan**

Popularity of Social Networks Among Armenian Users

*On the one hand, diplomatic relations have been severed, the Georgian-Russian conflict on the issue of Abkhazia and South Ossetia has not been resolved, Georgia supports Ukraine's side in the Northeast Military District, Russia has been declared an aggressor, Georgia's partners and allies are countries unfriendly to Russia, Georgia is striving to join the EU and NATO. On the other hand, trade turnover between the countries is growing, business contacts are developing, air traffic has been restored, church communications continue, civil communications are supported, Georgian youth are studying at Russian universities, including under Russian Government quotas.*

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Social processes in Modern Georgia: Is There any Potential for the Development of Russian-Georgian Cooperation?

RUSSIA & WORLD: SCIENTIFIC DIALOGUE

**РОССИЯ  
И МИР**  
НАУЧНЫЙ ДИАЛОГ

# On the Actualisation of Archaics

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**Abstract:** The article examines the dominant methods in Russian humanities for understanding the phenomenon of actualization of the archaic. Some researchers, when analyzing the archaization of modern societies from the perspective of political science and history, philosophy of history, politics, culture and religion, put forward concepts that focus on the search for key factors that determine the development trends of almost all countries, peoples, and civilizations. At the same time, for example, A. S. Akhiezer and B. M. Kondorsky proceed from non-coinciding basic foundations. More and more experts believe that it is necessary to consider the actualization of the archaic, taking into account the uniqueness of their historical, cultural and civilizational development. Among the authors adhering to this research, philosophical paradigm, it should be noted V. G. Fedotov, A. A. Belomytseva, V. B. Zemskova, A. V. Rubanova, A. P. Sitnikova, M. S. Uvarova and others. A study is underway of the specifics of transformation and modernization of cultural heritage values, including archaics, in politics and economics, in the social sphere, and the influence of ethno-confessional and civilizational characteristics of various regions on these processes. Reflections and conclusions formulate a vision of the most promising ways of developing the phenomena under consideration.

**Keywords:** archaic, cultural heritage actualisation, politics, civilizational and national peculiarities

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## Introduction

The problems of the archaic, as well as the essence and characteristics of what is called the archaization of modern societies, are actively discussed in the scientific community and are concentrated in the political discourse too. Among the pressing scientific and practical issues of “archaic” problems, there are those that require special attention. Firstly, appeals to various problems united by the concept of updating the archaic, as if “by inertia”, are often captive of the initial negative interpretation, secondly, many ideas that invite in-

depth research are essentially ignored, the main thing is that development is required, understanding of concepts based on a panoramic civilizational-country approach to what is included in this thematic field.

## Materials and methods

The article discusses the ideas and concepts of philosophers, cultural scientists, sociologists, political scientists, historians, religious scholars, and economists devoted to the problems of the archaic, cultural and historical heritage, and various interpretations of the actualization of these phenomena. The theoretical and methodological basis of the work was the general scientific principles of studying the past and present of culture, social reality, a systematic approach, methods of comparative analysis, etc. It should be emphasized our commitment to the principles of historicism, historical and philosophical analysis, methods of hermeneutics, structuralism, logical and critical analysis.

## Discussion

The need for cultural-national, civilizational, regional (historical-cultural-geographical) “dimensions” of historical development and modern problems arising from the past is well understood by specialists. There is no shortage of examples from the past illustrating certain judgments, since the dialogue between the past and the present fills the lives of individuals, social groups and communities, peoples and countries. However, the interpretation of phenomena associated with the actualization of the archaic is almost invariably politicized. As for the “models” of updating cultural-historical inheritance, experts justifiably conceptualize it as follows: “evolutionary, indicating the growth of diversity and differentiation of cultural patterns, or wave (discrete type of inheritance), when interest in certain objects of the past either increases or falls on a scale from complete oblivion to maximum interest” [19: 13] In reality, of course, there are various modifications of them.

It should also be emphasized that this subject field is closely intertwined with the consideration of such phenomena as archetypes, mentality, language, codes and cultural memory. There are many publications devoted to the study of these phenomena [1]. An invitation to a more in-depth study is contained, for example, in the reflections of M. Yu. Gurova and M. Yuan on the essence and manifestations of the phenomenon of cultural codes: “<...> a cultural code can be understood as a system of archetypes of the collective unconscious of a culture, and as a system of experiences meaningful in a culture, and as a system of stable artistic techniques and mnemonics” [7:156]. But the judgments of I. A. Nikolaychuk, T. S. Yakova and M. M. Yanglyayeva: there is the possibility of “building



hierarchical systems of cultural codes: global, regional, local, as well as the anisotropic nature of such systems.” Based on materials devoted to the study of regional, cultural and national characteristics of culture, they note: “The more regional societies have retained the features of traditionalism, the less <...> they are associated with Western civilization, the stronger the craving, personal interest in eternal feelings <...> enduring ethical metameanings” [16:51, 60]. There is a need to study and comprehend these complex and not existing phenomena in isolation.

It is generally accepted that in art history, archaic refers to the stage of development of ancient Greek art or, in general, to an early, ancient stage in the development of a particular phenomenon. But regarding the second reading, a far from idle question arises: what phenomena with their numerous modifications should be attributed to the early, ancient stages and how to qualify their modernized states and qualities? How to evaluate them if they have not been museumized, preserving almost their original properties in their current state (in various forms)? The original ones, which have come down to us from ancient times. In addition, we cannot continue to underestimate the fact that seemingly similar elements of the archaic flow into the system of traditions in different ways and are actualized in their own way in different cultures.

Until recently, the popular “archaization concept” could include the one proposed by A. S. Akhiezer: “Archaization is the result of a subject following cultural programs that historically developed in simpler conditions, in conditions of pre-state life, which do not correspond today to the increased complexity of the world <...> Archaization acts as a form of regression, where activity programs are associated with the pre-axial structure, with the dominance of the values of purely local worlds, where relationships are based on the emotions of people whose circle of contacts was very limited. Development was not their cultural value <...> Archaization is always an attempt to escape the complexity of mediation and return to the simplicity of the dominance of inversion. This phenomenon does not appear in its pure form, but is always chaotically mixed with the achievements of subsequent development and can have destructive consequences, the scale of which can grow as society becomes more complex. Archaization embraces thought, mass practical action <...> Archaization moves from the form of culture to the form of mass social behavior... It can take the form of archaization of the culture of individual elite groups, including the ruling elite <...> The clash of archaization and progress occurs primarily between cultural values, forms of lifestyle <...>, oriented either “to statics” or “to dynamics”, etc. The special importance of myth-making, the spread of prejudices, the formation of “hybrid forms of culture”, “artificial myths (ideologies)” are also noted “in politics, economics, public life, science” [4:90-91, 93-95, 97-99].

The “model”, built on the presence in history of almost everything that defines “reference points” (“pre-state life”, “pre-axial culture”) is attractive and logical in its own way. It is presented by the author mainly “based on” his reading of Russian history. When applying the “matrix”, based on the interpretation of the phenomenon of “pre-state life”, to the historical development of other countries and regions, problems arise related to its conceptual incompatibility with various “pre-state” histories, features of acquiring

statehood, etc. It is axiomatic that there is great cultural and civilizational diversity in the formation, development, transformation of the very phenomenon of statehood in the East and West, in the North and South, in the colonial metropolises and among colonized peoples. And the noted enlarged historical-geographical and cultural-civilizational areas are not uniform within themselves.

Such a “reference point” as pre-Axial history and culture looks more reasonable. Introducing this concept, “K. Jaspers called the era of VII-II BC the axial time of world history (in the territory from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic), assessing it as a watershed between the inertia of pre-Axial traditionalism and the awareness of the possibility of independent value choice with simultaneous responsibility for it <...>. A new social phenomenon has become the denial of the extremely strict requirements of a tribal, ethnic or sacred community and an appeal to a person to overcome the inertia of the established practice of life, to make a value choice himself <...>” Noting these well-known provisions, A. V. Rubanov rightfully draws attention to the fact that the origins of new value orientations should be sought in Zoroastrianism, in ancient Indian philosophy, in Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, in Greek philosophy and then in Christianity and Islam. “The new life guidelines formulated then became the basic value coordinates of human life throughout historical time and remain so for modern society” [18]. It should be noted that the imposition of “matrices” based on all sorts of “milestone turns” on the history of individual countries almost always requires clarifications and reservations. It is more fruitful to prefer thinking about the unique vectors of country, regional, and civilizational development to abstract schemes. And there are many vectors of movement towards the “highway” of the development of human civilization. And what is a “highway”?

The cultural-historical and at the same time “geographical” “angle of view” when addressing problems called archaization is present, but not focused. M. S. Uvarov was right, when analyzing domestic and foreign research on cultural geography, he wrote: “The problems of the relationship between culture and space, their interaction turn out to be extremely relevant both in the field of scientific research in various humanities disciplines (cultural studies, political science, history, philology, psychology, etc.) and in the sphere of direct practical human activity – be it the protection of cultural and natural heritage, foreign and domestic policy of the state, international relations, socio-economic development of various regions and countries” [22]. V. N. Streletsky and A. S. Gorokhov, focusing on the issue of “the relationship between ethnic and regional identity in multi-ethnic regions,” note that “Confessional geography is a new direction of cultural geography for Russia, which has acquired great relevance in the post-Soviet period in the conditions of the revival of religious life in a country characterized by exceptional complexity and mosaic of the religious composition of the population” [21]. Taking into account the spatial, ethno-national, confessional uniqueness of Russia, many observations and conclusions based on domestic soil acquire broader significance, especially in dialogue with the processes occurring and growing in the modern diverse world.

V. G. Fedotova whose judgment was underestimated drew some decades ago attention to many of the problems. She formulated: “...the archaic exists in societies of



any type – both traditional and modern, as a remnant, a rudiment of past experience, a feature of the established archetype <...>” Moreover, “with all the reactionism <...> archaic principles are people’s response to not projects and programs that reach them <...> At the same time, revolutionaries and unsuccessful reformers do not take responsibility for archaization, completely attributing it to the negative qualities of the people <...> But the desecularization currently occurring throughout the world has many common reasons. Among them is globalization, which created a global market, but did not eliminate local cultures and religions and their significance for peoples. Modernizations ceased to be catching up with the West; they began to use all acceptable positive examples found both in the West and in the East. They took on a national character, taking into account local cultures. Modernizations occur in the coordinates set by the social, cultural, human and symbolic capital of the countries implementing them <...> Thus, managing archaization is managing modernization and returning the past in forms that do not destroy the present” [23:26-30, 36]. This is an essential vision of archaization options, an invitation to a discussion that is not overloaded with political and ideological stereotypes.

I would also like to draw attention to the informative article by A. A. Belomytsev. Summarizing the ideas of V. D. Laz, Ch. K. Lamajaa, V. I. Przhilensky and I. B. Przhilenskaya, he interprets archaization in a comprehensive manner: it is a reworked anti-mediation, a conflict reaction to the corresponding modernization; “an expression of desire to return to old ideas that have proven their effectiveness”; “a fairly wide range of actions in politics, management, economics, culture, which, as a rule, is interpreted as a “return to the principles of the functioning of traditional societies,” but one should “distinguish between the concepts of archaization and traditionalism,” since they “are distinguished by their appeal to different layers of traditions – the archaic and any (including archaic) respectively”; “archaization is not exclusively reactive in nature and manifests itself not only in societies with a “catch-up” economy, but also in developed countries; one should not simplify the “opposition “modernity – demodernization”, since archaization “never appears in its pure form, accompanying innovation processes to a greater or lesser extent”; “The processes of archaization should not be viewed solely in a negative way. Archaization mechanisms presuppose protection from entropic processes <...> ensure stabilization of social life on a consensus, albeit relatively more primitive basis”; “it is the preservation of the social archetype, expressed in traditional spirituality, that protects society from the destructive manifestations of archaization, while at the same time promoting successful modernization and economic prosperity of society (a striking example of this is the modernization breakthrough of the so-called “Asian tigers”); archaization is “a process that is historically inevitable, but at the same time manageable”; finally, the same modern extremism has a “double source” and should be considered “as a response to both modernization and the archaization of society” [6:68-73].

The underestimated judgments of V. B. Zemskov are also promising, also long ago she proposed to the scientific community: “Culture, mentality, consciousness at every moment of its historical existence keep all layers of the original and later created “ready” for action: archaic, traditional, modern <...> The middle member of the triad – the traditional – is

once modern, which emerged from the archaic in interaction with innovation and became normative, “holding” the system” [11:224,223]. The recent publication of A.P. Sitnikov is in line with similar approaches. His vision is based on the ideas of V. G. Fedotova, “considering archaization as something rooted in the culture and psyche of the people and coming to life during the period of radical reforms and social upheavals” and V. M. Khachatryan that “in a number of cases <...> archaization can be considered as a necessity caused by reality itself, and in this aspect it appears as a social mechanism of survival, self-preservation of society” [20:95]. In his “methodological construct,” archaization is interpreted as “one of the modes of development of a sociocultural system in the era of transformation.” The source of such processes as “archaization, traditionalization and modernization <...> is tradition, the transformation of which gives rise to these processes, considered as modes of tradition – the substance of a sociocultural system that ensures the reproduction and preservation of the culture of society. Depending on the degree of destruction of traditional foundations and the basis of society’s life and the adequacy of the innovations being introduced, their organicity to the socio-cultural roots of society, archaic, traditionalist or modernist processes dominate in it. In turn, archaization can take two main forms (modes) – rearchaization and neo-archaization. These modes arise as a result of the intersection of traditionalization and modernization processes in society <...> Everything depends on the specific socio-cultural situation and the social practices of archaization implemented in the space of socio-cultural transformation, which can be either spontaneous, irrational, unconscious, or rational, conscious in nature” [20:103]. He also introduces such a concept as neo-traditionalization. There is food for thought here, especially when projecting such approaches onto real soils, including the Russian one.

In parallel with the noted conceptual proposals, the search for “reference points”, turning points in history, including those that stimulate the revision of assessments of the past, does not stop. B. M. Condorsky wrote: “Each stage of historical development is based on a certain type of revolution: neolithic, archaic, feudal, revolutions of the New Age. Each stage was characterized by a certain type of social (in the broad sense of the word) space and consciousness <...> One of the main tasks of the revolutions was the elimination of the carriers of the “old consciousness” <...> At the same time, continuity with the previous period in a certain sense prevented further development and the level of such continuity played a significant role in holding back progress” [14:85-86]. Earlier, he wrote that the essence of his concept “lies in the fact that all revolutions in a single state constitute a revolutionary period as a system that has its own internal laws.” Such judgments, of course, have potential for further research, but one can hardly agree with such statements: the appeal to “traditional culture” in China, for example, is of a decorative nature, and in all “post-Soviet states the patterns of archaic social institutions in the 1990s had a more significant influence on processes in the economic, political and cultural spheres” [13:113, 114].

Features of the manifestation of archaization and traditionalization are also analyzed in relation to various public spheres, social institutions, and political structures [9]. Some authors rightfully focus on the fact that the processes of archaization and traditionalization are significantly influenced by the phenomenon of interaction between the unconscious

and the conscious, and any actualized phenomena have a dual nature. Apparently, there is reason to assert that, on the one hand, the unconscious enters into their essence, and on the other, the unconscious exists in them as consciously exploited qualities, as something that is influenced, controlled, and this control itself is constantly modified. As the English sociologist Z. Bauman noted, new societies are “fluid modernity”, in which there is a departure from the past and a seeming loss of identity, the acquisition of a new identity according to new “patterns”. “Submission to standards is now achieved through seduction and temptation, rather than coercion” [5:94]. At the same time, a clarification suggests itself here: we need to talk only about special types of coercion through conscious appeal to the unconscious.

All noted is related to digitalization and the problems of virtualization and interaction between the virtual and the real caused by it. However, which is not very explicable, in most cases the connection of these pressing problems remains outside the scope of discussions about the existence of archaism in the modern world, about options for archaization or traditionalization. It is known that the invasion of digitalization into everyday life occurs in various areas of personal and public life through the capabilities and characteristics of numerous actors, components of the information sphere, culture and art, etc. In this case, I will highlight among the publications the article by S. Zheng, in which reflecting on such a new form of media art as immersion, the author notes that it “bridges the gap between time and space, between the work and the viewer, between reality and virtuality” and we have before us the presence of four realities created by this type of art. We are talking about virtual reality, which refers to “computer creation and modeling of a virtual environment”, about additional reality, which differs from “virtual reality in that it must depend on the real environment”, about mixed reality, which “contains both virtual and additional reality and can be understood as a new virtualization environment that arises as a result of the merging of the virtual and real worlds” and about extended reality, which means what is created by “a combination of the above technologies” [24:378-379].

It seems that we have reached the stage of concentrated and substantive understanding of the specifics of the existence of archaic principles, traditional values in previously “non-traditional” environments. S. Zheng, he starts from the actualization of shamanic culture by modern technical means, but a wide range of phenomena of cultural and historical heritage is organically present in his thoughts: “In the process of creating works of immersion art, artists have their own understanding of shamanic culture and cannot reproduce shamanic rituals, therefore the problem arises of the inability to interpret the cultural implications and show the depth of the rich traditional shamanic culture <...> From the point of view of the spread of shamanic culture, this can lead to an incorrect interpretation of its basic elements <...> Primitive religious rituals retain some fragmentary “archetypes” and are a model for understanding the origin of things and initialization of spiritual emotions” [24:377, 382]. Are such model interpretations adequate to the original meanings, values, what is the nature of these modifications and their diverse impact on the consciousness and behavior of people in the present?

The impact of new technologies on various spheres of human life and activity, society is a huge scientific and practical field. And the issues of humanitarian and legal

response of societies, civilization to the opportunities, challenges and risks of digitalization are becoming increasingly important. I will touch upon only one aspect. Turning to the issues of the peculiarities of legal regulation of generative artificial intelligence in various countries, Li Yao, also relying on the opinion of Chinese experts, notes: “The generative AI service has a strong autonomous quality, and even if the processed data is obtained from reliable and accurate sources, the generation of false information as a result of algorithmic integration of data based on the generative AI service cannot be ruled out. Another risk is that the basic structure of generative AI data is now dominated by English-language data, and the output content inevitably has a different concept of the history and culture of non-English-speaking countries, such as China and Russia, and sometimes generates false information. In this case, the population may subconsciously change its long-term understanding of traditional culture and national characteristics after long-term exposure to false information containing value biases. If generative AI is used in cognitive warfare at the national level, it will pose a threat of undermining national sovereignty... How to combine the rule of law and innovation and promote healthy development and standardized application of generative AI is an important question facing the legislator” [15:249, 264].

Among the actively discussed problems of managing archaization and traditionalization, the problem of political dominants apparently claims primacy. There is still clarity not only with the goals, but also with the mechanisms for managing these processes and their exploitation by numerous political entities. It is more difficult with economics, since the conviction has become firmly established that we know both the general patterns of progressive economic development and the ways, forms, and methods of their development by various countries. It often even seems that economics is the most universal direction of general civilizational development, less dependent than others on “extraneous” influences, i.e., non-economic influences.

In the article by A. A. Auzan “The “Rut Effect”, the problem of dependence on the trajectory of previous development”, the famous domestic economist, based on a comparative analysis of the trajectories and development results of various countries, noted that in economic management the phenomenon of “culture relay” is of considerable importance: “Institutions, like standards, determine the choice of trajectory, and culture makes it a “stable track” and this is “a hypothesis that has some basis,” etc. [2:8, 11]. In a course of lectures published later, A. A. Auzan, analyzing how certain hypotheses and forecasts “work” in various cultural and civilizational environments, formulated it differently. The problems of sociocultural economics, in his opinion, “can be presented using five theses”: “There are economic phenomena that cannot be explained by factors other than cultural”; “From the point of view of the theory of informal institutions, cultures are values and behavioral attitudes shared by a certain community and slowly changing over time”; “Culture influences economic development, but does not determine it. The impact of culture is stable over time, but is associated with other factors.” In the whole world, in the course of historical development, “no convergence that was predicted by theoretical models occurs – divergence occurs” [3:8, 128]. And in such conclusions there are meaningful intentions for the transformation of some approaches to the issues under consideration.

Separately, the following should be highlighted: a realistic assessment of a person, various social communities, their behavior and stereotypes, national psychology, culture, traditions can only be done by remembering that the surrounding reality in all the originality of its formation, characteristic features and their shades, etc., is known and comprehended not only by scientific methods, but also by artistic ones. V. I. Vernadsky generally argued that “the separation of the scientific worldview and science from <...> human activity in the field of religion, philosophy, social life or art is impossible...” [8]. Based on this understanding, it should be said that further study of the issues discussed in the article will be more productive if their development is accompanied by reaching new horizons. Otherwise, the “stamps” cannot be overcome. M. S. Kagan rightly asserted: “The spiritual content of human existence is not amenable, in all its real completeness and integrity, to scientific and theoretical knowledge...” Art has the potential to cognition of spiritual principles in their “real concreteness, inaccessible in this existential quality of analytical thought, not only scientific physiology, but also psychological science, not only the methods of sociology, but also ethics” [12:10]. It’s all about the ability to handle the legacy of the past. As J. Huizinga beautifully formulated, history is “the spiritual form in which a culture is aware of its past.”

I will also highlight such an important aspect as studying the content of cultural policies. This is a large independent topic; I will only touch on the issue of some features of the cultural policies of different countries. Thus, in a substantive review of the Laboratory for Cultural Studies of the National Research University Higher School of Economics, it is noted that “in the field of cultural policy, more than in any other sphere of public life, there is a problem of incommensurability of national policies, due to different historically established and institutionally fixed <...> interpretation of the concept of “culture”, semantic goal-setting of cultural policy as such.” The conclusion is indicative: “Cultural policy goes beyond the usual boundaries of the field associated with traditionally understood art and creativity; programs are increasingly being formed that connect it with other spheres of social life: economics, education, politics (preserving cultural identity, ensuring equal rights of various social and cultural groups, etc.), environmental management and preservation of various types of socio-cultural communities” [10]. The dependence of cultural policy on “official philosophy”, the “roll call” of political practice, information content, etc., is beyond doubt. And options for updating the archaic, especially its elements transformed into traditions, are present in both internal and external politics and concentrated in information policy. In politics, as we know, almost everything is determined by the ideas, interests, and values that dominate in the ruling structures – in government agencies, in business, in civil society institutions, which are purposefully formed and dominant in the mass public consciousness.

Finally, one cannot help but dwell on the problems of originality, distinctive features of civilizations and their relationships. The ongoing discussions in the West around S. Huntington’s ideas about the clash or cooperation of civilizations seem indicative. It is noteworthy in them that “most Western specialists <...> do not pay special attention to his (Huntington – V. E.) author’s definition of “civilization” and do not recognize the active role of civilization in relation to the state, shifting the focus of their research to the clash of

political, economic and social interests of countries, their populations and political leaders.” This is from an extraordinary article by young researcher K. V. Rakova, which also cites the following opinion of the British scientist and former Egyptian journalist E. Aish: “The sense of national identity among the US population is not supported by centuries of history or ethnicity <...> The identity of US citizens, their collective “we” is based on political values <...> and also on ideology<...> Hence the need for an external enemy in the person of a state, region or ideology arises...” [17:24, 28-29]. And it becomes clearer why in these discussions there is no due respect for the position of their “initiator,” i.e. Huntington: “People of different civilizations look differently at the relationship between God and man, the individual and the group, the citizen and the state, parents and children, husband and wife, and have different ideas about the relative importance of rights and responsibilities, freedom and coercion, equality and hierarchy. These differences have evolved over centuries. They will not disappear in the foreseeable future” [17:22]. But it is no secret that adherence to or rejection of the values listed by Huntington most often underlies the division of countries, peoples and cultures, civilizations into modern and archaic or archaizing.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it must be emphasized once again that professing traditionalism does not mean engaging in archaization. Almost everything that stands behind traditionalism for political and ideological purposes is called archaization. Archaization is only a component of the actualization of intangible cultural heritage as a type of modernization change that is immanently present in the cultural and historical process. Elements of the archaic order exist in different ways and manifest themselves in the present in different national cultures. Traditional principles, including stable, persisting archaic principles, manifest themselves in different ways in various spheres of social life and activity. This series includes not only phenomena, without which a productive dialogue of heritage and cultural and historical experience is unthinkable, but also ideologies, “value” preferences, the actions of various quasi-cultural and quasi-religious associations, satanic organizations, and new formations grouped around “issues” of gender relations or “groups” influences” parasitizing on them, like them, etc. It should be noted that many active subjects of current socio-political activity use ideas, perceptions, tools of influence borrowed from the archaic, with the support (direct or indirect) of the institutions of modern democracy. Therefore, of particular interest is the study of the entire “archaization package” through the prism of traditional and new phenomena in the culture of national, ethnic, secular and religious, folk, mass and elite, rural and urban, in socio-demographic, professional subcultures, etc. And the coordinating role in connecting various branches of humanities to this work should apparently belong to regional studies and regional studies.

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# Popularity of Social Networks Among Armenian Users

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**Abstract.** Now there is active debate about the influence of virtual (online) communication on real (offline) communication. Do online and offline communications complement each other, or will online communication gradually completely replace real (offline) communication, including in the professional and personal life of a modern person? If people stay at home and go about their daily activities without interacting with other members of society and this suits them, then they will not make efforts to create social connections outside the online sphere, and the field of real (offline) relationships is completely or significantly transformed. The article discusses: the spread of social networks among Armenian users, online and/or offline communication preferences of Armenian users in one or another area of life, depending on age, gender and the subject of communication. As a result of the study, conducted by questionnaire, preferences were identified on the basis of which users build online communication, which determines the purposes of using social networks in Armenia. The research was carried out with the financial support of Yerevan State University according to the scientific project "Mechanisms of dissemination and consumption of fake news in social networks", 2022-2024. The article was prepared according to the International Academic Mobility Program, organized by the National Research Institute of the Communications Development for young scientists from foreign countries.

**Keywords:** virtual communication, virtual space, online and offline space, social media, social networks, users

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## Introduction

Statistics shows that there is an increase in the number of people actively participating in the communication processes taking place on various online platforms around the world, including Armenia. At the moment, there are 4.8 billion users of social networks in the world, and 150 million new users appeared in the last year alone.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, social networks, as a constantly developing field, require their periodic examination in order to identify trends, updates, development and enrichment of information in the field of recent scientific developments. In addition, for us the most important in the study of user behavior is their communicative behavior – preferences, strategy, forms of communication in the network space, including comparing it with communicative behavior in the offline space.

The article develops and presents conceptual problems of development and distribution of network communications:

- Functionality of virtual social networks;
- Statistics on the distribution and popularity of various social networks, including among Armenian users;
- Preferences and goals of social media users in Armenia;

Communicative preferences of users of social networks in Armenia when comparing online and offline communications.

The objective of this paper is to conduct a more thorough study of the users of social networks, the analysis of which may have strategic goals, such as identifying the characteristics of the audience with the help of specialists in public relations, marketing or advertising, taking into account its behavioural characteristics, formulating and positioning communication goals and developing information strategies, as well as effectively engaging new target audiences.

In this paper we will distinguish between online and offline communications. By «online communication» we mean the transmission of information through various Internet platforms both in synchronous and asynchronous context. «Offline communication», in its turn, is the transfer of information and/or various signs in real space and time during personal communication.<sup>2</sup>

According to McKenna and Bargh, online communication differs from offline communication in several key features: availability, irregularity, idealization of personality, reduced physical signals, and anonymity. These distinctive features, according to the

<sup>1</sup> Chaffey D. Global social media statistics research summary, 2023. URL: <https://www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/social-media-strategy/new-global-social-media-research/#:~:text=A%20summary%20of%20global%20social,the%20rest%20of%20the%20year>

<sup>2</sup> Lieberman A., Schroeder J. Two social lives: How differences between online and offline interaction influence social outcomes. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 2020:16–21. Available from: [https://escholarship.org/content/qt94n9w8b9/qt94n9w8b9\\_noSplash\\_293949a5e051fffc8e1fdcc9ffc168c4.pdf?t=qdtez](https://escholarship.org/content/qt94n9w8b9/qt94n9w8b9_noSplash_293949a5e051fffc8e1fdcc9ffc168c4.pdf?t=qdtez)



authors, facilitate communication and prevent the existence of barriers inherent in offline communication<sup>3</sup>.

There is currently much debate about the impact of online communication on offline communication. Are online and offline communication two complementary spheres? Or will communication in a network space gradually and completely replace real (offline) communication, including in the professional and personal life of the modern person?<sup>4</sup>

A number of studies suggest that online communication strengthens real-life relationships. If relationships are formed only through online platforms, without real communication, they remain superficial and there is a possibility that over time they may deteriorate and cease.<sup>5</sup>

Other researchers argue that online communication is a contributing factor in improving relationships that develop in the context of real communication, that is, relationships that were first established outside the Internet.<sup>6</sup>

Critics argue that online communication does not provide a real-life experience or real interaction. Research shows that people who spend more time communicating in the real world have significantly higher emotional resilience. If virtual communication becomes dominant, users will need more social support over time, as they typically experience higher levels of depression [Gross, 2002]. According to Tyler, one of the reasons for this phenomenon are social signals that cannot be received in an online environment.

So, a step-by-step picture emerges, initially emphasizing the positive aspects of online domination: comfort, security, accessibility, self-expression, the formation of new social connections, the development of communication and social skills. However, this later leads to a weakening of offline social ties, a loss of sense of reality and a lack of desire to engage in them, which can lead to depression. Consequently, social networks lose their ability to be social.

According to recent data, one third of the world's Internet users (approximately 32 per cent of all users) are young people between the ages of 25 and 34. The proportion of young people aged 18 to 24 is 18 per cent. In addition, 80 per cent of Internet users are also users of a certain social network, with a significant proportion of them using multiple social networks.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Nina V. A. The Transformation of Online Friendships into a Real-Life Context in Individuals with Social Anxiety-Development and Application of the Need to Transfer Scale. Wien. Vienna, 2015:9-15.

<sup>4</sup> König R., Seifert Al. University of Zurich Alexander University of Applied Sciences and Arts North, From Online to Offline and Vice Versa: Change in Internet Use in Later Life Across Europe, *Frontiers in Sociology*, 2020. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339334351\\_From\\_Online\\_to\\_Offline\\_and\\_Vice\\_Versa\\_Change\\_in\\_Internet\\_Use\\_in\\_Later\\_Life\\_Across\\_Europe](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339334351_From_Online_to_Offline_and_Vice_Versa_Change_in_Internet_Use_in_Later_Life_Across_Europe).

<sup>5</sup> Pallant J., Whiteside N., Aleti T., Zeleznikow J. Helpful or harmful? Exploring the impact of social media usage on intimate relationships. *Australasian Journal of Information Systems*. 2018: 4-15.

<sup>6</sup> Matook S., Butler B. Social Media and Relationships. *The International Encyclopedia of Digital Communication and Society*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2014:7-9.

<sup>7</sup> Distribution of internet users worldwide as of 2019, by age group. Available from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272365/age-distribution-of-internet-users-worldwide/#:~:text=Age%20distribution%20of%20internet%20users%20worldwide%202019&text=As%20of%202019%2C%20a%20third,aged%2018%20to%2024%20years>.

By the end of 2022, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Weixin WeChat, QQ, Snapchat, and Telegram had become the most popular virtual social networks. Not all of these social networks are widely distributed and actively used in the Republic of Armenia.<sup>8</sup>

R. Hanna and a number of other theorists point out that social media have changed the Internet from an information platform to a platform that influences users. It is therefore necessary to examine the communication strategies of users as well as the trends and characteristics associated with these strategies.<sup>9</sup>

Bauman remarked: «Most individuals use social networks to break away from reality and justify in the area of comfort, where perceived voices are echoes of their own inner voice, where the only thing that is apparent is the reflection of their own personality».<sup>10</sup>

Valkenburg and Peter (2006) conducted a study on the involvement of young people and adolescents in online communication. In addition, there are psychological studies related to the transition from virtual space to real life, which confirm the presence of psychological problems in this transition.

The authors of the article "On the Internet No One Knows I'm an Introvert" notice that one of the goals of users who turn to online communication is to overcome depression and loneliness. When it comes to social media, the voice of each user is initially of equal importance, but its further form and impact are determined by the analysis of the situation and the chosen communication strategy.<sup>11</sup>

There are several popular social networks in Russia that play an important role in the everyday communication of Russian citizens. One of the most common networks is «VKontakte», which provides many functional features including groups, audio and video recordings, as well as personal messages.

An important reason for the popularity of social media in Russia is their ability to communicate with friends and family, especially in the context of long distances, which is relevant to this country. Social media also offer the opportunity to participate in panel discussions, exchange views and share information about world events. In addition, many Russian citizens use social media to post their creative works, as well as for business activities, which complements their social dimension of economic and cultural life.

It should also be noted that social networks in Russia have become an important source of information on political events and public life. Many people use these platforms to discuss current events and express their views, making social media a meaningful tool for shaping public opinion.

<sup>8</sup> Most popular global mobile messenger apps as of October 2020, based on number of monthly active users. Available from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/258749/most-popular-global-mobile-messenger-apps/>.

<sup>9</sup> Yulia K., Erik K. Communication Strategies via Social Media. *Jönköping International business school*, 2012:30-36.

<sup>10</sup> Atanesyan A.V. The Impact of Social Networks on Protest Activities (The Case of Armenia). *Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniya* [Sociological Studies]. 2019; №. 3:73-84. DOI: 10.31857/S013216250004280-1.

<sup>11</sup> Yair A. H., Wainapel G., Fox S. Extroversion, Neuroticism, and Internet Interaction. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*. 2002. 5(2):125-128.

Thus, the popularity of social networks in Russia is due to their ability to provide communication, information exchange and public debate, which makes them an integral part of the socio-cultural dynamics in this country.

In modern Russian society, there are unique models of online communications that reflect the complex dynamics of cultural and social interactions. Research works (such as the work of A. Ivanova<sup>12</sup>) provide a perspective on the preferences of Russian users in the field of social media. According to the study, the popularity of the «VKontakte» platform remains important, personifying the central space for the exchange of information and the establishment of virtual social connections. At the same time, along with the established traditions, there is a growing interest in the use of messengers such as «Telegram», emphasizing the evolution of online communications in the Russian context.

At the same time, structured forms of communication on the Internet in Russia reflect not only social relationships but also political aspects. V.Petrov's research<sup>13</sup> reveals that social media is an important channel for the expression of public opinion and participation of users in political discussions. Users actively discuss current political events and share opinions that influence the formation of public opinion. This layer of online communication in Russia is a dynamic field reflecting the diversity of sociocultural and political aspects in modern society.

According to G. Chu and N. V. Edge, many Facebook users are convinced that their friends on Facebook\* are not only online, but also in real life are happier and more successful than they are. Thus, people tend to compare themselves to an idealized image of themselves in a virtual environment, which can harm the formation of a positive attitude towards themselves and lead to low self-esteem. This is due to the fact that in the online space such elements may be included in messages that are not available in real life, or information about other users may simply be unavailable to the user.<sup>14</sup>

It should be noted that online interaction within the family is sometimes inferior to offline interaction due to certain situations and social status within the family. This is particularly the case with regard to studying and working abroad. This phenomenon is also manifested in Armenian society, as people studying and working abroad make up a significant part of society, for them the online environment plays an important role in addition to offline communication and communication with family.

Social media now play a significant role in people's daily lives, influencing social dynamics and shaping personal identities. In this context, it is important to consider several key aspects: social networks consumption, conspicuous consumption, self-

<sup>12</sup> Ivanova A. Social Media in Modern Russia: Trends and Preferences. Journal of Communications Research. 2019.

<sup>13</sup> Petrov V. Online Discourse in Russian Politics: Social Media Analysis. Political Communication. 2020.

<sup>14</sup> \* Activity in Russia blocked at the request of Roskomnadzor, 18+ Erin V., Jason P.R., Lindsay R. Social comparison, social media, and self-esteem. American Psychological Association. Psychology of Popular Media Culture. 2014. Vol. 3 (4):206-222.

expression, the disruption and acquisition of social connections, and the fashionable social networks and symbolic capital acquired.

### 1. Social media consumption.

They have become an important tool for communication, information exchange and the creation and maintenance of social connections. In this context, the analysis of social media consumption is a topical research issue.

Social networks consumption includes a wide range of user actions. It covers reading and commenting on content, creating their own posts, participating in panel discussions, and interacting with other communicators. It is a form of social activity that influences social and cultural dynamics.

Consumption of social media can have different effect on individuals. On the one hand, it can contribute to the expansion of social circles, self-promotion and communication skills. On the other hand, excessive consumption of social media can lead to mental health problems, including feelings of isolation and addiction.

### 2. Conspicuous consumption and self-expression.

Social media also encourage conspicuous consumption when users expose their achievements, looks, lifestyles to create a certain image. This is due to the desire to gain recognition (including social) in the online community.

With the development of information technologies and the spread of social networks, the concepts of conspicuous consumption and self-expression have taken on new forms and have penetrated into the virtual space. In this context, the analysis of these phenomena on social networks is of interest for understanding the impact of digital platforms on social dynamics.

Conspicuous consumption in social networks consists of creating visual images and content to demonstrate their social status, success, and involvement in certain sociocultural practices. This includes the publication of luxury travel, expensive things, participation in prestigious events, etc.

Self-expression in the context of social networks implies the active expression of individuality through the creation of unique content, emphasizing their interests, values and ways of life. This may include posts about hobbies, cultural preferences, and visual responses to social events.

Conspicuous consumption and self-expression in social networks influence the shaping of cultural trends, fashion and success standards. They affect the perception of social reality and create new consumption norms. Moreover, these phenomena shape the image of a successful individual, which can influence the ambitions and goals of youth.

However, conspicuous consumption and self-expression in social media raise questions about ethics and authenticity in virtual space. Distortion of reality and creation of idealized images can lead to a dissonance between virtual and real «I».

Conspicuous consumption and self-expression in social networks is a complex phenomenon that influences social preferences and values. Understanding these processes is essential for the development of effective strategies for virtual communication and maintaining authenticity in online space.

### 3. Breaking up and acquiring social connections.

Social media can both strengthen existing social connections and create new ones. But they can also lead to a breakdown of real relationships if the consumption of social media goes beyond reason.

The disruption and acquisition of social connections in modern society are taking new forms as a result of the development of information technologies and virtual platforms. In this context, the analysis of these processes is important for understanding changes in social relationships.

Social disruption can occur as a result of geographic distance, changing circumstances or divergent interests. In today's world, virtual platforms provide tools for communication regardless of physical location.<sup>15</sup>

Virtual platforms also facilitate the acquisition of new social connections. They provide opportunities for communication and interaction with people who can be found on the basis of common interests, professional or cultural preferences.

These processes influence social dynamics. Virtual platforms expand the circle of communication, allowing people to find like-minded people and develop professional and personal relationships globally.

However, despite the benefits of virtual social connections, it is important to be aware of their limitations in comparison with real interactions. Real meetings and communication play an invaluable role in shaping deep and long-term relationships.

Breaking up and acquiring social connections on virtual platforms are important aspects of contemporary social dynamics. Understanding of these processes is necessary for the effective use of virtual social networks in maintaining and developing social relationships.

### 4. Acquiring symbolic capital in social networks: transforming socio-cultural dynamics.

The acquisition of symbolic capital in social networks is an important phenomenon in modern society. This process influences socio-cultural values and social dynamics.

Symbolic capital in social networks represents the accumulation of symbolic resources such as prestige, reputation, influence. It is based on creating and maintaining an image of a virtual personality that has significance and influence in a particular social group or environment.

<sup>15</sup> Shiryaev E. Virtual network as a tool of communication and social adaptation of personality. *Siberian Psychological Journal*. 2017; 64 (1):35-42 [In Russian]

This process has a significant impact on the formation of sociocultural values. Social media become a platform where users create and publish content that represents their values, beliefs and ideals. This contributes to shaping public opinion and influences cultural trends.

The acquisition of symbolic capital in social networks is changing the dynamics of social interaction. Virtual platforms provide tools for the creation and strengthening of social connections based on shared interests, values and preferences. This promotes the formation of online communities and groups where users come together around common ideas and beliefs.

The acquisition of symbolic capital in social networks plays an essential role in the formation of sociocultural values and social dynamics. Understanding this process allows you to consciously influence social processes through virtual social networks.

In conclusion it should be noted that social networks have a profound impact on various aspects of social life. They shape new consumption patterns, as well as influence the creation and maintenance of social connections. It is important to understand both the positive and the potentially negative aspects of using social media and to maintain a balance between virtual and real communication.

In this article we present the results of research of communication preferences of Armenian users in social networks, which will illustrate their approaches to the use of online and offline communication in different spheres of life, preferences and goals of social media users in Armenia.

## Materials and methods

The research was conducted in February-May 2023 by means of a virtual questionnaire survey. 400 Armenian users of the virtual social network were interviewed. The purpose of the survey is to find out the communication preferences of Armenian users in online and offline spheres, preferences and goals of social network users in Armenia.

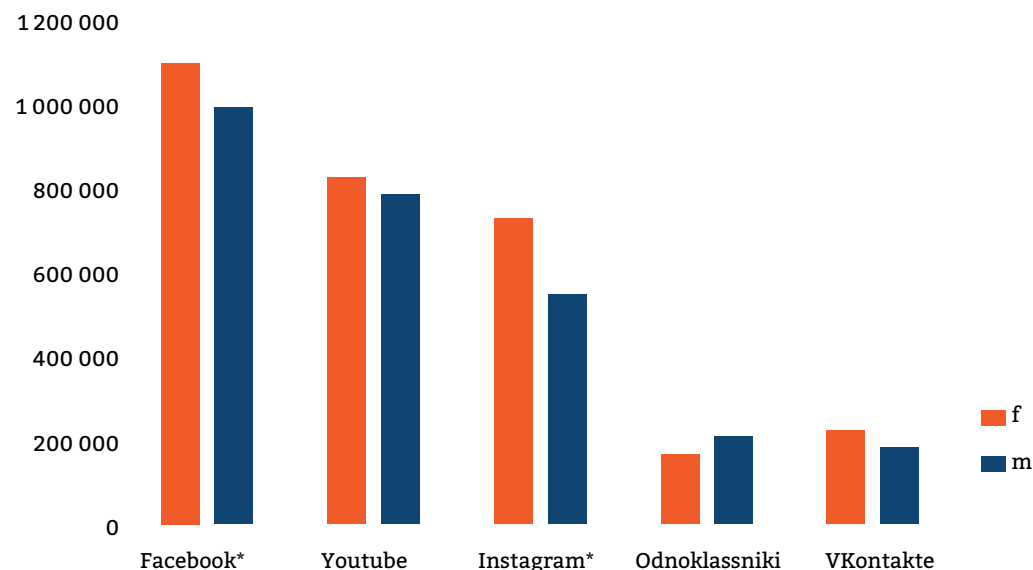
Research objectives:

- to determine the most popular social networks among users in Armenia;
- to find out the preferences of Armenian users in online and/or offline communication in different spheres of life, taking into account age, gender and communication topics;
- to find out the peculiarities of the communicative preferences of Armenian users of social networks.

## Discussion

Based on a number of factors, such as the prevalence of social networks in Armenia, the representation of Armenian users, their functional characteristics, advantages and limitations, country of origin, etc., the following virtual social networks have been



**Figure 1. Gender Representation of Armenian users in social networks**

widely represented in Armenia: «Facebook»\*, «Odnoklassniki», «Instagram»\*, «YouTube», «VKontakte», «TikTok».

The popularity of social networks in Armenia is an interesting aspect of the study of modern digital society. It should be noted that our research has shown that Russian social networks are not dominant in this country. Despite the large number of users of Russian social networks, Armenian users prefer alternative platforms for social interaction.

Facebook\* is the most popular social network among users in Armenia. The majority of respondents were users of Facebook\* or simultaneously users of several social networks.

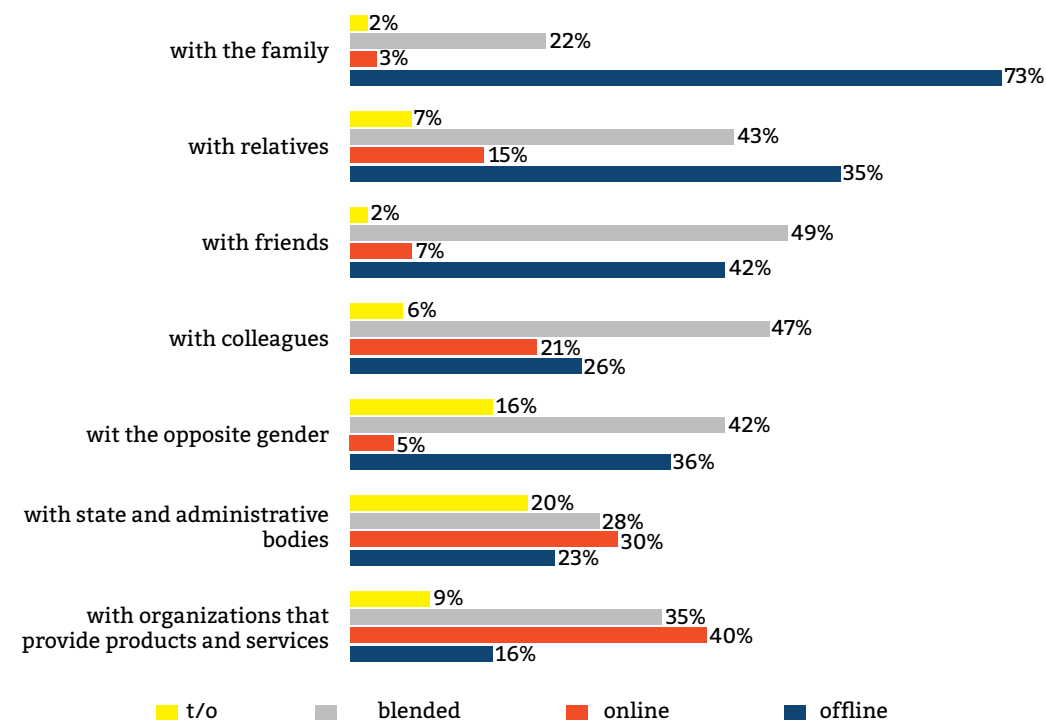
According to the latest data, Instagram\* is approaching Facebook\* in terms of size of the audience in Armenia. Currently, there are already about 1-1.1 million active users, and every month this number increases. About three quarters of Instagram's\* audience are under the age of 35. At the same time, half of Facebook\* users are over 35.

There are social networks including «TikTok», whose statistics is unknown, as they do not provide detailed information about the Armenian audience. It was clear that the number of users was increasing, but clear statistics was not available.<sup>16</sup>

According to the data we have received, Armenian women are much more inclined to share personal information about themselves on the Internet (66%) than men (34%).

<sup>16</sup> Martirosyan S. Social networks in Armenia: how many people are there, 2022. Available from: <https://media.am/hy/critique/2022/12/20/34858/>.

\* Activity in Russia blocked at the request of Roskomnadzor, 18+

**Figure 2. Communication preferences among users**

These findings are supported by a number of other international studies<sup>17</sup>, including those of Russia.<sup>18</sup>

The figure shows that people still prefer direct communication with family members, relatives and friends. Unlike personal relationships, in a business environment, many respondents prefer online communication with colleagues. Interaction with Government Organizations, such as the Tax Authority or Government Agencies, is mostly carried out in an online or combined format. This simplifies application processes and decreases time expenses.

Many of those surveyed prefer buying online or buying both ways. Online shopping is becoming increasingly popular among respondents. Convenience, variety of products and the ability to compare prices make online shopping preferable.

<sup>17</sup> Atanasova A. Gender-Specific Behaviors on Social Media and What They Mean for Online Communications, 2016. Available from: <https://www.socialmediatoday.com/social-networks/gender-specific-behaviors-social-media-and-what-they-mean-online-communications#:~:text=Social%20media%20data%20also%20shows,warm%27%20and%20more%20positive%20words>

<sup>18</sup> Mitina O.V., Voiskounsk A.I.E. Gender Differences of the Internet-Related Stereotypes in Russia Petrenko, Moscow State University after M.V. Lomonosov. PsychNology Journal. 2005 .Vol. 3 (3):243-264. Available from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/220168820\\_Gender\\_Differences\\_of\\_the\\_Internet-Related\\_Stereotypes\\_in\\_Russia\\_Petrenko](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/220168820_Gender_Differences_of_the_Internet-Related_Stereotypes_in_Russia_Petrenko).

**Table 1.** The primary purpose of using social networks

Reading news	61%
Communication with friends in Armenia	56%
Viewing posts	35%
Communication with relatives and friends abroad	30%
Spending free time	23%
Communication with colleagues	22%
Establishing professional contacts	19%
Organizing more efficient work/study	18%
Posting photos and/or videos	14%
Shopping	13%
Posting their own thoughts	10%
Sales of user-created products and provision of services	9%
Establishment of friendly relations	8%
Meeting people of the opposite gender	8%
Telling about the everyday life of the user	6%
Games	4%
Hosting live streams	2%
Monitoring number of likes, comments and views of user's posts	2%
Fund-raising	1%

Interestingly, there is little difference in quantitative indicators of preferences in communication with relatives and with the opposite gender. This may also indicate that Armenians see the opposite gender as close to themselves. This may be due to the fact that communication with the opposite gender for every third user implies a long-term connection.

Communication preferences depend on the nature of the relationship and the context of the interaction. Offline communication retains its relevance in personal sphere, while online options become preferred in more formal and business contexts.

User preferences do not change significantly depending on gender. Previous studies on a similar problem confirm this. The study «Preferences of online communication depending on age, gender and duration of use of the network» attempts to study the choice of strategies of online communication, preferences in building relationships and their variations depending on age, gender and duration of network usage. This study focuses on preferences in communication and building relationships in the family, among friends, colleagues and with anonymous persons.

Thus, on the basis of a survey conducted as part of our research the authors have identified a number of preferences that determine the way users interact in online communication. The main differences were found by age, not gender.

**Table 2.** Results achieved through social networks

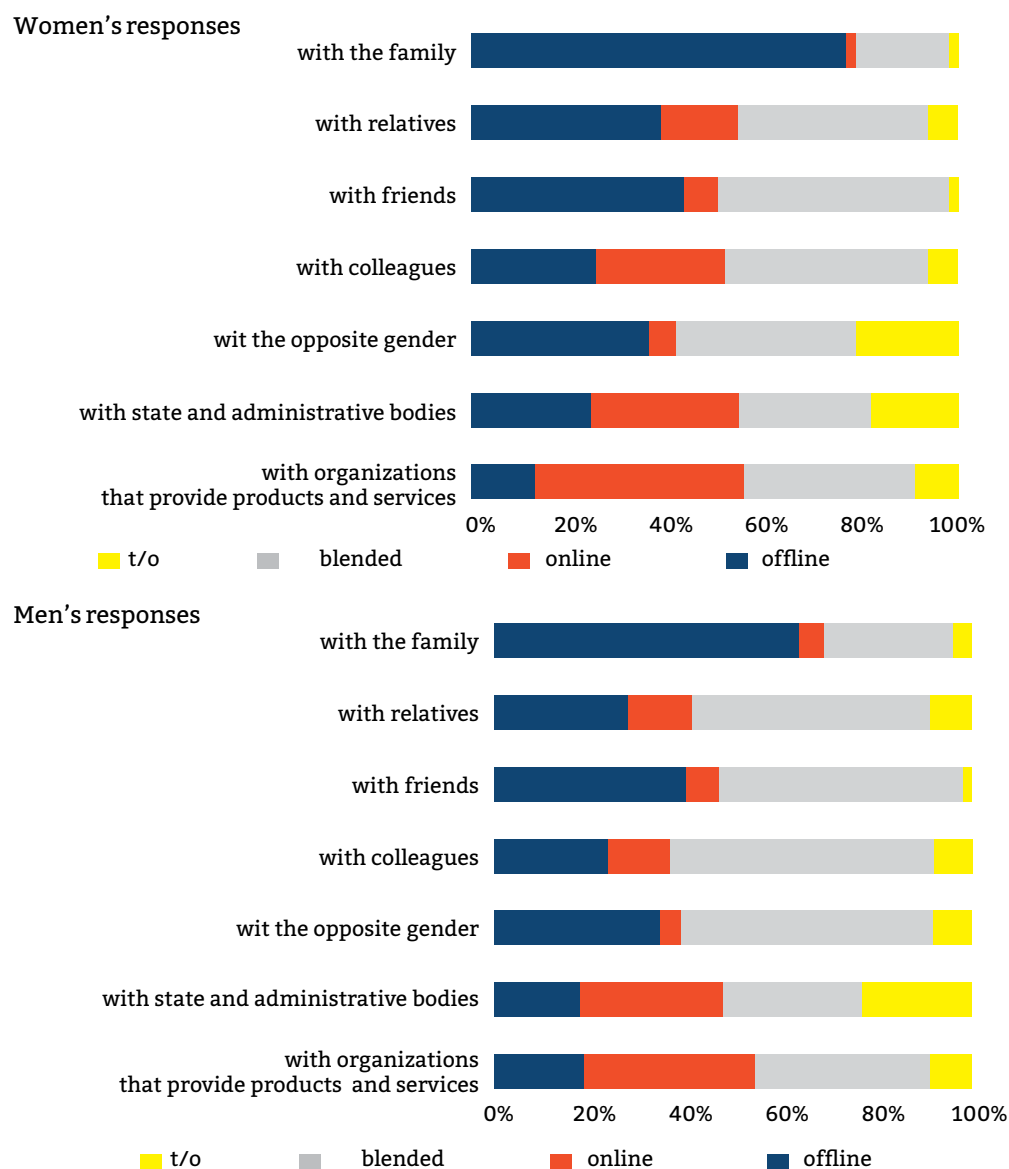
Received information on important events	55%
Acquired new, not virtual acquaintances	49%
Re-established ties with former friends, colleagues, acquaintances	41%
Found job	27%
Met a possible partner	20%
Established professional/business relations	14%
Received important information	13%
Received recognition	12%
Earned money	11%
Organized a fundraiser	10%
Set higher goals, solved environmental issues in the area of residence	7%
Acquired new professional skills	5%
Sold/bought property or goods	4%

Social media play a significant role in shaping public opinion and sharing information. In this regard, the analysis of the level of trust of Armenian users in the information coming from social networks is interesting for understanding the online behavior of users and their perception of information. Based on the data presented in the figure, it can be seen that the group of users who fully trust the information is 1%, which is a small part of the sample. These users are likely to have a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the sources with which they interact. The majority of respondents (32%) in this group mostly trust the information obtained from social networks. This may indicate that they generally consider social media to be reliable sources of information, but that they remain somewhat incredulous. About 60% of respondents said that they mostly do not trust the information coming from social networks. This may be due to concerns about the authenticity of the sources and the dissemination of false or distorted information on the network. The group of users (7%) who do not trust information from social networks is represented by a small percentage. These users most likely prefer to obtain information from other sources, considering social media unreliable.

The most significant purposes indicated by the respondents were:

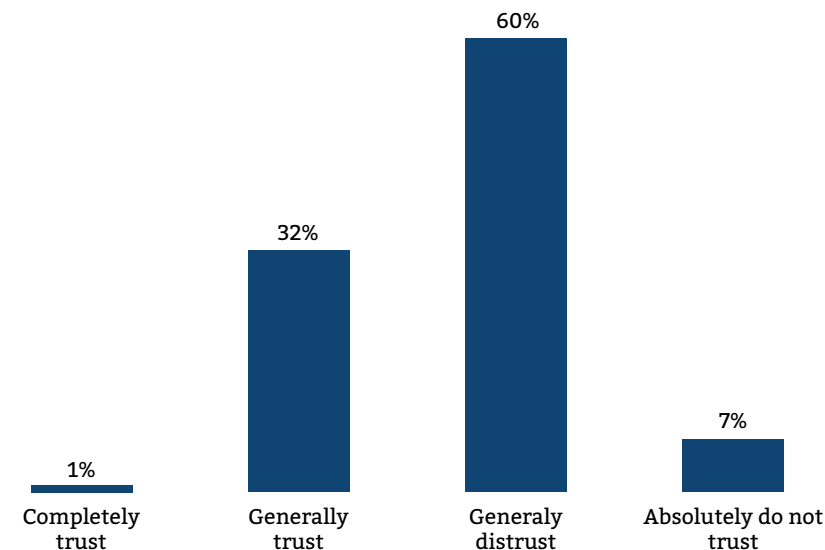
Information on important events (55%). This shows that social networks are perceived as an important source of news and information feedback in Armenian society;

Acquisition of new, non-virtual acquaintances (49%). This indicates that social media are presented to many users as a platform for expanding social contacts and establishing new personal relationships;

**Figure 3. User Gender Preferences**

Re-establishment of contact with former friends, colleagues and acquaintances (41%). This aspect highlights the significant role of social media in maintaining and restoring old social networks.

In addition, some respondents used social media to find work (27 per cent), meet potential partners (20 per cent) and establish business relationships (14 per cent).

**Figure 4. The degree of trust of users in information coming from social networks**

It is clear from the data presented that Armenian users of social networks use the above online platforms for very different purposes. The most common motivations are: obtaining information about important events (55%), acquiring new, not virtual acquaintances (49%). These results show that social networks are a means of communication and information exchange for many Armenians.

Armenian users also use social media for other purposes. For example, reconnecting with former friends, colleagues and acquaintances (41%) points to the role of social platforms in rebuilding and maintaining personal relationships.

Another important motivation for using social networks is the search for work (27%), which indicates the growing role of social networks in the professional sphere and in employment.

Analysis of the data obtained indicates a variety of purposes that Armenian users pursue when using social networks. The platforms not only provide information about important events, but they also provide an opportunity to expand social communication, reconnect with acquaintances, and address practical challenges (such as finding work).

The results of the research show the growing influence of social networks on various spheres of life of Armenian users, including social, professional and practical aspects. Understanding these motivations can be useful for developing strategies for effective interaction with social media audiences and gaining user experience.

## Conclusion

When researching the preferences of Armenian users in social networks one may find that:

Preferences of Armenian users of social networks are partly replaced by virtual communication instead of real, direct interaction. As a result, we see an increase in the preference for combined (online and offline) communication (on average by 30% in all age groups) and a parallel reduction in the range of offline communication in favor of only online as well as combined communication formats. This trend is most noticeable among users under 15 years of age (up to 60 per cent), but there are no clear differences among older users.

The 16-30 age group (74 per cent) and the 31-55 age group (83 per cent) are the main users of offline communication with the family. When viewed in the context of the use of social media by people in the older age group, it can be assumed that their direct inclusion in social networks occurred in adulthood, after a period of intense spread of Internet. On the other hand, younger users have the same lifestyle as their family members and are therefore inevitably involved in direct communication.

In professional areas, online and combined communication are preferred, especially when interacting with public and administrative authorities, as well as with organizations providing goods and services. Unlike other age groups, young people are more likely to minimize direct interaction with organizations providing goods and services (46% prefer to make purchases only online). In the 31-55 age group, the figure is 36 per cent, in the case of persons under 15 years, 38 per cent, and in the case of persons aged 56 and over, the lowest is 27 per cent.

The younger and older age groups prefer mainly to interact with their families not only offline but also using a combined format. The share of such individuals is 43% among those under 15 years of age and 50% among those under 56+. When looking at the situation of young people, their preference for online communication beginning in the childhood, can be explained by the fact that they perceive it as a more comfortable way of communication. In contrast, older persons may prefer online communication for other reasons, such as living apart from young family members or being in another country.

The research shows that the majority of Armenian users of social networks, namely 60%, express mostly distrust in the information obtained from this source. However, 32% of respondents have a tendency to trust social media in certain cases. These results point to the need to improve the quality of information and trust in social networks in the Armenian information space. Critical thinking and the development of source verification skills can play an important role in increasing confidence in social media among Armenian users.

In general, the data show a variety of goals pursued by users in Armenia. These findings can be useful for further analysing user behavioural patterns and developing strategies for effective communication and interaction with audiences on social media.

Women have a much broader spectrum of communication with different people

online than men, who prefer to establish a closer relationship. As a result, men's circle of communication, dating and relationships is narrowed down.

The choice of signs and language of communication can be determined by gender. Another fact identified in the study is that women feel more free online than offline.<sup>19</sup>

Returning to the research, conducted by the authors, men prefer to communicate offline with the public and administrative authorities much less than women. Regardless of age, users prefer to communicate directly with family rather than with relatives, friends or colleagues.

Women have a tendency to do online shopping. One hypothesis put forward in earlier international studies claims that the convenience of using online platforms is related to the frequency of online purchases, and this hypothesis is confirmed by the Armenian example.

According to experts, consumers' online behaviour significantly changes society, including the culture of consumption and behaviour. However, even in the online environment, there are discussions about consumer addiction, which is seen as a rare phenomenon.

Analysis of the results of our research shows that Armenian users of social networks have different motivations and goals when using online platforms. However, it is interesting to note that the primary goals mentioned in the first study do not always coincide with the results obtained through social networks.

For example, in the first survey, the most common target was to read news and news articles (61%), while in the second survey only 55% of respondents indicated to receive information about important events. This may indicate to the fact that some respondents use social media not only for information purposes but also for other important aspects of their lives.

In addition, in the first survey, the communication with friends (56%) ranked second in the popularity of social networking goals, while in the second this goal was not rated lower than the information about important events.

Thus, it can be concluded that users of social networks in Armenia have different motivations, including both social and information aspects. Despite differences in research results, the results show that social networks play an important role in the daily life of Armenian users by providing them with various opportunities for communication, exchange of information and achievement of various objectives.

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# Social processes in Modern Georgia: Is There any Potential for the Development of Russian-Georgian Cooperation?

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**Abstract.** The authors of the article, participants in the discussion "Georgia's Communication Regime: Development Trends," presented their views on social processes in modern Georgia. It is substantiated that the spiritual ties between Georgians and Russians are based on Orthodoxy and the mutual assistance that Russians and Georgians have provided to each other for centuries. The historical and cultural origins of Russian-Georgian relations are examined. The common historical past contributed to the interpenetration of cultures and traditions. However, under the influence of Western ideologies, a large part of modern Georgian youth has formed a different worldview. The authors of the article propose how to overcome the ideological gap through the implementation of cultural projects. Promising areas of cooperation between Russia and Georgia are considered in the absence of diplomatic relations and the anti-Russian position of the Georgian authorities. Youth communications and cooperation in the economy (primarily in agriculture) are also promising. The following risks of cooperation are considered: the unresolved issue of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, fluctuations of the political elites of Georgia, the chaotic nature of the Georgian economy, the role of anti-Russian position of Russians in Georgia, insufficient work with Georgian society on the Russian side and the need to activate the potential of the Georgian diaspora in Russia.

The article was prepared based on the materials of the international round table "Georgia's Communication Regime: Development Trends" (conducted by the National Research Institute for the Communications Development in December 2023).

**Keywords:** communication regime, Georgia, Russian-Georgian relations, Georgian Orthodox Church, Georgian economy, Georgian politics, Georgian political elite, humanitarian cooperation

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## Introduction

Georgian society is one of the first post-Soviet societies to come under a massive information attack from Western European institutions and the United States with the aim of creating anti-Russian sentiments. Russia's recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia aggravated the situation and anti-Russian sentiments took hold for a long time. Georgian society, in general, welcomes Georgia's European integration (more than 80% of the country's population supports joining the EU); part of Georgian society views NATO as a guarantor of national security. The youth of Georgia have been brought up in unfriendly rhetoric and some of them have absorbed a hostile attitude towards Russia. However, the current state of Russian-Georgian relations is contradictory. On the one hand, diplomatic relations have been severed, the Georgian-Russian conflict on the issue of Abkhazia and South Ossetia has not been resolved, Georgia supports Ukraine's side in the Northeast Military District, Russia has been declared an aggressor, Georgia's partners and allies are countries unfriendly to Russia, Georgia is striving to join the EU and NATO. On the other hand, trade turnover between the countries is growing, business contacts are developing, air traffic has been restored, communications through the church continue, civil communications are supported, Georgian youth are studying at universities in Russia, according to quotas of the Government of the Russian Federation.

Research into the complex dynamics of Georgian society, which also affects relations with Russia, has been analyzed in recent years in scientific studies, monographs and articles 2020-2023 [1-11].

In order to identify possible areas for expanding Russian-Georgian communications, identifying priority areas and risks of communications between Russia and Georgia at the present stage, an international round table "Georgia's Communication Regime: Development Trends" was held, the materials of which formed the basis of this article.

## Materials and Methods

The article was prepared based on the materials of the speeches of the participants of the international round table “Georgia’s Communication Regime: Development Trends.” The round table was held in December 2023 in Moscow at the National Research Institute for the Development of Communications. The round table participants included scientists, experts, representatives of economic, cultural, religious, and youth communications from Georgia and Russia. The positions of the participants were summarized and systematized. The most interesting opinions formed the basis of this article. In the process of preparing the article, methods of analysis, generalization, and systematization were used.

## Results

### Cultural, historical and spiritual community of Russia and Georgia (M. Sh. Tsikhelashvili)

The current stage of Russian-Georgian relations is characterized by the desire to negatively show the role of Russia in the history of post-Soviet countries. However, historically Georgia and Russia have been characterized by mutual assistance and friendship. History provides many examples that could form the basis for good neighborly relations today.

Diplomatic relations between Russia and Georgia were established in the 15th century under the Russian Tsar Ivan III and the Georgian Tsar Alexander I. Thanks to these relations, Georgia strengthened and developed. With the help of Russia, it was possible to protect the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom from the raids of Persia and Turkey, which inflicted heavy damage on the Georgian principalities. In the 19th century, thanks to Russia, it was possible to unite the Georgian principalities and create a single Georgian nation, annexing the western lands. In turn, Georgia has always helped Russia in difficult war times. Let us give the example of Peter Bagration (an associate of Mikhail Kutuzov), the brothers Ivan and Semyon Panchulidze. Over 70 generals from Georgia fought in the Great Patriotic War. The soldiers of the Red Army Egorov and Kantaria erected the flag on the fascist Reichstag.

Spiritual roots connect Russia and Georgia. A common faith has always strengthened relations between peoples. Let us remember the story of the rescue of the Iveron Icon of the Mother of God, redeemed by Russia from “Persian captivity”; Church of the Holy Great Martyr George the Victorious of the Moscow Patriarchate, which was erected in 1750 and is currently the spiritual center of the Georgian diaspora in Moscow. By agreement between the patriarchs of the Russian and Georgian Orthodox Churches, His Holiness and Beatitude Patriarch Alexy and His Holiness and Beatitude Catholicos – Patriarch Ilia the Second – close friends from student days in the Trinity – St. Sergius Lavra – services in this temple are held in Georgian and Russian.

Another shrine is the basement of the Holy Don Monastery with the burials of princes from the royal family of Bagrationi, Dadiani and other grand-ducal families, under whose leadership the Georgians fought for the Fatherland. This great spiritual shrine emphasizes the spiritual unity of the two Orthodox peoples.

In Russia, Georgian saints are highly revered, and in Georgia, Russian saints are highly revered. Many Georgians, for example, consider St. Seraphim of Sarov their patrons. In addition, on the grave of the Glinsky elder Vitaly (Sidorenko) on the territory of the temple of St. Prince Alexander Nevsky in Tbilisi there are always fresh flowers. The Orthodox treat with reverence the saint, our contemporary, fool for Christ for the sake of Gabriel Urgebadze; holy confessor Tamar Marjanishvili (founder of the Seraphim-Znamensky convent with the blessing of St. John of Kronstadt in the village of Bitukovo, Domodedovo region), St. David of Gareji. Saint George is generally a revered saint for two nations; coats of arms with his image are the official symbols of cities and departments.

Until now, the peoples of Russia and Georgia treat each other with great sympathy and even love. The Georgian diaspora is widely represented not only in Moscow, but also in St. Petersburg, in the Tver and Yaroslavl regions, in the Krasnodar Territory (the village of Plastunka), in the Urals and Siberia.

Deep spiritual connections are manifested in modern cultural projects. An example is the recently developed project of the international youth ethnocultural festival “On the Path of the Ancestors Together.” This is the first large-scale project – a historical, ethnographic, cultural, religious, international music youth festival. It will take place in the fall of 2024 in Ingushetia (in Magas), in Ossetia (in Vladikavkaz), in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

A series of performances “On the path of our ancestors together” will be held in ancient fortresses/monasteries and museums in Georgia and Russia. Such projects contribute to the revival of Georgian and Russian traditional culture and history, and attract the attention of the public, youth, and foreign tourists to architectural monuments, to ancient monolithic objects that are of enormous historical and artistic value. The project emphasizes the inextricable connection between generations of the past, present and future. By integrating elements of the ancient, authentic culture and art of Russia and Georgia into modern culture, thus connecting the past and present, it is possible to establish connections for a common future.

The creative part of the Georgian diaspora in Russia (cultural and art workers), together with the Krasnodar public organization of disabled children and disabled children “Inva-Studio” and the Krasnodar scientific and rehabilitation center, implements art therapeutic master classes for people with disabilities. There are plans to adapt this experience for the rehabilitation of Northern Military District veterans who received severe wounds and injuries, depriving them of the opportunity to fully integrate into society.

Thus, Russia and Georgia have deep spiritual ties, the actualization of which in modern conditions becomes a condition for the development of Georgian-Russian relations and a guarantor of the preservation of the traditional values of both countries.

## Conservative forces of Georgian society for traditional values (G. V. Gikashvili)

Western European influence on Georgia has formed part of the society with neoliberal values, which, under the guise of a struggle for rights and freedoms, blurs identity and reduces the ability of Georgians to understand and realize their civilizational identity. These people and groups perceive traditional values as archaic, limiting human freedoms and impeding progress. Meanwhile, most of society adheres to a conservative point of view.

The neoliberal agenda is not only supported, but also imposed on Georgia by European institutions. Thus, back in 2012, the European Court imposed monetary sanctions on Georgia due to the fact that during the parade of sexual minorities (organized in connection with the International Day against Homophobia), clashes occurred between parade participants and opponents of the popularization of neoliberal values.

The stronghold of the conservative part of society is the Georgian Orthodox Church. The Church (along with language, cultural artifacts, etc.) forms the civilizational identity and sociocultural code of Georgians, protects the foundations of traditional forms of family and relations between men and women, entering into confrontation with political institutions. Georgian Orthodox Church has a moral right to this, since ancient times it has participated in the construction of Georgian statehood. Moreover, today in Georgian society the authority and influence of Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia Ilia II is high. In 2014, on his initiative, a public holiday appeared – the Day of Strength and Sanctity of the Family.

Representatives of conservative society in modern Georgia make up the majority, despite active propaganda and permissive policies towards LGBT people, etc. In addition, this fact should be taken into account when developing communications with Georgia. Joining efforts in upholding the priority of traditional values could bring Russian and Georgian societies closer together.

## Politicization of Georgian media: the phenomenon of “Rustavi 2” (A. T. Sikharulidze)

The Georgian media space is politically based, as scientists and experts have repeatedly noted.

All rating media with a large audience are tools of one or another political force. Each political force in modern Georgia has its own media resources. It is unlikely that such media will provide objective coverage of even the noblest deeds. Georgian media resources have long ceased to be perceived as objective sources of information, as the fourth estate, which could form the information agenda and content independently of political forces. This should be taken into account when building Russian-Georgian communications.

The beginning of this process will be laid by the TV channel “Rustavi 2”, which remains in the memory of Georgians as an instrument of political struggle. At the beginning of his professional career, the famous Georgian businessman E. Kitsmarishvili said that if not for

“Rustavi 2”, the Rose Revolution would not have been able to happen. It was the popularity and trust of citizens in this TV channel that allowed in 2003 to gather masses on the streets of different cities of Georgia and force the government of E. Shevardnadze to recognize the crisis. If the red rose that Saakashvili carried into the country’s parliament as a sign of peaceful popular protest became a symbol of the revolution itself, then Rustavi 2 became a symbol of freedom of speech and the struggle for a better future.

After the change of power, M. Saakashvili, realizing the importance of this TV channel, took it under his control, removing the previous leadership (E. Kitsmarishvili) and appointing a new one. Rustavi 2 turned into a propaganda channel and gave impetus to the formation of a politically engaged media space in Georgia. The struggle for the political resource of “Rustavi 2” was also typical during the period of confrontation between the already former government of M. Saakashvili, the United National Movement and the new political force led by the “Georgian Dream”. A decades-long legal battle at the local and international levels was ended by a decision of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. He ruled that the TV channel was illegally seized from its owners during the reign of the United National Movement. Therefore, it must be returned to its rightful owners. This decision recognized at the international level the use of illegal methods against the independent media space by the government of M. Saakashvili.

This example shows the typical Georgian struggle for media resources by any means and their importance in the political confrontation. The media has stopped broadcasting objective information is a tool for promoting the interests of their owners.

## Cinema as a potential area of cooperation (A. A. Khotivirishvili)

Georgian cinema celebrated its 115th anniversary in 2023. The only partially preserved full-length documentary film essay from 1912 is “Akaki Tsereteli’s Journey to Racha-Lechkhumi” by V. Amashukeli. During the Soviet period, about 1,200 Georgian films were shot at the Georgia-Film studio. The first Soviet film was “The Assassination of General Gryaznov” (1921, directed by I. Perestiani, scripted by Sh. Dadiani). Since 1928, the era of the rise of Georgian cinema begins. In four years, high-profile films were created: “Eliso” by N. Shengelaia (1928), “My Grandmother” by K. Mikaberidze (1929), “Jim Shvante!” M. Kalatozov (1930) and “Khabarda” by M. Chiaureli (1931).

Thanks to the support of cinematography in the USSR and the creative achievements of directors, the Georgian national school of cinema was formed. Georgian films have their own unique flavor, traditions and customs of Georgians, reflecting the features of the national character – the independent spirit of Georgians, openness and kindness, human joy of communication. In Georgian films, there is respect for each other, ethno-confessionalism and the desire for good-neighborly relations. The actors themselves gave zest to Georgian cinema. The legends of Georgian and Soviet cinema are V. Kikabidze, S. Zakariade, R. Chkhikvadze, S. Chiaureli, L. Kavzharadze, L. Abashidze and others.



Despite the new preferences of modern Georgian and Russian youth, these films could become a bridge to mutual understanding. Festivals of old Georgian cinema could become a new project for the organizers of humanitarian communications. With the correct positioning of the Festival, its organizers could bypass the restrictions of the communications regime with Russia in Georgia. These films are also important for the adaptation of new emigrants from Georgia to Russia. The Georgian diaspora in Russia notes that joint screenings of Georgian films and creative evenings bring emigrants together. The organization of such events is of interest to Russians [10].

Currently, the National Cinematography Center of Georgia contributes to the development of the country's film industry. Contemporary Georgian films actively participate in various festivals around the world. However, the lack of proper funding does not allow the development of Georgian cinema at the same level as it was in the USSR.

### Needs and potential of the agricultural sector of Georgia (G. Tsopurashvili)

The agricultural sector of Georgia provides great opportunities for the development of Russian-Georgian relations. Back in the 1930s, comprehensive resource studies were carried out in Georgia in the USSR and the soil-climatic and territorial-microzonal capabilities of the territory were identified. Georgia produced tea, citrus fruits, tobacco, the best-tasting fruits, early vegetables, wine and wine materials, essential oils, high-quality silks and much more for the entire USSR. Georgian brands are also remembered in modern Russia.

Although today Russia is Georgia's number one agricultural partner, 15–20% of its potential is not used. To develop this potential, a number of problems need to be solved:

- achieve mutual understanding and respect in matters of political and diplomatic relations. For Georgia, the most important thing is territorial integrity and good neighborliness. For Russia, geopolitical interests in the Caucasus and peace. The restoration of diplomatic relations will give additional impetus to the cooperation process;
- create a Russian-Georgian information and analytical center for the development of large-scale projects, which will analyze and determine the prospects for cooperation and the direction of action. Currently, Western analytical centers operate in Georgia, including in the field of agriculture. Their activities are unsystematic and ineffective. If there were efficiency, then Russia would not be a vital trading partner for Georgia in the field of agriculture. Some recommendations of Western consultants harm the national interests of Georgia, establishing dictatorship in determining the directions and pace of development of the country's agricultural sector;
- within the framework of this center, it is necessary to develop targeted model programs: the creation of joint ventures, simplification of product supply and concluding contracts directly with manufacturers, product certification, implementation of the "green standard" and others.

The work of the Russian-Georgian information and analytical center would make it possible to overcome the inertial regime of communications. Today, Georgian agriculture needs an alternative effective strategy, a results-oriented action plan, access to particularly interesting traditional markets and the production of competitive products. It is unacceptable to delay the process and leave the country in "evolutionary inertia," therefore, deepening trade and partnership relations with the Russian Federation will give an incomparable impetus to the development of the industry, and there is no alternative to this today.

## Discussion

### Risks of Russian-Georgian relations (G. Rtskhiladze)<sup>1</sup>

The outgoing year 2023 was marked by important events in Georgian-Russian relations, which officially, at the diplomatic level, do not exist. A certain positive background is due to the current coincidence of interests of the leadership of Georgia and Russia, which can hardly be called even situational allies, but the current situation is quite close to this definition.

Georgia, whose economy suffered greatly because of the declared "pandemic," was greatly helped by the rapid influx of Russian temporary migrants, as well as a jump in trade and transport turnover starting in 2022. Thanks to this, there was a rapid restoration of economic growth and filling the budget. Although this process is largely burdened by strong inflation, but still.

Russia has also become interested in an intermediate settlement of disputes with Georgia, in lifting the ban on air travel (which was introduced in 2019), the return of visa-free entry into the Russian Federation for Georgian citizens and other cosmetic concessions in order to secure its ground transportation from/to Turkey(s) and from / in Armenia(s). Russia needs a reliable rear in the Caucasus in the conditions of the Northern Military District in Ukraine. Russia has begun expanding and improving the territory of the Lars checkpoint to increase the throughput of this checkpoint.

Institutionally, the warming of economic relations between Russia and Georgia took shape in the Russian-Georgian Business Council under the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation. Russia is likely predicting strengthening economic ties. However, in our opinion, there are serious risks. In addition, any dialogue in Georgia has not yet marked the activities of the Council; consultative platforms and discussions are held mainly in Russia.

The West, pursuing radical goals in relation to Russia, naturally does not welcome Russian-Georgian cooperation. However, there is a danger that even without much

<sup>1</sup> The full version of the report is published by the author on the website [geworld.ge](https://geworld.ge). Available from: <https://geworld.ge/ge/sakartvelos-komunikatsiuri-rezhimis-ganvitarebis-tendantsiebi/>

pressure from the West, Georgia and Russia could slow down and even reverse the modest achievements in bilateral relations. Let us look at the reasons for this.

The problem of borders and possible escalation of the conflict. At the beginning of the Northeast Military District, there were calls from representatives of the Russian political establishment for the admission of South Ossetia (and, possibly, Abkhazia) into the Russian Federation. These initiatives were not confirmed at the level of the top leadership of the Russian Federation. The Parliament of South Ossetia initiated changes to the law on the state border, which could provoke reactions in Georgia that would violate the relative stability in the region. On the very border with South Ossetia, provocations from Georgia and the reaction of Russian border guards to them do not stop, which, in our opinion, is asymmetrical.

Fluctuations of Georgian politicians. The seriousness of Georgia's intentions to join the EU and NATO is determined by its dependence on Western countries and, above all, on the United States. Georgia's budget depends on Western investments and grants and loans (Georgia has a huge external debt). Representatives of the authorities have a personal dependence: their funds are invested in Western offshore companies, their children are trained and employed in the West, and they vacation mainly in Western countries. An illustrative example of total dependence is the attempt to pass a law on "foreign agents," which was abandoned due to pressure from the United States (and from not the highest person in the American political hierarchy). Thus, under fear of direct intervention by American diplomacy, the Georgian government will refuse cash injections from Russia, even if its representatives have a personal interest in this. The risks are too high. Even Georgian businessmen doing business in Russia, with connections in the power quarters of Georgia, will not be able to lobby for the interests of Russian-Georgian relations

After receiving candidate status for the EU, the Georgian government in relations with Russia will repeat the position of the EU. The value of this status is so high for the authorities that a Georgian citizen faces from 3 to 6 years in prison just for tearing the EU flag from the administrative building of the city of Mtskheta in protest against the status of a candidate for the EU and against the magnificent reaction to it event (the authorities organized massive street celebrations after confirming the status of a candidate in the EU).

The chaotic nature of trade and economic relations in the context of the insecurity of the Georgian market. Georgia needs the Russian market to sell wine (its main export) and agricultural products. Wine is exported, but the products of Georgian farmers (vegetables and melons) are difficult to sell even on the domestic market in conditions of cheap Russian imports. Investments by Russian business in the tourism and recreational system (land, hotels, and restaurants) often put local medium-sized businesses in a difficult position, among which discontent is growing. Pro-Western media replicate each case as official Russian policy aimed at destroying the Georgian economy<sup>2</sup>.

2 Qartli.ge. Available from: <https://mix.metronome.ge/news/122992> (18.10.2023)

Western countries have developed programs to reduce "economic dependence on Georgia." They began to offer alternatives – cheap loans, technical support, advice on business development and marketing of agricultural products. Perhaps Russia should create an organization that will solve both commercial and social problems. In particular, it is centralized to accept surplus harvests of fruits and vegetables from Georgian peasants.

Russophobia with a Russian face. Image costs can also hinder the development of economic relations with Russia. Negative images of Russia are formed not only by Western countries, but also by Russians themselves. There are examples when on the stage of the Russian Drama Theater they hold actions in support of Ukraine with the transfer of funds in favor of the Armed Forces of Ukraine<sup>3</sup>; The director of the private Russian school "Intellect" banned a Russian language textbook for primary grades, since Russia was mentioned in this textbook. Moreover, this is done under pressure from organizations that monitor the correctness of the content of textbooks.

At the same time, there is another part of society in Georgia – people who are proud of the action of Givi Vanishvili, who specially came to Russia to participate in the SVO. To strengthen the trust of this part of society, reduce discontent and conflict potential, improve Russia's position in Georgia and vice versa, a number of steps are necessary.

## Conclusions

An analysis of modern Georgian society and the considered risks of the development of Russian-Georgian communications show the need for a number of significant steps.

First, armchair diplomacy will not solve most problems. It is undoubtedly necessary to work with the Georgian authorities, but it is necessary to start working with society. Over the long period of their presence in Georgia, Western countries have managed to create a society that is indifferent or negative towards Russia. Supporters of Georgia's good relations with Russia feel themselves divided and in the minority. However, that does not mean they do not exist. Without working with the public, the development of Russian-Georgian relations will not be possible.

Secondly, when implementing large-scale economic initiatives, public approval should be built. For example, the territory adjacent to South Ossetia is often used to create provocative situations. At the same time, Russians, Ossetians, and Georgians are interested in opening transit roads. Therefore, it is necessary to start a public dialogue on the topic of

3 S. Kenya, the organizer of the play, has repeatedly spoken about the help from the proceeds from the play, which was staged in unprecedented numbers from October to December 2022, and this was printed on official posters. Among others, the Russophobe Mirzali-Zadeh, who was deported from the Russian Federation for Russophobia, performed in the performance banned in Russia. See: Arno Khidirbegishvili "Don't play theater!" (10/24/2022). Available from: <http://ru.gruzinform.ge/news/55483/arno-Khidirbegishvili-ne-igrajte-teatrom-.html> ; Radio "VeraTV" – "Dmitry Potapenko, Sergo Kenya" (07.09.2022). Available from: <https://youtu.be/33RStiXmv7c> (from 1:19:20); "Funds from each performance go to help Ukraine" (10/30/2022). Available from: [https://www.facebook.com/KomliTheatre/?locale=ms\\_MY](https://www.facebook.com/KomliTheatre/?locale=ms_MY)

transit economics between representatives of the public of Georgia and South Ossetia with the assistance of Russia (according to the principle “we discuss what is beneficial to the parties”). Without this preparatory work of society (as well as without preparatory work with society), it is risky to begin large-scale projects. The project may be blocked by public resistance actions.

Thirdly, it is necessary to work with young people. At a minimum, start working with those undergraduate and graduate students who come to Russia from Georgia. Most of them then remain in Russia, but are not involved in any way in the public dialogue between Russians and Georgians. These young people are more interested in friendly relations between Georgia and Russia than others. The Georgian diaspora could implement this initiative and create the so-called “Alumni”.

Fourthly, there are themes that unite our peoples. This is a common history, culture (for example, Georgian cinema in the USSR), traditional values, the memory of I. Stalin, etc. Despite the ambiguity of assessments of his personality, Stalin’s role in world history creates a reason for pride for Georgians. Cultural projects could be built around memorable events of a common historical past.

Fifthly, Orthodoxy unites Russians and Georgians. The common task is to promote in every possible way the development of the Georgian Orthodox Church and to counteract schisms, politicization of the church and political pressure on clergy (which is observed, for example, in Ukraine and Moldova).

Sixth, the development of economic cooperation and trade relations between Russia and Georgia seems to be more institutionalized and manageable. It is advisable to create a Russian-Georgian center for analysis, development of strategies and projects for economic cooperation, and the creation of a more open and manageable infrastructure for business participants.

All these proposals can be implemented subject to minimal legal and political conditions. In this regard, the elections in Georgia 2024 are of utmost importance, since the norms and rules of communications with Russia will depend mainly on the winning political force.

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## Contribution of the authors

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# HISTORICAL RETROSPECTIVE AND MODERNITY

History of International Relations  
and Foreign Policy

*By the beginning of the second millennium, the Roman civilizational matrix had not only two different institutional cores, but also a split shell. The Western European path of development for the next centuries is determined: the dominance of secular power with strong spiritual power, acting as an institutional balancer, and strengthening market institutions. At the same time, the civilizational matrix of Byzantium was taking shape, formed by an institutional core of a redistributive type and a shell, the specifics of which were determined by the dominant Orthodox faith, ethnic diversity, proximity to the Mediterranean Sea, the strong influence of Roman and Greek cultures and technologies and the constant threat to the existence of the empire.*

**P.A.Barakhvostov**

The Role of Institutions in the Civilization Schism (the Case of Christianity)

*Stalinism in Abkhazia (Abkhaz ASSR) led to tension in relations with the Georgian ethnic group, to the infringement of the rights of the Abkhaz people, to the problem of preserving the Abkhaz national identity and to the almost complete destruction of the political elite.*

**K.D.Kobakhia**

Features of Socio-Political Processes In Abkhazia (Abkhaz ASSR)  
in the 1930–1940s

*The Iskanderkul campaign became a key moment in the history of Central Asia, as a result of which Russia strengthened its influence and ensured stability in the border areas... Despite the primary military goals, the Iskanderkul expedition also included outstanding scientists and specialists. Their main goal was to conduct a comprehensive scientific study of the areas involved in the expedition. This multi-tasking underlines the complex nature of the research enterprise undertaken by the Russian administration in the upper reaches of Zarafshan.*

**A.N.Odinaev**

Iskanderkul Expedition of 1870: Contribution of the Russian Orientalist A.L.Kuhn to the Preparation and Editing of the “Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition” by A.Mustajir

*As a multinational state with religious and traditional, economic and communication problems, Afghanistan tried to contact the two opposing centers of the Cold War in order to exploit positional opportunities, increase the geopolitical importance of the country, and create and develop ties with technological centers.*

**V.A.Poghosyan**

The Impact of the Cold War on the Afghan society

RUSSIA & WORLD: SCIENTIFIC DIALOGUE

**РОССИЯ  
И МИР**  
НАУЧНЫЙ ДИАЛОГ



# The Role of Institutions in the Civilization Schism (the Case of Christianity)

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**Abstract.** The geopolitical transformations of recent decades have added to the topicality of the study of civilizational differences between the East and the West relevant. Religion is often cited as a contributing factor to these differences. This can be confirmed by the example of the split of the Christian Church into the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches and, as a consequence, the emergence of the Western and the Eastern Christian civilizations. As a rule, the authors “isolate” religion from the social system, considering it independently of all other spheres, as the primary factor that triggers the emergence of civilization. In this work, the emergence of a new Western and Eastern Christian, is considered within the framework of the institutional approach, as a process of formation of a certain complex institutional structure that regulates the life of society and consists of a whole complex of interconnected and interdependent economic, political, and socio-cultural institutions, including religion. This process can begin in the bowels of the “mother” civilization, causing its crisis. The stages of development and resolution of such a crisis are analyzed using the example of a split in the united Christian world using a matrix approach. This approach assumes that civilization is characterized by a civilizational matrix formed by an institutional core that simultaneously contains market and redistributive institutions on the basis of dominance/complementarity, and a shell that includes cultural-religious and national-demographic characteristics, the natural-climatic and material-technological environment. The necessity of both strengthening dominant institutions in the institutional core and creating balancers (complementary institutions) for the sustainable development of civilization is shown.

**Keywords:** civilizational matrix, institutional core, market institutions, redistributive institutions, institutional matrix, religion

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## Introduction

Research on the East-West dichotomy has become relevant due to the geopolitical and geo-economic transformations of recent decades, which have changed the modern world beyond recognition. The peculiarities of the geographical location make this problem extremely important for Russia, which is located both in Europe and Asia. The issue of the confrontation between East and West and the role of Russia occupied many Russian thinkers, in particular N. Ya. Danilevsky [9], L. N. Gumilyov [8], K. N. Leontyev [16], who identified civilizational contradictions as its basis. It is important to establish the factors that determined them.

Among these factors, religion is often mentioned, considering the formed differences (contradictions) between Western and Eastern Christian civilizations as a consequence of the split of the Christian Church into Roman Catholic and Orthodox. The role of the religious factor in the formation of two Christian worlds is studied by historians [13, 15, 20, 21, 22, 26, 27], philosophers [5, 14, 25, 28, 29, 32], political scientists and lawyers [19, 23, 30], theologians [11, 18, 24]. As a rule, the authors isolate religion from the social system and consider it independently of other spheres, as the primary factor that triggers the process of distinguishing civilization. However, is this so, since religion is only one of the institutions of the social system? To answer this question, in this work, the emergence of a new civilization is considered as a process of formation of a certain complex institutional structure that regulates the life of society and consists of a whole complex of interconnected and interdependent economic, political, socio-cultural institutions, including religion. This process can begin in the depths of the mother civilization, causing its crisis. Its stages of development and resolution are analyzed using the example of a split in the united Christian world.

## Materials and methods

The work uses an integral institutional approach [1; 4; 10; 35]. It is based on the idea that the evolution of civilization is determined by its civilizational matrix, formed by interconnected elements: a shell that includes cultural-religious and national-demographic characteristics, the natural-climatic and material-technological environment, and the institutional core – a complex system of institutions (“rules of the game”, which determine the direction of social actions [36]), ensuring the functioning of the entire system. In the institutional core, we can distinguish an institutional matrix formed by basic institutions – “deep, historically stable and constantly reproducing social relations that ensure the integration of different types of societies, historical invariants that allow society to survive, maintain its integrity and develop in its given material environment” [12].

There are two types of basic institutions: redistributive and market. In accordance with the works of S. G. Kirdina [12], the basic redistributive institutions include: in the economic sphere – public property, redistribution (accumulation – coordination – distribution with the mandatory participation of the Center); in the political sphere – a unitary-centralized political structure, a hierarchical vertical of power; in the sociocultural sphere – a communitarian worldview, which expresses an awareness of the priority of “We” over “I”, egalitarianism.

Basic market institutions: in the economic sphere – private property, purchase and sale as an institution of exchange, wage labor, competition; in the political sphere – federal political structure, self-government and subsidiarity; in the sociocultural sphere – an individualistic worldview, expressing the dominance of “I” over “We”.

In the institutional matrix, basic institutions of two types (redistributive and market) coexist on the principles of dominance – complementarity [12]. Similarly, in the institutional core one can also find institutions of alternative types, and the dominant type coincides with that in the institutional matrix.

The civilizational matrix is not a once and for all given structure. In the process of sociocultural dynamics, determined by the influence of both endogenous and exogenous factors, it reconstructs its elements. The question arises: under what conditions does a civilizational crisis arise and to what state of the civilizational matrix does it correspond? How does the crisis develop and what are the ways to resolve it? These problems will be analyzed using the example of the collapse of Roman civilization and the birth of Western and Eastern Christian civilizations.

## Discussion

In the process of the birth of Western and Eastern Christian civilizations, several stages can be distinguished, each of which is associated with a certain phase of the crisis of the “mother” Roman civilization. Their features are analyzed in the article.

### **Western Roman Empire and Eastern Roman Empire: the origin and development of a civilizational crisis**

In 330, the center of the Roman Empire, which was experiencing colossal pressure from warlike barbarian tribes, moved to the calm and rich eastern provinces, where the ancient Greek city-colony of Byzantium was located on the shores of the Bosphorus. However, due to the enormous size and, as a result, poor governance of the Roman Empire, an internal economic and political crisis broke out, and in 395 it was divided into two parts – the Western (Latin) and Eastern (Greek) Roman Empires. The linguistic and cultural differences between them (differences in socio-cultural institutions) caused centrifugal tendencies, which served as the beginning of the first stage of the civilizational crisis. The western part of the empire found itself adjacent and, therefore, subject to the diffusion

(penetration) of the institutions of the Germanic, and the eastern – of the Asian tribes and empires. The main integrating factor was the single Christian religion, but due to printing in different languages in the western and eastern parts of the Roman Empire, differences were found even in liturgical texts.

As a result of the fall of Rome under the onslaught of the barbarians, Italy found itself under Gothic rule. “The Gothic rulers were not persecutors of the Catholic Church, but the awareness of living without protection forced the bishops to unite into a more solidary union” [2, p. 457]. A force arose that could resist the weak state power in the barbarian kingdoms of the early Middle Ages – the church. The functions of governance in the cities were taken over by bishops [7]. Thus, “the Italian episcopate was educated in the awareness of its complete ecclesiastical independence” [2, p. 457].

After colossal destruction, the restoration of the lands of the former Western Roman Empire began. This was favored by the geographical advantages of Western Europe: a mild climate, a warm Gulf Stream, the presence of rivers leading to the sea, which contributed to the development of agriculture and trade; the diversity of natural landscapes that determined the development of various forms of management; remoteness from the most aggressive tribes and empires of that time, therefore there was no need to organize a strong centralized state to provide protection. Western Europe inherited from the Romans and Greeks a number of advanced technologies (for example, technologies of urban planning, water supply, road construction, in agriculture – viticulture and winemaking) and institutional developments (institutions of polis democracy, rational legal consciousness, ideas of the “common good”, protected by the right of private property, the dignity of a free person). From the Eastern Roman Empire, as a result of the diffusion of institutions, a monetary system, legislative codes, experience in government, and a number of cultural achievements of Eastern civilizations came to these lands.

The institutional developments of the ancient Germanic peoples had a significant influence: an emphasis on the personal and group rights of free people, the accountability of authorities to the community. The Latin language, the liturgical language of the Western Christian Church, played a huge integrating role. The absence of barriers to communication stimulated the spread of ideas and technological innovation.

As a result of the influence of many factors, the formation and strengthening of market-type institutions began in Western Europe: in the economy – private/personal property, commodity-money exchange; in the political sphere – bodies of class representation, self-government; in the sociocultural sphere – elements of an individualistic worldview. At the same time, there was a strengthening of the branch of spiritual power (the Western Christian Church), which is characterized by a high degree of centralization, which is inherent in institutions of a redistributive type. Taken together, this was a balance that prevented the emergence of eastern-type despotism while overcoming fragmentation and establishing a strong central government in Western Europe.

In the eastern part of the Roman Empire, development took a different path. For Byzantium, surrounded by enemies, one of the primary tasks was protection from

external aggression. This function could only be performed by a strong state, and victory could only be achieved with the dominance of “We” over “I.” A necessary condition for the survival of society in this case was the dominance of redistributive institutions in the institutional matrix. Byzantium is a social system welded together by the spirit of militant collectivism.

Here, both new institutions and the institutional developments of the Roman Empire, which played the role of a balance, were combined in a bizarre way. Byzantium was headed by an emperor, but in the early Middle Ages there was still no order of succession to the throne. Formally, it was believed that the emperor was elected by the senate, the army and the people represented by unique parties. Under the emperor, there was a permanent advisory body – the Senate (synclit), which discussed issues of foreign and domestic policy, considered bills sent for approval by the emperor, appointed senior officials, and carried out judicial functions in the most important criminal cases. At the head of the central government administration was the State Council (Consistory), an advisory body that discussed all current issues of government administration and carried out judicial functions. But these bodies did not play a decisive role in the life of society. Subsequently, the right to consider bills and appoint senior officials of the empire was withdrawn from the Senate in favor of the imperial power, which indicates the strengthening of redistributive institutions.

Local government was initially built on the principles of separation of military and civil government. Local communities were governed by elected officials under the control of government (appointed) officials. But under the influence of the military threat, new administrative units – themes – were formed in many regions, where military and civil power was concentrated in the hands of an appointed commander of military units stationed in this territory.

A strong army is the core of the Byzantine social system. In pre-industrial society, one of the main sources of income was land. In Byzantium, the most common way to receive it was through reward for military service. In the 7th century a special military class of stratiots was created from among the free communal peasants. The land of the stratiots could not be alienated and was inherited by one of the sons, who were supposed to serve.

The needs of maintaining the army led to the creation of a system of centralized redistribution of income – state taxes and distributions, which, as a consequence, led to the emergence of a huge bureaucratic apparatus. The service of officials and military personnel was paid in gold coins, the issue of which was monopolized by the state. They, in turn, bought everything they needed for life with them. The coins “spreading” throughout Byzantium were returned to the state in the form of taxes. State regulation of the volume of issued coins made it possible to manage economic life: if more coins were produced, manufacturers were forced to sell their products at reduced prices.

Peasants gave coins as a tax to the state. This was much higher than peasant payments in Western Europe and was often prohibitive, which led to the emergence of a special form of enslavement – centralized, which hindered the development of private estates, the

strengthening of the power of landowners, and, consequently, the formation of a strong class that could balance the excessive strengthening of the branch of state power. It is noteworthy that there are no such castles here as in the West. The nobility preferred to live in cities, but not in all of them, since during the 3rd–5th centuries. A policy of “rationalization” of the distribution of cities was practiced: many of them in densely populated regions were deprived of their status and privileges, which was again associated with the need to increase tax revenues to the treasury. The central authorities began to directly control urban fiscal affairs and use local authorities primarily as assessors and tax collectors. By the middle of the 6th century, only the state could afford to invest in the construction of buildings in cities – usually defensive or administrative structures. By the end of the 6th century, the cities actually lost their independence and no longer served as cultural centers. The decline of cities, and consequently the weak development of handicraft and industrial activity, did not allow the development (as in Western Europe) of the “third estate”, with its inherent values of individualism.

With such a decline in provincial cities, the capital of the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) Empire, Constantinople, flourished. The main goal for everyone was to occupy a certain place in the imperial system. The well-being of representatives of the ruling class depended much more strongly on their place in the hierarchy of state power than on inherited and acquired property. Byzantium is characterized by an undifferentiated unity of power and property functions – that is, the institution of power-property [6].

Thus, in the Byzantine Empire an institutional matrix was formed with the dominance of redistributive institutions, which is usually characteristic of eastern hydraulic societies (the term was introduced by K. Wittfogel [37]). As I. Brodsky noted, “Byzantium was a bridge to Asia, but movement along it went in the opposite direction” [3:373]. The main reason was the militarization of Byzantium due to external factors.

In conditions of strict domination and subordination in the state (dominance of political institutions of a redistributive type), the Eastern Christian Church sought to maintain democracy within itself, thereby performing a compensatory function, balancing institutional imbalances in the institutional core. The Eastern Christian Church was the representative body for all Christians living both within the territory of the empire and beyond its borders. Decisions concerning church life were made by a majority vote and were binding on everyone. In early medieval Byzantium, along with the clergy, the laity also participated in the work of cathedrals. The life of the church between councils was directed and regulated on the basis of consensus reached by the Ecumenical Patriarchs in the absence of a strict hierarchy between them. If in Western Europe there were two strong branches of government – secular and spiritual, represented by the Western Christian Church, then in Byzantium the relationship between church and state was built on the principle of union (“symphony”).

So by the middle of the 7th century, the institutional core of the once united Roman Empire was divided into two parts: Western and Eastern with alternative institutional matrices (market institutions dominated in the West, and redistributive institutions in the East). Religion as an institution in the west and east of the Roman Empire was embodied

in institutional forms of an alternative type, corresponding to the complementary institutions of parts of the divided institutional core. These various institutional forms had a corresponding impact on cultural and religious characteristics – the shell of the civilizational matrix, which led to its significant spatial deformation. The civilizational crisis in the Roman Empire moved into the next, stage II.

### Development of the civilizational crisis (VII–IX centuries)

By the middle of the 7th century due to the expansion of Arab tribes, Byzantium lost a large number of its lands: Egypt, Jerusalem, Syria and Antioch. Only Greek territories remained within the empire; Latin began to be forgotten, which negatively affected trade with Western Europe and the development of crafts. The state became de-urbanized, relying on the peasant community with its collective responsibility (redistributive institution). The Roman service aristocracy gradually turned into a church and government service elite that sought to settle in Constantinople and its environs, closer to the emperor. The economic and political independence of the upper strata of society decreased with a corresponding strengthening of imperial power.

The Byzantine power model finally took shape, which formed the basis of the first Christian ideology in history: the emperor (leader of the people and army) and the church operating under his tutelage (guardian of the moral foundations of the state and society). By actively introducing this model, the emperors endowed the church and its important structural element, the monasteries, with enormous possessions and privileges, which, on the other hand, limited the possibilities of distributing lands for service.

The need to live in a state of constant military threat (especially on the Asian outskirts of the empire) and the difficult economic situation led to an increase in discontent, a decline in culture and a surge in superstitions. Constantinople of those times was “an ark full of relics and other religious relics” [31], the attitude towards which on the part of the illiterate population bordered on pagan idolatry. This was the basis of iconoclasm, launched by Emperor Leo III the Isaurian. To justify their actions, the iconoclasts used the thesis that it was impossible to adequately depict Christ, since he was not a man in the usual sense. In addition to the fight against icon veneration, iconoclasm implied strengthening the power of the state in church affairs that is, strengthening the elements of redistribution in religious institutional forms, in particular, the secularization of monastic land property. The implementation of such a policy led to the elimination of the balancers of the institutional matrix, the role of which is played by religion, and to the excessive strengthening of the dominant redistributive institutions.

The Roman popes saw the victory of Caesaropapism<sup>1</sup> in iconoclasm, declaring for the first time the contradictions in the principles of state-church relations that had developed in the East and West. This marked the beginning of the confrontation

<sup>1</sup> Caesaropapism is a term denoting a form of government in which the head of secular power, the emperor (Caesar), was actually at the same time the head of the church (the pope). Available from: <http://ponjatija.ru/taxonomy/term/4619>.

between the Eastern and Western Christian churches, which culminated in a schism that lasted about a hundred years and formed a “crack” in the shell (cultural and religious characteristics) of the Roman civilizational matrix. By its end, the former Roman Empire found itself divided both administratively and religiously. Thus, de facto, as a result of the development of the civilizational crisis, two Christian worlds emerged (Western and Eastern).

By the beginning of the second millennium, the Roman civilizational matrix had not only two different institutional cores, but also a split shell. The Great Schism of 1054, as a result of which the Western Christian and Eastern Christian churches de jure separated, forming respectively the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, resolved the civilizational crisis and recorded the final collapse of the Roman civilizational matrix.

### Overcoming the consequences of the division of civilizations

The favorable location of Western Europe contributed to the strengthening of market institutions in the institutional core. The population explosion at the beginning of the second millennium caused active colonization of empty European lands. New settlements arose, cities flourished, under the patronage of feudal lords and kings interested in the development of trade, which ensured an influx of duties. The growth of trade required the development of infrastructure (good and safe roads, bridges). New crafts appeared (for example, cloth production), which began to generate great income.

As a rule, the artisans who made up the main population of the city united into social corporations (guilds); this is a hybrid type of institution, which is not uncommon in transitional societies [34]. On the one hand, the workshops were created to withstand yesterday's peasants in new conditions; they are based on the idea that only a collective can be a force. The workshops were distinguished by strict organization and isolation from the outside world, which implied preferential communication and even marriages within such an association. Workshops are an institution that has the features of a redistributive type. However, the leadership of the workshop was elective. In addition, there was no equalizing principle for the distribution of workshop income, as a result of which this institution also had market-type characteristics.

Wealthy members of the guilds, traders, and landowners were members of the elected bodies of city government. The autonomy of the city from the power of the feudal lord was often achieved through ransom. Independent cities established connections with each other, created agglomerations or even unions, for example, the Hanseatic League. Thus, economic market institutions led to the emergence and strengthening of political and sociocultural institutions (individualist worldview).

The strong spiritual power in the West was the Roman Catholic Church. A clash developed between the popes and European kings for political dominance. Its stages were: the struggle for the joint participation of representatives of spiritual and secular authorities in acts of investiture of vassal bishops, recognition of the infallibility of popes, the right to carry out military actions in various regions of the world in the name of God (crusades). The



Church created special paramilitary structures, which were the vanguard of the crusades and the colonization of new Christianized lands – spiritual knightly orders. Their members, as a rule, were the younger sons in feudal houses (due to the right of inheritance, or primacy, that existed in Western Europe, they could not count on their father's possessions). Smoothing out the social consequences of primogeniture, the Catholic Church was an active participant in the formation of Western civilization [33].

From the beginning of the 14th century, the Roman Church began to lose influence in Western Europe, which was largely due to the modification of this institution – the penetration of market elements into its structure in the form of trade in indulgences. The Western European path of development for the following centuries was finally determined: the dominance of secular power with a strong spiritual power, playing the role of an institutional balancer, and strengthening market institutions. At the same time, the civilizational matrix of Byzantium was taking shape: an institutional core of the redistributive type and a shell, the specificity of which was determined by the Orthodox faith, ethnic diversity, and proximity to the Mediterranean Sea, a strong influence of Roman and Greek cultures and technologies, and a constant threat to the existence of the empire. The empire's being in a state of permanent war led to material costs that annually ate up to 70% of the budget, and, as a consequence, the conservation of the existing order [17]. It was not the economic sphere that determined the political one, but vice versa. G. G. Litavrin noted that the Byzantine Empire was the only country in the European Middle Ages whose monarchical system preserved the features of ancient Asian despotisms, where subjects owned property as long as it pleased the despot. At the same time, the subjects themselves were a kind of property [17].

In this situation, the emperor's expenses were difficult to calculate in advance, so he was granted the right to collect not only ordinary, but also emergency taxes. At the same time, the state was the guarantor of the rural community in case of crop failure. This led to the formation of state paternalism and a "moral economy", which cultivated the predominance of "We" over "I", the idea of tradition as the highest value in comparison with innovation, and egalitarian values.

However, the institutional core of the Byzantine civilizational matrix contained not only dominant redistributive institutions, but also complementary market ones in the form of emerging private land ownership and commodity-money relations in developing provincial cities. But these institutions were weak, and the aggressive external environment did not allow them to develop and fulfill its function as an institutional balancer.

The imbalance of the institutional core of Byzantium (excessive strengthening of redistributive institutions with extremely weak development of market ones) did not allow it to overcome the consequences of the civilizational crisis.

Thus, the institutional differences between the Western and Eastern Roman Empires were the primary factor that caused the civilizational crisis and the split between the Western Christian and Eastern Christian civilizations. The stages of this process are identified: the first stage is characterized by the emergence of heterogeneity of the institutional core of the civilizational matrix; this stage manifested itself in the division

of the Roman Empire into Western and Eastern parts; the second stage is characterized by the division of the institutional core into parts with alternative institutional matrices and the deformation of the "shell" (cultural and religious features), which was observed by the middle of the 7th century; the third stage of the civilizational crisis is characterized by the emergence of a crack in the shell, covering all its components, this stage ends with a civilizational schism (which occurred in 1054 during the division of the Western Christian and Eastern Christian churches *de jure*). For the development of civilization, it is necessary to strengthen the dominant institutions in the institutional core and create balancers (complementary institutions) that contribute to the sustainable development of society.

## Conclusion

The conducted research shows that the cause of a civilizational split is the emergence of two spatially separated institutional systems (civilization cores), institutional matrices of alternative types, in the depths of the "parent" civilization. A civilizational crisis is characterized by a prolonged stage-by-stage development and can end, as in the case of the Roman civilization, with a split, manifested, in particular, in the cultural and religious features of the resulting "fragments". The condition for the formation of new civilizations from them is the strengthening of dominant institutions in the new institutional core and the creation of balancers (complementary institutions).

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# Features of Socio-Political Processes in Abkhazia (Abkhaz ASSR) in the 1930–1940s

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**Abstract.** The article examines Stalin's repressions in Abkhazia in the 1930s and 1940s. The author revealed the specifics of socio-political processes that took place under the influence of Stalinism. As a result of the study, the main directions of Stalin's repressive policies in Abkhazia were identified. Attempts to destroy the political and cultural elite, infringe on the rights of Abkhazians and other peoples living in Abkhazia are described in detail. Official data on the forced change of the ethnic composition of the population and the persecution of representatives of the political elite are provided, as well as the conditions of Georgian-Abkhazian interaction during this period are analyzed. The author drew a conclusion about the tragic impact of Stalin's repressions on the development of the Abkhazian statehood, the preservation of national identity, as well as the construction of Georgian-Abkhazian relations.

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**Keywords:** Stalinism, Abkhazia, repression, resettlement policy, linguocide, statehood

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## Introduction

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 became a catalyst for interethnic conflicts and the beginning of armed clashes in the post-Soviet space. One of the results of the existing contradictions was the Georgian-Abkhaz war of 1992–1993. Although the elimination of the centralized system of power gave rise to open aggression, the real causes of the war should be sought in the origins of the conflict itself, which began long before the end of the USSR was recorded.

Joseph Stalin, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b), and his policy of forcibly integrating the Abkhazian Soviet Socialist Republic into Georgia are

largely involved in the aggravation of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict. The decisions taken during his leadership formed the main trends in Georgian-Abkhaz relations, the subsequent development of which led to the war. The interethnic contradictions that already existed at the time of the establishment of Soviet power in Abkhazia and Georgia were cultivated by the Stalinist policy of the 30–40s of the XX century, which increased tension between the neighboring republics.

The chronology of the study is determined by the fact that it was from the mid-1930s that Stalin's repressive policy intensified in Abkhazia, deteriorating the political and social situation in the region. As the Georgian government strengthened, the Abkhaz government lost the ability to control the processes taking place in the republic. In the 1920s, all decisions taken here were the result of agreements between the central Soviet government and the Abkhaz government itself. This was facilitated by the friendly relationship between Stalin and the head of the Central Executive Committee of Abkhazia, Nestor Lakoba. His assassination in 1936, as well as the downgrading of the status of Abkhazia in 1931, became the starting point for the open infringement of the rights of the Abkhazian nation, which up to that point he had been able to defend. The repressive policy against the Abkhazian population continued both until Stalin's death and until the collapse of the USSR, depending on which aspect of the repression is being discussed. But the events that have been taking place since the late 1940s can actually be considered a natural consequence of the policy developed and implemented by Stalin after Lakoba's death.

The object of the study was Stalin's repressive policy in Abkhazia in the 1930–40s, and the subject is the socio-political processes provoked by this policy in the republic during the same period. The purpose of the article is to highlight the features of Stalin's repressions in Abkhazia. The relevance of the research topic lies in the fact that the establishment of the specifics of Stalinist repressions in Abkhazia is a necessary condition for understanding the current political situation in which the Republic of Abkhazia finds itself. In particular, the study focuses on the contradictions that arose in Georgian-Abkhaz relations during this period.

For a clearer understanding of the situation in Abkhazia in the early 30s of the XX century, as well as the specifics of the relationship between Abkhazia and Georgia, the reader is offered a brief summary of the conditions in which the Abkhazian Soviet Republic arose. In particular, the author draws attention to the important ethnodemographic and political changes in Abkhazia that took place before the beginning of Stalin's repressions.

One of the key issues in the process of establishing Soviet power in Abkhazia was the issue of the country's state status. Abkhazia has been counting its statehood since the creation of the Abkhazian Kingdom in the VIII century. However, over time, the state status of the country has changed. For example, at the time of joining the Russian Empire in 1810, the Abkhazian Principality was one of the few states in Transcaucasia that received the status of autonomy. Many of the neighboring Georgian principalities (Kartli-Kakheti Kingdom, Imereti, Guria, etc.) have already been abolished by the tsarist administration

[15]. However, in 1864, as a result of the Caucasian War (1817–1864), the principality was transformed into the Sukhumi district and subordinated to the administration of the tsar's governor in the Caucasus [6:3–7]. In Abkhazian historiography, the process of establishing Soviet power in Abkhazia marked the restoration of Abkhazia's sovereignty. Although this point of view is disputed by Georgian researchers, who interpret the fact of the creation of the SSR of Abkhazia as a «trick» of the central government, but are unable to deny it due to the presence of supporting normative legal acts [7–9]. It is noteworthy that back in 1917 The local government body created here, the Abkhazian People's Council, developed international relations in three directions: integration into the Union of the Caucasian republics (in particular, the entry of Abkhazia into the Mountain Republic), the establishment of equal relations with Menshevik Georgia (from the signing of the good-neighborly agreement on February 9, 1918 to the occupation of Abkhazia by the troops of Georgian General Mazniev), as well as rapprochement with the RSFSR.

On March 4, 1921, Soviet power was established in Abkhazia. On March 28–29, 1921, a meeting of senior officials of the Caucasian Bureau of the RCP(b), the Central Committee of the KP(b) of Georgia and Abkhazia was held in Batumi on the issue «On the structure of the Soviet Power and the Communist Party in Abkhazia», at which a resolution was drafted according to which Abkhazia was declared a “socialist Soviet republic”. Based on this, on March 31, 1921 The Revolutionary Committee of Abkhazia adopted the declaration “On the Formation of the Abkhazian Soviet Republic”. The Central Committee of the RCP(b) approved the resolution of the Batumi meeting and the Declaration of the Revolutionary Committee (hereinafter – the Revkom) of Abkhazia. On May 21, 1921, the Revkom of Georgia accepted the declaration “On the Independence of the Socialist Soviet Republic of Abkhazia”, in which it “recognizes and welcomes the formation of the independent Socialist Soviet Republic of Abkhazia...” [13:114–121]. Nevertheless, the republic soon came under pressure from the center, which advocated its unification with Georgia. Stalin's economic isolation became the main instrument of pressure. So, back in September 1921, when Abkhazia had the status of a Soviet republic, he wrote to the secretary of the Central Executive Committee A. Enukidze: “Abkhazia is an autonomous part of independent Georgia, hence it does not have and should not have independent representatives under the RSFSR. Therefore, she cannot receive a loan from the RSFSR” [6:84–100]. And on July 5, 1921, at a meeting of the Plenum of the Kavburo of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) with Stalin's participation, a resolution was adopted on conducting party work «towards the unification of Abkhazia and Georgia in the form of an autonomous republic that is part of Georgia». November 14, 1921 a statement by the first Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee (MRC) of Abkhazia, Efrem

Eshba, was published to the Central Committee's Kavburo, in which he insisted on Abkhazia's entry into the Transcaucasian Federation as the fourth republic. In response, the Kavburo of the RCP(b) adopted a resolution on November 16, 1921, which stated: “To consider the existence of independent Abkhazia economically and politically inexpedient”; it was proposed either to unite on a contractual basis with Georgia, or to become an autonomous region in the RSFSR [13:114–121].

In February 1922, the SSR Abkhazia united with the SSR Georgia on the basis of a «special union treaty». Formal independence was maintained until February 11, 1931. The downgrade of the state status was only the first point in the plan to eliminate Abkhazia as an independent state. This is followed by the purposeful destruction of the Abkhazian nation through the use of various kinds of repression – from attempts at intellectual and physical destruction to the replacement of the indigenous people by settlers.

## Materials and methods

The study of Stalinist repressions in Abkhazia is complicated by the high political importance of this topic. It often happens that the positions of the Abkhaz (S. Z. Lakoba, T. M. Shamba, V. A. Chirikba, etc.) [6, 13, 15] and Georgian (M. Lordkipanidze, Z. Papaskiri, M. Matsaberidze, etc.) [7–9] researchers when considering the same manifestations of Stalinism in Abkhazia are strikingly different. The existing diversity of opinions emphasizes the relevance and controversy of the chosen topic. In an effort to achieve maximum objectivity in his research, the author relied not only on the work of domestic scientists, but also analyzed the publications of Georgian authors on the chosen topic. Nevertheless, the degree of study of the directly stated topics in Georgian historiography leaves much to be desired. Despite the numerous works challenging the state-legal status of Abkhazia in the 20s of the XX century, only a few of them mention the events that will be discussed in this article. It seems that this is being done in order to conceal the unfavorable moments of the joint history for Georgia.

It is worth noting that another aspect that complicated the study was the negligent attitude of the officials involved in recording information, for example, about the number of convicted citizens, penalties or the true motives of the accusation. Repeatedly, in the framework of the study, the author had to deal with incorrect or incomplete data on the fate of victims of Stalinist repression in Abkhazia. For example, it is known that many of the convicted citizens who were sent to correctional labor for 10 years without the right to correspond soon died, but according to the documents they were still alive for some time. It should be understood that the actual number of repressed persons cannot be established, since not all sentencing acts have been properly documented. This means that the data used in the study will always be relative and approximate. The work on establishing the number of victims continues today. Thus, non-profit organizations engaged in collecting and publishing lists of memory of victims of repression, such as Memorial<sup>1</sup>, Open List (database of victims of political repression in the USSR (1917–1991), Immortal Barrack, etc., made a great contribution to the process of forming the research source base. Of immediate importance is the study of not only archival data, but also the memories of repressed officials, their family members and ordinary citizens. The mental portrait of the Stalinist



period in Abkhazia is clearly reflected in the memoirs of Adile Abbas-oglu<sup>2</sup>, in the family archive and memoirs of Irina Vardania<sup>3</sup> and the works of N. N. Ioanidi [3].

In order to objectively study the topic, the materials of both Abkhazian (S. Z. Lakoba, T. A. Achugba, B. E. Sagaria, etc.) [1, 6, 10] and Georgian researchers (M. Lordkipanidze, Z. Papaskiri, M. Matsaberidze, etc.) [7–9].

The source base of the research includes official documents: state normative legal acts, in particular: Resolutions of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the Central Committee of the CPSU, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and local Soviet authorities, decrees of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, as well as archival documents of the NKVD (orders, sentences, court decisions). It is important to mention that during the Georgian-Abkhazian war of 1992–1993, the State Archive of Abkhazia was destroyed. When working with Abkhazian archival data, the author had to rely on collections of documents published before 1992, as well as on preserved information<sup>4</sup> [2].

Within the framework of the study, the use of the structural-diachronic method prevails. It allows us to track the development of socio-political processes that took place in Abkhazia from the early 30s to the late 40s of the XX century.

## Discussion

The author has identified several characteristic directions of Stalin's repressive policy in Abkhazia (the Abkhazian ASSR) in the 30–40s of the XX century, each of which affects separate socio-political aspects.

### Mass repression and persecution of the Abkhaz political elite

On December 28, 1936, the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Abkhazian ASSR, Nestor Lakoba, died during his business trip to Tbilisi. From that moment on, the flywheel of repression began to actively unwind in Abkhazia.

On July 20, 1937, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Georgia, L. Beria, sent Stalin a letter «About counterrevolutionary groups in Georgia». He claimed that N. N. Bukharin and A. I. Rykov had created a local counterrevolutionary organization, which allegedly included Nestor Lakoba. According to Beria, Lakoba personally launched the work of the right in order to create an independent Abkhazia under the protectorate of England and Turkey. Beria said that he intends to shoot «at least 1000 people from among the K. R. rightists, Trotskyists, spies, saboteurs, wreckers,

<sup>2</sup> Daughter-in-law of Nestor Lakoba, Chairman of the Central Election Commission of Abkhazia in the 20–30s. Abbas-oglu A. I can't forget. Moscow, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> The daughter of Anatoly Vardania, a politician and associate of Nestor Lakob. The daughter for the father is... responsible! (Secrets of the family archive of Anatoly Vardania and Veronica von Belinsky) / Comp.: S. Lakoba, A. Dbar. Sukhum, 2018.

<sup>4</sup> The Abkhazian publicist Ekaterina Bebia, who collected documents before the destruction of the Abkhazian archives in 1992, shares a significant amount of data in her works.

etc.»<sup>5</sup> He did not include former kulaks or criminals in this number, but Nestor's family and friends were offered arrest because they «behave suspiciously»<sup>6</sup>.

From October 30 to November 3, 1937, an open trial was conducted «over a counterrevolutionary, wrecking, espionage organization in Abkhazia», in which 13 people – comrades, relatives and colleagues of Nestor Lakoba – were being held. Also known as the «Case of the Thirteen Lacobians», the trial ended with the death sentence imposed on all participants. On the list of those arrested, even before the trial began, there was a resolution by L. Beria, which read: «To shoot» [6:132–136].

Repressions were carried out against the entire Abkhazian intelligentsia. The initiated cases were held under the following names: «Horsemen», «Abkhaztorg», «Anthropoids», «Dynamite», «Diplomats», «Iranians», «Punishers», etc. Death sentences were imposed on the basis of falsified data and tortured testimony. In the case of the Abkhazian youths from 1937, four underage boys, from 13 to 15 years old, Rauf Lakoba and his brothers, were tried. All of them were shot on July 6, 1941<sup>7</sup>.

According to S. Z. Lakoba, from July 1937 to November 1938, 2186 people were repressed in Abkhazia; 748 of them were shot, 377 disappeared without a trace in prisons, many «found their end in camps» [6:132–136].

### Resettlement policy and changes in the ethnic composition of the population

The Great Terror of 1937–1938 was just the beginning of a new, no less difficult stage of Stalinist repression in Abkhazia. Terror did not stop either during the Great Patriotic War, or even more so in the post-war period. On the contrary, Abkhazia was on the verge of complete disappearance due to accelerated ethnodemographic changes in the country (see Table 1).

It is worth noting that even before the establishment of Soviet power, the key role in changing the ethnodemographic situation in Abkhazia was played by «mahajirism» – the massive, forced resettlement of the Abkhazian people, which occurred as a result of the Caucasian War of the XIX century, the uprising of 1866 in Abkhazia, the Russian-Turkish war of 1877–1878. For example, a similar disastrous consequence of the Russian-Turkish War of 1877–1878 was the forced eviction of about 50.000 Abkhazians to Siberia and Turkey, as a result of which Abkhazia was «deserted». Thus, as a result of the resettlement of the 60–70s of the XIX century. The number of Abkhazians in the country has decreased to almost 46.000 [1:105–106]. For the first time in their history, the Abkhazians found themselves in a minority on their own territory [14:10].

Such conditions simplified the process of colonization of the region and formed the basis for the formation of a multiethnic population here. The imperial authorities began

<sup>5</sup> A note by L. P. Beria to I. V. Stalin about counterrevolutionary groups in Georgia. July 20, 1937. Available from: <https://istmat.org/node/31615>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Rauf Lakob Memorial Day. Available from: <http://lakobamuseum.ru/24-06-2022>.

**Table 1.** The ethnodemographic structure and population of Abkhazia (on the materials of statistical studies conducted in different periods)

years	abkhazians	kartvelians	russians	armenians	greeks	total
1886	589636	4166	971	1049	2149	69184
1897	58697	25875	5135	6552	5393	104449
1914	91450	14731	4978	7980	9922	132538
1916	111780	37414	21978	15794	10627	197593
1926	55918	67494	20456	30048	27085	202927
1939	56197	91967	60201	49705	34621	294600
1959	61193	158221	86715	64400	9111	379640
1970	83097	213322	79730	73000	13600	462749
1977	77000	200000	93000	75000	14000	503000
1989	93267	239872	74913	76541	14664	499357

Source: Shamba T. M., Neproshin A. Yu. Abkhazia. Legal foundations of statehood and sovereignty. Moscow, 2004. URL: [http://apsnyteka.org/228-abkhazia\\_pravovye\\_osnovy\\_gosudarstvennosti\\_i\\_suvereniteta\\_glava1.html](http://apsnyteka.org/228-abkhazia_pravovye_osnovy_gosudarstvennosti_i_suvereniteta_glava1.html)

to develop the deserted lands, distributing them to the settlers as rewards and organizing Russian settlements. Gradually, Greeks, Russians, Bulgarians, Germans, Mingrelians, Armenians, etc. settled in Abkhazia. However, local climatic conditions and the diseases caused by them (in particular, malaria) slowed down the development of the region [12:88–96]. Neighboring Western Georgia took advantage of this by launching an active process of settling the Abkhazian lands. For the most part, the Megrelians settled in the vacant plots, incited to this not only by the difficult economic situation, but also by the publications of Georgian public figures. The program developed by the Russian government accelerated this process, and by the end of the 19th century Georgians, Megrelians and Svans made up a quarter of the population of Abkhazia [12:96–99].

The result of the Russian-Georgian struggle for the development of Abkhazia was a change in the ethnodemographic composition of the population. According to the All-Russian Population Census of 1897, the population has almost doubled since 1868. At the same time, the number of Abkhazians was 58.700, Georgians and Megrelians – 25.000, Russians – up to 6.000, Armenians – from 1.300 to 6.500, Greeks – from 2000 to 5.400 people [1, pp. 137–138]. Historian T. A. Achugba notes that already in the Soviet period, from 1926 to 1939, the composition of the population of Abkhazia changed again. The number of Russians, Armenians and Greeks increased by 40.000, 20.000 and 7000 a person, in accordance [1:137–138]. It is worth noting that leading Georgian historians prefer to keep silent about the fact of active settlement of Abkhazia by Georgian immigrants and focus on the number of Russians resettled here [7:214–216].

The purposeful settlement of Soviet Abkhazia by Georgians began in 1937, after the trust «Abkhazpereselenstroy» was established, which set as its task the construction of ethnic settlements for immigrants from Georgia. The land fund for these needs was developed through the confiscation of plots of Abkhazian villages. The situation worsened as the central policy of the USSR changed. Resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR of 1939 № 1447 the creation of a Resettlement Department under him was approved, which was entrusted with the direction of agricultural migrants from low-land areas to multi-land areas<sup>8</sup>. The report of the State Planning Committee of Abkhazia to the Government of 1940 states that the resettlement is taking place «on the initiative of the beloved son of the Georgian people, Comrade L. P. Beria», with the aim of «developing a huge amount of “undeveloped lands” for centuries»<sup>9</sup>. It is obvious that the report manipulates data on the land situation in the country, ignoring the real prerequisites and causes of land devastation in the form of a mass outflow of population. This is also evidenced by the resolution of the Council of People's Commissars of the Georgian SSR of September 2, 1941 № 1595 «On cutting off surplus undeveloped lands from 12 collective farms of the Abkhazian ASSR and transferring them to newly organized collective farms from resettlement farms»<sup>10</sup>.

And on April 25, 1940, the Council of People's Commissars of the Georgian SSR adopted a resolution «On measures for the further development of tea farming, citrus crops, viticulture and high-quality winemaking in the Georgian SSR», which accelerated the process of settling Abkhazia with new immigrants<sup>11</sup>. In 1941 alone, despite the outbreak of World War II and the corresponding military expenditures, 28.9 million rubles were allocated for the improvement of collective farm settlements. By this time, 11 resettlement collective farms had already been built, accommodating 1.650 families. By 1944, it was planned to increase the number to 5.404 families [1:197–228].

The main problem of the resettlement policy was the creation of an artificial prevalence of the Georgian population in the Abkhazian territory. Relying on numerical superiority, the visiting Georgians have repeatedly influenced political decision-making in Abkhazia, turning them in their favor and not taking into account the position of the Abkhazians. In addition, speaking about Soviet Abkhazia, Georgian researchers often complain that the interests of the large Georgian population were not the main guideline of Abkhazian policy, as if implying infringement of the rights of Georgians here [7:214–216]. At the same time, they are not confused by the fact of the origin of this Georgian «majority», nor the need to represent Abkhazian interests, at least at the level of the Abkhaz government itself.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution №. 1447 of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR. Moscow – Kremlin. September 14, 1939. Abkhazia: the documents show. 1937–1953. Collection of documents. Sukhum, 1992:22–24.

<sup>9</sup> From the report of the State Planning Committee of Abkhazia to the government. 1940. Abkhazia: the documents show. 1937–1953. Collection of documents. Sukhum, 1992:44.

<sup>10</sup> Resolution No. 1595 of the Council of People's Commissars of the Georgian SSR on September 2, 1941 «On cutting off surplus undeveloped lands from 12 collective farms of the Abkhazian ASSR and transferring them to newly organized collective farms from resettlement farms». Available from: <http://doc20vek.ru/node/1531>

<sup>11</sup> Resolution No. 13 of the Council of People's Commissars of the Abkhazian ASSR and the Bureau of the Abkhazian Regional Committee of the KP(b) of Georgia. Available from: <http://doc20vek.ru/node/1527>

## The mental destruction of Abkhazians: from linguocide to persecution of the intelligentsia

The outbreak of the Great Patriotic War not only did not prevent the implementation of the resettlement policy, but also contributed to unpunished encroachments on the national identity of the Abkhazians. During this period, the policy of infringement of the indigenous ethnic group, which began in the 30s of the XX century, is actively continuing. For example, on August 17, 1936, the Resolution of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR «On the correct spelling of names of settlements» was adopted. According to this document, the names of three Abkhazian cities, including the capital, were translated into Georgian (Sukhum – Sukhumi)<sup>12</sup>. A year before, the Central Election Commission of Abkhazia and, in particular, its chairman N. Lakoba appealed to the central government to assign names to Abkhazian settlements in their native language (for example, Sukhum – Akua; Akhali-Afoni – Psyrdzha, etc.). The memo noted the inexpediency of translating toponymy into Georgian, which does not correspond the ethnographic origins of the Abkhazian names. Of course, the offer was rejected<sup>13</sup>.

At the same time, radio broadcasts in the Abkhaz language, newspaper and magazine publications were closed. Persecution of Abkhazian authors began, books of repressed writers were seized (S. Chanba, L. Labakhua, S. Ashkhatsava, Z. Agrba, B. Zantaria, etc.). Signs with Abkhazian inscriptions were removed throughout Abkhazia, the use of the Abkhazian language in office work was prohibited<sup>14</sup>.

The repressions did not stop either. This time, the Abkhazian intelligentsia was subjected to them, and cases were reopened on falsified charges. A detailed description of these repressions, as well as information about the persons subjected to them, is provided by historian B. E. Sagaria [10:20–22].

Intensive efforts have begun to assimilate the local population into the Georgian cultural environment. School education and the use of the Abkhaz language have undergone fundamental reform. Back in 1938, the Abkhaz alphabet was translated into the Georgian graphic basis. Since 1940, the name of the Abkhazians has disappeared from official circulation. In January 1945, a commission was convened to reorganize Abkhazian schools. It was stated that it was necessary to translate education in schools from Abkhaz (in the first three grades) and Russian exclusively into Georgian. The reason was the difficulties in learning that arose from students who allegedly did not speak their native languages. It was also mentioned about the insurmountable complexity of the Abkhaz language, which complicated the educational process [11:88–96]. The Abkhazian Pedagogical College was

12 Resolution of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR «On the correct spelling of names of settlements» // Abkhazia: the documents show. 1937–1953. Collection of documents. Sukhum, 1992:488–489.

13 The Central Executive Committee of the Soviets, Workers', Peasants' and Red Army Deputies of the ASSR. Abkhazia – to the Central Executive Committee of the USSR. Copy: To the People's Commissariat of Communications of the USSR. 1935. A memorandum by [Nestor Lakoba on the renaming of Abkhazian settlements] // Ibid:486–488.

14 Avidzba A. F. Abkhazia in 1945–53. History of Abkhazia. A course of lectures. Sukhum, 2021:358–364.

liquidated, which led to a change in the personnel in educational institutions in favor of Georgian teachers who came from Georgia<sup>15</sup>.

The personnel imbalance existed not only in the field of education. As A. M. Khashba notes, in 1938 it was impossible to find a single abkhaz in either government or trade bodies<sup>16</sup>. As for the consequences of the reorganization of schools, the academic performance of students in primary school has declined sharply. It was 66.1% in the 1945/46 academic year, a figure lower than it has ever been. Academic performance in grades 5–8 decreased to 48.9% [5].

Discrimination based on language caused natural discontent in the Abkhazian society. Some parents announced a boycott of schools, not allowing children to attend classes. There were cases of denunciations of Abkhazians who called the reforms an initiative of the current Georgian government of Abkhazia, «which hates Abkhazians»<sup>17</sup>. The popular sentiments of this period are reflected in the so-called “Abkhazian letters”, which are part of the national liberation movement of the Abkhazians. In 1947 representatives of the Abkhazian intelligentsia (K. Shakryl, B. Shinkuba, G. Dzidzaria) a letter was sent to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) A. Kuznetsov, in which the facts of the infringement of the Abkhazian people were cited, and the current situation was called a national cultural genocide<sup>18</sup>.

## Eviction of other ethnic groups of Abkhazia

The continuation of the policy of changing the ethnodemography of Abkhazia was the mass deportation of Greeks living here in 1949. According to the Abkhazian historian-archivist N. Ioanidi, the prerequisites for this event arose much earlier than its implementation. For example, according to his information, from 1938 to 1949, Greeks were not mentioned in Abkhazian newspapers as permanent residents of the region. In addition, he believes that the replacement of Greek leaders with cadres of other nationalities was carried out. During the same period, Greek schools and theater studios were closed [3:11].

On May 17, 1949, in a secret decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) “On the eviction of Greek subjects”, a plan for the deportation of Greeks was adopted. The purpose of this operation was declared to be the “cleansing” of the Black Sea coast, Georgia and Azerbaijan from “politically unreliable elements”<sup>19</sup>.

Researcher T. Achugba believes that the true motive for the eviction of the Greeks was the liberation of the territory for Georgian immigrants who received empty houses free of

15 Abkhazia: the documents show. 1937–1953. Collection of documents. Sukhum, 1992:481–531.

16 Khashba A.M. Abkhazia in the era of Stalin's totalitarian system. // History of Abkhazia. A course of lectures. Sukhum, 2021:358–368.

17 The memorandum. About certain statements of some anti-Soviet-minded people in the Gudauta district, in connection with the introduction of education in the Georgian language in Abkhazian schools Available from: <http://doc20vek.ru/node/1511>

18 Abkhazia in the Soviet era. Abkhazian letters (1947–1989). Collection of documents. Volume 1. Sukhum, 1994:81–86.

19 The decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) “On the eviction of Greek subjects, former Greek subjects who currently do not have citizenship, and former Greek subjects who have been accepted into Soviet citizenship”. May 17, 1949. In: Pobel N. L. Stalin's deportations. 1928-1953. Moscow, 2005:665-666.



charge [1:228–229]. This was indicated by the fact that the decree on the deportation of the Greeks contained a decree on the placement of newly arrived Georgians in their homes. On May 28, 1949, the decision was fixed by order, and Turks and Dashnaks of the Georgian SSR, Armenian SSR and Azerbaijani SSR were added to the Greeks in the list of deportees.

It is important to note that in 1942, Greek foreign nationals had already been evicted. The wave of resettlement in 1949 became the second phase of the deportation of the people [3:21–23]. Thus, from June 14 to 16, 4,830 families (28,043 people) were evicted: Turks – 361 families (1,058 people), Greeks – 4,474 families (21,837 people), Dashnak Armenians – 45 families (148 people). On July 17, another 1,092 Greek families (5,124 people) and 10 Turkish families were expelled under the pretext of voluntary desire. Thus, in 1949, about 34,000 people were deported, 22,000 of whom were Greeks. The migrants were sent to Kazakhstan, whose government took care of the economic arrangement of the arrivals. 60% were employed in unprofitable collective farms, 20% – in state farms [4:35–36]. The forced eviction continued until the arrest of L. Beria in July 1953, and the rehabilitation of the evicted peoples by the government took place only in 1956.

## Conclusions

Stalin's activities, which unfolded after the assassination of the leader of Abkhazia Nestor Lakoba in 1936, put the Abkhazian people on the brink of survival, limiting their rights to a fair personnel policy, as well as depriving them of the opportunity to speak and develop in their native language in their own state. Stalin's repressions in Abkhazia, which included the extermination of the intelligentsia, the persecution of dissent, the closure of national schools and even the expulsion of entire peoples, left a heavy imprint on the entire population of the country. The problems that arose in the 30–40s of the XX century were not solved during the XX Congress of the CPSU in 1956 and the «Khrushchev thaw», not later, as they affected much more ambitious aspects than the need for amnesty for political convicts or the elimination of instances of extrajudicial sentencing. In particular, Stalinism in Abkhazia (the Abkhazian ASSR) led to tension in relations with the Georgian ethnic group, to the formation of a tendency to infringe on the rights of the Abkhazian people, to the problem of preserving the Abkhazian national identity and to the almost complete destruction of the political elite. Not only Abkhazians themselves were subjected to repression, but also Greeks, Armenians, Estonians and many other representatives of the Abkhazian Republic.

In general, Stalin's repressions in Abkhazia (the Abkhazian ASSR) not only radically changed the ethnic composition of the population, provoked a decrease in state status and led to a decrease in the number of the Abkhazian population, but also determined the further course of history in the region. It was during this period that the foundations of the confrontation between Abkhazia and Georgia were laid, which in 1992 led to the Georgian-Abkhazian war. The territory of Abkhazia turned out to be the object of claims by indigenous residents and settlers supported by the central government. Stalin's death in March 1953 and the arrest of L. Beria in 1956. The repressive policy was suspended for a while. It was a

short respite within the framework of the national liberation struggle of the Abkhazians, which will soon resume and last for more than a decade.

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## Contribution of the author

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# Iskanderkul Expedition of 1870: Contribution of the Russian Orientalist A.L.Kuhn to the Preparation and Editing of the «Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition» by A.Mustajir

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the analysis of the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870, organized with the aim of exploring little-known territories along the eastern border of the Zarafshan district and the southern border of the Syrdarya region. The main attention is paid to the role of the orientalist A.L.Kuhn in conducting the expedition and his contribution to the preparation of the “Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition” Mirza Mullah “Abd ar-Rahaman, son of Muhammad Latif Mustajir. The article notes the strategic importance of this expedition for Tsarist Russia and emphasizes the role of A.L.Kuhn, who has deep knowledge of Eastern cultures and languages. He paid special attention to the language and culture of the Tajiks of the Zarafshan Valley. The article highlights the relevance of cooperation between Russian researchers and local authors for the study and preservation of the cultural heritage of Central Asia in the context of geopolitics, ethnography and language studies. The Iskanderkul expedition and A.Mustajir’s “Diary” are important sources for the study of history, ethnography, spiritual culture and socio-economic conditions of life in the upper reaches of Zarafshan in the second half of the 19th century. This study is relevant for understanding the historical and cultural context of Central Asia, especially the upper reaches of Zarafshan.

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**Keywords:** A.Kuhn, Iskanderkul Expedition of 1870, A.Mustajir, «Diary», Zarafshan District, linguistic studies, historical significance

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## Introduction

During the period of hostilities associated with the annexation of the territories of Central Asia to the Russian Empire, systematic efforts were made to collect manuscripts and archives, as well as to form archaeological and ethnographic collections. Along with orientalist, a significant contribution to the study and documentation of ancient monuments was made by the Russian officers participating in the expedition, who were distinguished by a high level of education. A special, outstanding contribution to the study of Central Asia was made by the Russian scientist and orientalist Alexander Ludvigovich Kun<sup>1</sup>.

In 1870, due to the lack of exploration of the territory of the upper reaches of the Zarafshan River, it was decided to organize a scientific study of this zone. For this purpose, a reconnaissance detachment was created, consisting of specialists and military personnel under the command of Major General A. K. Abramov<sup>2</sup>. This detachment, called the “Iskanderkul” or “Iskander-Kul Scientific Expedition,” had military tasks, including the complete conquest of the upper Zarafshan valley.

Despite the primary military goals, the Iskanderkul expedition also included outstanding scientists and specialists. Their main goal was to conduct a comprehensive scientific study of the areas involved in the expedition. This multi-tasking underlines the complex nature of the research enterprise undertaken by the Russian administration in the upper reaches of Zarafshan.

The scientists and specialists who were part of the expedition were called upon not only to support the military effort, but also to evaluate and document the geographical, natural and ethnographic features of the region. Their participation in the expedition underscores the Russian administration’s desire for a systematic and comprehensive study of this previously little-known territory.

Among the expedition participants were geologist D. K. Myshenkov, who was responsible for geological research<sup>3</sup> (1841–1906), A. L. Kuhn was an archaeologist and philologist responsible for the study of the region in these aspects. Captain A. D. Grebenkin<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Way of writing the name A. L. Kun may vary in different historical sources, being represented as both “Kun” and “Kuhn”. However, when he himself used the Latin alphabet, he consistently preferred its German variant, “Kuhn”. In this article we adhere to the Russian form of his name, which A. L. Kuhn used when publishing his articles in Russian pre-revolutionary newspapers and magazines. His secretary, A. Mustajir, is mentioned in the “Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition” and “Note on the Moscow Exhibition” as “Iskander-tyure”, and A. L. Kun himself used this nickname (pseudonym) in several of his publications in various issues of the *Turkestan Gazette* newspaper.

<sup>2</sup> Abramov Alexander Konstantinovich (August 28 [September 9] 1836 – October 21 [November 2] 1886) was a participant in the Central Asian campaigns, lieutenant-general of the Russian army.

<sup>3</sup> Myshenkov Dmitry Konstantinovich (1841–1906) – Russian geologist, geographer and mining engineer. He also served as an official with special assignments for the mountainous part under the Turkestan Governor-General.

<sup>4</sup> Grebyonkin Afanasy Davydovich (1840–1888) was an officer of the Russian Imperial Army, holding the position of colonel. He was also awarded the title of Knight of the Order of St. George, 4th degree.

(1840–1888) collected statistical and historical data. P. A. Aminov<sup>5</sup> (1844–1899), who held the position of General Staff officer in the detachment, supervised research work and the collection of topographical and geographical data, L. N. Sobolev<sup>6</sup> (1844–1913) was engaged in identifying places for astronomical research.

The expedition also included sapper E. Voronets and a resident of Samarkand, Tajik A. Mustajira, who acted as mirza (secretary) of the orientalist A. L. Kuhn. Subsequently, during the movement of the military team from the village of Obburdana, starting from June 2, 1870, A. P. Fedchenko<sup>7</sup> (1849–1873) and his wife O. A. Fedchenko<sup>8</sup> (1845–1921) joined them for naturalistic research. They were included in A. K. Abramov's team, also joined by A. M. Skassi, responsible for topographic data, and warrant officers of the II Turkestan battalion N. P. Startsev, assistant officer of the General Staff P. A. Aminov for collecting data on these regions, and others. Using the cover of military detachments, they collected extensive scientific data in the fields of geology, biology, archaeology, history, ethnography and philology.

## Materials and methods

The research is based on two manuscripts from the archives of the St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences: № D 133 (old code 609g) and № D 134 (old code 609h). Manuscript № D 133 is a diary kept by a Tajik resident of Samarkand, Mirza Mullah 'Abd ar-Ra'haman, ibn Muhammad Latif Mustajir<sup>9</sup>, in the period

<sup>5</sup> Baron Aminov Johann-Friedrich-Gustav Aleksandrovich (1844-1899) was a lieutenant-general, an active participant in the Turkestan campaigns and the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878. He also served as a governor during the Kuopio period of his career.

<sup>6</sup> Sobolev Leonid Nikolaevich (June 9, 1844, Toropetsk district – October 13, 1913, Toropetsk district) was a Russian infantry general and participant in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878. In addition to his military service, he also served as a Prime Minister of Bulgaria.

<sup>7</sup> Fedchenko Alexey Pavlovich (7[19] February 1844, Irkutsk – 3 September 1873, Mont Blanc) was a Russian scientist, biologist, geographer and traveler specializing in the study of Central Asia, primarily the Pamirs. During his travels throughout Central Asia (1868-1871), he collected extensive material on the flora, fauna, geography and ethnography of the region. His main scientific works concerned parasitology and entomology. Fedchenko discovered the Trans-Alai Range and, unfortunately, died on Mont Blanc. In his honor, a glacier in the Republic of Tajikistan, discovered by an expedition led by V. F. Oshanin in 1878, was named the Fedchenko glacier.

<sup>8</sup> Fedchenko Olga Aleksandrovna (1845-1921) – Russian botanist and corresponding member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences since 1906 (since 1917 – the Russian Academy of Sciences). The wife of Alexei Pavlovich Fedchenko, the daughter of Moscow University professor A. O. Armfeld and the mother of Boris Alekseevich Fedchenko.

<sup>9</sup> Many researchers make mistakes in using A. Mustajir's name, probably due to the misspelling of his name as "Mirza Mulla" Abdurrahman, son of Muhammad Latif Mustajir. The use of capital letters before the words "Mirza" and "Mulla" is considered inaccurate, since "Mirza" is a title that can mean 1) prince, emir-zode, and 2) writer, secretary. The word "Mulla" (or "Mullah"), also known as molla, comes from an Arabic word translated as lord, ruler. In Persian, this term is denoted as "malá", and also has synonyms: 1. literate, educated, learned, learned; 2. Mullah, clergyman, sheikh; 3. Educated, meaning uneducated. In the Islamic tradition, a mullah is a spiritual leader with knowledge of the Koran and religious rituals. In the Russian Empire, the term "mullahs" was widely used to refer to various Muslim spiritual leaders, including madrassa teachers and qualified scholars. In the Shia tradition, the mullah plays a key role in the religious community, serving as a theologian and expert in the interpretation of matters of faith and law, while in the Sunni tradition these functions are performed by the ulema. In this article we adhere to the form "Mirzo Mullah Abdurahman son of Mahmed Latif Mustajir", which was used by the orientalist A. L. Kuhn when writing the preface to the "Diary".

from April 25 to June 27, 1870, in the Samarkand Tajik dialect. Manuscript D 134 is similar to D 133 in content and design, but was not edited by A. L. Kuhn. The research is also based on materials from the archive of A. L. Kuhn at the St. Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

The method of textual criticism and the method of comparative analysis are used. These methods and materials provide a deeper understanding of A. L. Kuhn's contributions in the preparation and editing of the "Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition" and his role in preserving and interpreting the historical records of this expedition.

## Discussion

In the history of exploration of Central Asia, the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 occupies an important place, representing a significant event. Organized with the aim of exploring little-known territories along the eastern border of the Zarafshan district and to the southern border of the Syrdarya region, this expedition set itself a number of tasks.

This expedition was carried out with the aim of restoring order in the regions of Upper Zarafshan, which were in a state of conflict with the Bukhara Khanate. The expedition was sent to territories where there were tense relations between the local population and the Bukhara Khanate. The main task is to restore order in the region subordinated to Bukhara Bekstvos: Falgar, Matcha, Fan, Yagnob, Farab and Kishtud. The expedition provided Russia with the opportunity to expand its borders and integrate mountainous territories into the empire. Due to the uncertainty of relations with the Bekstvos of the Falgar Bekstvo, there was a possibility of attracting these territories to Russian citizenship. In addition to scientific research, the expedition had important political significance, given rumors about the natural wealth and strategic position of the region. Resolving conflicts and restoring order had a military component, emphasizing Russia's influence in the region. The expedition not only solved current problems, but also created the basis for future research. Geographical, geological, archaeological and historical research provided detailed information about the region, which laid the basis for further research and management of the territory. The expedition contributed to establishing Russian control over the region and maintaining political stability. The return of order and the establishment of friendly relations with the local population created the preconditions for strengthening Russia's influence in Central Asia.

Following the signing of a peace treaty with Bukhara in 1868, Russia accepted the emirate as its protectorate. However, mountain raids continued to disrupt stability in the region, and Russia took decisive action to stop these raids.

The Russian command developed a strategy for conducting an offensive campaign with the goal of establishing control over the rebel bekstvos south of the Fergana Valley. This would strengthen Russia's influence in Central Asia and secure the borders of the Bukhara Emirate and the Khanate of Kokand.

On April 25, 1870, the Iskanderkul campaign began, during which Russian troops under the command of Major General A. K. Abramov faced resistance from local residents

and mountain refugees. As a result of several limited military engagements, the Russian army achieved victory, demonstrating the effectiveness of its tactical actions and dispersing the enemy.

The losses of Tsarist Russia amounted to 5 killed and 32 wounded, while the enemy suffered significant losses – 16 prisoners and 1.5 thousand heads of livestock. Victory in the conflict created the conditions for the annexation of the territories of several mountain bekstvos, strengthening Russia's position in the border areas.

The Iskanderkul campaign became a key moment in the history of Central Asia, as a result of which Russia strengthened its influence and ensured stability in the border areas. This conflict also contributed to the establishment of control over the mountain bekstvos, helping to ensure the security of the Bukhara Emirate and the Khanate of Kokand.

Thanks to the materials of the Iskanderkul expedition, including research articles by A. L. Kuhn [6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18] and "Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition" by A. Mustajir [1, 3, 4], the upper reaches of Zarafshan attracted attention scientists. These materials became available to a wide range of researchers in the field of social sciences and humanities who are interested in the history, ethnography, material and non-material culture of the population of the region, especially in the second half of the 19th century.

Among the scientists who made a significant contribution to the study of this region, were pre-revolutionary Russian scientists, including military ones, for example, P. A. Aminov, N. Maev, V. V. Stasov, as well as modern researchers such as B. V. Andrianov, associate professor N. D. Miklouho-Maclay, as well as A. D. Karimov, academician A. Mukhtorov, professors A. L. Khromov. B. V. Lunina, A. L. Khromova, Kh. Sh. Kamolova, S.N. Brezhnev, associate professors O. I. Smirnova, O. M. Yastrebova, M. Yu. Yuldasheva, M. S. Isakova, U. A. Sultonova, Sh. Yusufi, and N. Ikromova [2–5; 13, 16–20]. These scholars continue to expand our understanding of Central Asia and its history, especially in the context of this orientalist's contributions to the history of the region.

The works of the above-mentioned scientists and researchers not only enrich our knowledge about Central Asia, but also contribute to the preservation and transmission of the historical and cultural heritage of this region. They maintain interest in this important topic among researchers and the public today. It is important to note that when preparing this article, we consider it necessary to refer to the works of the above-mentioned authors, which allows us to dive deeper into the scientific work of A. L. Kuhn and his role in collecting information, describing and preparing the historical diary of A. Mustajir – "Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition".

The result of the research of the participants of the Iskanderkul expedition was valuable information in various fields of knowledge, such as geography, history, ethnography, anthropology, philology, demography, zoology, botany and meteorology of Kuhistan. Throughout the expedition, a diary was kept, which became an important historical source and recorded many observations and data collected during the research [5, p. 133].

Moreover, scientific works based on the results of the Iskanderkul military expedition were published between 1870 and 1875 and were presented by authors such as A. L. Kuhn,

A. P. Fedchenko, A. D. Grebenkin, P. A. Aminov and others. These works became the first steps in the study of Kuhistan within the framework of Russian and European oriental science.

Especially A. L. Kuhn was a "field" Orientalist scholar at the end of the 19th century. He was of mixed origin: his mother was an Armenian from Tabriz, and his father was a Prussian from Memel<sup>10</sup>.

It is interesting to note that Alexander Ludvigovich Kuhn, in his research and expeditions, actively collaborated with local educated people, including A. Mustajir, who was from Samarkand and one of the first local researchers of ancient artifacts and history. Their joint activities bore fruit, including participation in expeditions and research in the region.

A. Mustajir took part in the famous Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 under the leadership of General A. K. Abramov, in which. also participated A. L. Kuhn. A. Mustajir served as a translator and collected valuable materials, including inscriptions on rocks, roadside stones, building walls and tombstone inscriptions. His diaries contained valuable information about ancient monuments and the life of the population in the regions of Bukhara, Shakhrisabz, and Khiva.

The collaboration between A. L. Kuhn and A. Mustajir produced valuable results and had an important impact on the study and understanding of the history and culture of Central Asia. From 1870 to 1875 A. L. Kuhn accompanied Russian troops on various military expeditions, collecting extensive information on folklore, linguistics and ethnography. The secretary, A. Mustajir, often helped him in this work, including in the study of "daftars" from the archives of the Khiva khans.

During the expedition, Kuhn's secretary, A. Mustajir, kept a diary in Tajik, including a chronicle of the detachment's movements, a description of the area and stories of local residents. This diary was compiled on the instructions of A. L. Kuhn and was personally corrected by him. Some stories recorded during the expedition remained in his archive, not included in the diary. For example, in the copy (№ D 134 (609h)) the original version of the "Diary" is recorded; the text written by A. Mustajir is sometimes crossed out with blue ink and a black pencil, and new words, phrases and sentences appear in its place. Most of the sentences and phrases written are literary and the changes made are local idioms and phrases of Samarkand or Kuhistan. However, it is difficult to say whether this edition is related to the author of the Diary, or whether it belongs to A. L. Kuhn. The second situation is really rare. This type of editing begins with [11. 4, 1b, 2a and 26] and appears on many pages. The copy belonged to A. L. Kuhn until his death, and only in 1890 it was transferred to the treasury of the Asian Museum RAS.

In the period from April 30 to June 29, 1870, Mustajir kept his diary, starting from the village of Yori [3, l. 1b] and ending in the city of Samarkand (fol. 304b). The last entry in the diary is dated 14 Rabi al-Akhir 1287 Hijri, which corresponds to July 14, 1870.

<sup>10</sup> Klaipeda (Klaipėda; until 1923 and in 1939-1945 officially known as Memel; German Memel) is the third largest city in Lithuania after Vilnius and Kaunas. Located in the western part of the republic, it is where the Baltic Sea meets the Curonian Lagoon. It is the administrative center and the largest port in terms of cargo volume in the Baltic countries.



A. Mustajir's "Diary" is a valuable source of information about the geography, nature, ethnography and social structure of the region covered by the expedition in 1870.

Let us recall that A. L. Kuhn instructed mirza mullah Abd ar-Rahaman, the son of Muhammad Latif Mustajir, to keep a travel diary and provided a pre-compiled program in the Tajik language, close to the programs published by the Russian Geographical Society of that time. According to the daily records of Mustajir, A. L. Kuhn checked the names of places and added what was not noticed by the translator. A. Kuhn also kept his own notes. He collected ethnographic data personally in the presence of A. Mustajir, who recorded what he heard in the Tajik language.

It is noticeable how A. L. Kuhn strives for completeness and accuracy of the collected materials. He talks about the methods and techniques he used in his research process, such as Mirza's keeping a travel diary and his emphasis on pinpointing the names of places. This approach allows him to systematize data and collect the most detailed information possible.

From the "Preface" to the "Diary" of A. L. Kuhn, several conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, the author focuses on the discovered ancient inscriptions made on rocks and boulders. He makes a distinction between two types of inscriptions: the first, on chert rocks, are simple and ungrammatical records which, in his opinion, have no historical significance. The second ones, on boulders, are of greater interest, since they can be used to determine the time of settlement of villages. Kuhn draws attention to the linguistic diversity of the inscriptions, noting that most of them are written in Tajik, with some exceptions in Arabic.

Secondly, the author regrets the impossibility of collecting all the inscriptions due to the rapid movement of the detachment and lack of time. This highlights the difficulties and limitations that explorers faced during their expeditions.

The third important point is the note about the education of Mirza, who kept a diary. A. L. Kuhn emphasizes his specialization in calligraphy and notes that this kept his speech simple and close to everyday language, making the diary more understandable and authentic.

In general, the foreword by A. L. Kuhn's "Diary" conveys his deep interest in the horsemen of Zarafshan, its inhabitants and their culture. This introduction allows the reader to become immersed in the research, understand the methodology and challenges of the work, and appreciate the scientific and historical significance of the data collected.

Finally, A. L. Kuhn ends the passage with an expression of hope for the completion of the diary and for the preparation of notes and translation for the next year. This indicates his commitment to providing complete and interpreted material for future readers and researchers.

"The Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition" is a valuable source for historians, ethnographers and philologists, providing information about the upper reaches of the Zarafshan that is not always available from other sources. The reliability of the Diary is ensured by the fact that it was compiled under the guidance of a specialist scientist who controlled the objectivity of the entries. However, despite the lack of translation, the Diary remains an important scientific document.

Despite extensive research regarding the "Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition" by A. Mustajir, the contribution of the orientalist A. L. Kuhn's contribution to the editing and preparation of this diary remains relevant for researchers, including historians, and retains its scientific significance to this day.

## Conclusion

The Iskanderkul campaign of 1870 became an important stage in the history of Russia's relations with the region and emphasized the strategic importance for ensuring stability and influence in Central Asia.

The expedition to Iskanderkul in 1870 became a key event in the history of the study of Central Asia, in particular the upper reaches of Zarafshan. The results of this expedition and the "Diary" written by A. Mustajir with the assistance of the Russian orientalist A. L. Kuhn, have outstanding scientific and historical significance. This article focuses on the revival of interest in this expedition, its historical significance and contribution to the understanding of the culture of Zarafshan in the second half of the 19th century.

The materials of the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 and the "Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition" by A. Mustajir are significant sources for the study of the history and culture of the Zarafshan region. Contribution of orientalist A. L. Kuhn's preparation of research work, his ability to understand and record the language and culture of the local population, distinguish him as a key participant in this direction.

The expedition and A. Mustajir's "Diary" highlight the importance of cooperation between Russian researchers and representatives of local cultures in the study and preservation of the cultural heritage of Central Asia, especially in the upper reaches of Zarafshan.

The Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 has outstanding historical and cultural significance. It took place at a time when the Russian Empire was actively expanding its possessions in Central Asia, representing one of the first attempts to systematically study the upper reaches of Zarafshan and the surrounding area of Lake Iskanderkul.

A. L. Kuhn, as a Russian orientalist, was specially appointed to collect extensive material about the language, culture, history and ethnography of local peoples. These materials were important both for scientific research and for the military-strategic policy of Tsarist Russia in the region.

"The Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition" is a unique source containing extensive information about the life and customs of local residents, the geographical features of the region, as well as the political situation and relationships between various communities in this region. This provides researchers with valuable materials for studying the history and ethnography of Central Asia in the 19th century.

At the end of the study, several key conclusions can be identified. Firstly, the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 represents a strategically important event in the history of Tsarist Russia, being an attempt to explore little-known territories along the eastern border



of the Zarafshan district and to the southern border of the Syrdarya region. The expedition was made possible thanks to the participation of orientalist A. L. Kuhn, who has deep knowledge of Eastern cultures and languages.

The article emphasizes the role of A. L. Kuna in the preparation and editing of the “Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition” by Mirza Mullah 'Abd ar-Rahaman, son of Muhammad Latif Mustajir. A. L. Kuhn becomes a key figure, paying special attention to the language and culture of the Tajiks of the Zarafshan Valley. This indicates not only the scientific significance of his work, but also the importance of preserving the cultural heritage of the region.

The study emphasizes the relevance of cooperation between Russian researchers and local cultures in the context of geopolitics, ethnography and language studies. This collaboration has fostered a deep understanding of the region's cultural diversity and is an important element in preserving this heritage.

In the course of the research devoted to the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 and the contribution of the orientalist A. L. Kuhn in the editing and preparation of the “Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition” by A. Mustajir, the key aspects that determine the significance of this historical event were highlighted.

One of the important conclusions is that the 1870 expedition led by A. K. Abramov became a significant stage in the history of studying the region of the upper Zarafshan in Iskanderkul. The influence of this event is due not only to scientific achievements, but also to the formation of traditions and research methodology that influenced subsequent oriental studies.

The work also revealed the contribution of A. L. Kun in editing the “Diary of the Iskanderkul Expedition”. His professionalism and attention to detail have played a key role in preserving and transmitting reliable information about those times, emphasizing the importance of collective participation of scientists in the preservation of historical heritage.

In the future, for future research on this topic, attention should be paid to a more in-depth analysis of not only the scientific, but also the sociocultural aspects of the Iskanderkul expedition. The possibility of using modern methods and technologies to more fully recreate the context of events of that time should also be considered.

In conclusion, it should be emphasized that the study of the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 and the contribution of A. L. Kuhn have not only historical, but also actual significance for the modern scientific community. This demonstrates the importance of preserving and studying cultural heritage for understanding history and shaping future scientific approaches.

Finally, a study of the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870 and the contribution of A. L. Kuhn's editing of A. Mustajir's “Diary” represents an important contribution to the study of the history of the upper reaches of Zarafshan and the role of orientalists in the preservation and transmission of the cultural heritage of this region. Analysis of these aspects allows us to more deeply understand not only the events of the past, but also the research methodology during that period, as well as the influence of one scientist on the formation of the historical narrative. This study becomes relevant in the context of

understanding the historical and cultural development of Central Asia, especially in the light of the upper reaches of Zarafshan.

Thus, the Iskanderkul expedition of 1870, in addition to its scientific significance, played a key role in establishing control by Tsarist Russia over the little-known territories around the upper Zarafshan. Its results predetermined subsequent steps in the integration of these regions into the Russian Empire, and also influenced the formation of the political map of Central Asia.

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## Contribution of the author

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# The Impact of the Cold War on the Afghan Society

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the policies of the global players of the Cold War using the example of Afghanistan. Noting the features of the Afghan policy of the Cold War, the author highlighted the key content of the very concept of the Cold War, political events in Afghanistan, internal and external challenges, ethnic problems and the problem of women during the Cold War. The influence of geopolitical processes on the development, internal and external interests of Afghan society in the 20th century, the social, economic and political consequences of the Cold War, features of the development of the political system and political culture of Afghanistan, ethnic problems in Afghan public discourse, etc. are considered. The author concludes that “The Cold War of the superpowers had a direct impact on internal political developments in Afghanistan, where parties and public organizations emerged as political structures with secular or Islamic ideology. The author comes to the conclusion that the internal political unity of Afghan society was not ensured for the reason that the Afghan elite was unable to form an ideology expressing national unity, and its individual parts preferred to serve the interests of one or another player without supporting the national interests of Afghanistan.”

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**Keywords:** Afghanistan, Cold War, Afghan crisis, political incubation, Islamic value system, conservative society

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## Introduction

In the Central Asian region, the security system is inextricably linked with the global security system; traditional challenges and new ones dynamically manifest themselves here.

In the 20th century serious processes took place around Afghanistan and Afghan

society, which directly and indirectly led to the formation of a crisis in Afghanistan and the Central Asian region as a whole. The Afghan war, which tested the system of checks and balances of the Cold War, helped to assess the risks of confrontation and the possibilities of responding to the challenges of the two military-political systems.

The object of the study is changes in Afghan society under the influence of the Cold War, and the subject is political and social-normative changes in Afghan society in the 1950-80s.

The purpose of the article is to identify the features of the social and humanitarian policy of Afghanistan during the Cold War.

To achieve the goal, we have set the following tasks:

- to study the reasons for the split in the Afghan elite, the influence of external and internal factors on these processes;
- to describe the dynamics of the development of the party system.

## Materials and methods

The scientific basis of the research is the works of Russian and foreign researchers: R. Akhramovich [1], M. Slinkin [6], A. Lyakhovsky [5], V. Spolnikov [8], V. Korgun [3], V. Maliya [16], B. Rubin [18], R. Nevel [17] and other authors.

The research was carried out on the basis of an interdisciplinary approach, historical, comparative and statistical methods, on the principles of historicism and objectivity, on a systematic study of internal and external influences on the social policy of Afghanistan

## Discussion

In the Central Asian region, international terrorism, religious extremism and ethno-national separatism, drug and weapons trafficking, and illegal migration have found fertile ground. Here the interests of many participants in international relations intersect, global powers such as Russia, China and the USA, the EU, or regional ones such as Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and India, as well as international organizations such as the UN, NATO, OSCE, CSTO, SCO and others acts.

In the 20th century, Afghanistan and Afghan society were closely involved in world politics and geopolitical shifts and became one of the axes of competition in a bipolar world. The political, military, social and cultural consequences of the Cold War are most visible in Afghan society.

### Model content of the Cold War

The Cold War, as a confrontation between two opposing systems and ideologies, is a phenomenon of the 20th century and arose after two world wars, when international

relations ceased to be only Eurocentric [13:207], the ideology of the conflict changed. It has already appeared not only as a specific action or goal, but as a multi-level and disintegrative phenomenon.

Modern historiography offers various approaches to understanding the Cold War, which are based on one or another idea important for the formation of a bipolar world. Since the 1990s the studies examine not only economic (energy), political, diplomatic and social reasons, but also cultural and informational ones.

If we consider the Cold War as a form and means of conflict, then the slogans and information mechanisms used by the two warring parties (“better red than dead”, “anti-communist danger”, “colonial peoples in the light of the “torch of freedom”<sup>1</sup>, “no to capitalist exploitation”<sup>2</sup>), indicate that the Cold War was a period of slowdown after the rapid improvement of the socio-economic existence of post-war society, the search for new patterns of development, which was manifested in the patterns of civilizational conflict (threat of nuclear war, ideological confrontation, Marxism – the danger of the spread of Leninism, paradigms of revolutionary-imperial power etc.).

The Cold War, which unfolded between the USSR and the USA in the 1940s–1980s, was a special form of international conflict in which ideological struggle, political and diplomatic competition, and threats to use force interacted.

The history of post-war Soviet-American relations witnessed a complex process of hostility and rivalry combined with elements of cooperation. This combination created the conditions for the two superpowers to help each other build and maintain a certain world order (bipolar world order), and for other countries to survive in conditions of intense competition and hostility.

The resulting model manifestations of the Cold War were in different parts of the world – from Cuba to the Far East, where, through the distribution and balance of interests of the two superpowers, they implemented a policy of control over the rest of the world. It is possible to identify a number of specific models in which the Cold War policy manifested itself in “warm” tones. Thus, models can be divided into: Korean, Cuban, Vietnamese, Middle Eastern, Afghan and others, where pre-escalation, escalation and post-escalation stages of conflict development are noticeable.

These models have significant similarities and differences, since the regions and instruments of the Cold War policy at different times had technical, ideological, military-strategic and other differences. The only indicative phenomenon was the principle of controllability (transformation) of the Schelling conflict [10]. Indeed, every conflict that arose and developed in third world countries developed in the interests of one of the warring parties; the race for expansion of influence in third world countries led to competition (using “soft power” technologies), and then to the use of mechanisms of mutual deterrence and finally to escalation.

<sup>1</sup> Soviet anti-American posters. Posters from the Cold War. Available from: <http://surl.li/mwdwl>  
<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## Afghanistan in the maelstrom of the Cold War

Being a multinational state burdened with religious, economic and communication problems, Afghanistan, represented by its political elites, also tried to connect with the two opposing centers of the Cold War in order to use positional opportunities, the geopolitical significance of the country, and develop easy connections with technological centers.

This is caused by extreme poverty and lack of technology. The basis of the policy was especially the benefits of combining the possible interests of world players during the period when Mohammad Daoud was Prime Minister. As M. Dowd liked to say: "I feel happier when I can light my American cigarette with Soviet matches" [18:37].

Dowd's experience with the commercialization of foreign policy in the 1950s. allowed foreign investors to invest in areas of economic and strategic importance to the country, from energy security to the military. Afghanistan entered into cross agreements with both the United States [1:126, 117] and the Soviet Union, thus being drawn into the whirlpool of a geopolitical alliance between the two superpowers. The policy of Soviet economic support for Afghanistan, which some Western researchers characterized as an "economic attack" [11:124], was intended not only to rebuild the economic type of the Afghan state, but also to try to contribute to the Afghan mission of "nation building", secondly, attempt to incubate the communist political system.

US economic interests are primarily related to the desire to benefit from changes in the political map of the region, since the destruction of British colonial rule opened up the prospect of American political and economic expansion. US Afghan policy in the 1950s. was aimed at stopping the regional advance of the Soviet Union, and investment projects carried out in the Highland Valley were aimed at precisely this goal.

During the first period of Prime Minister Mohammed Daoud's activity, despite the economic and military-financial support provided by the Soviet Union to Afghanistan, discussions of the "Pashtunistan problem" and territorial problems with the Pakistani side several times dragged the country into real wars. The moderate successes of the domestic policy of the M. Daoud regime, combined with secondary attention to Afghan interests in foreign policy, undermined the stability of the regime.

The geopolitical disposition of forces in the post-war Central Asian region was unfavorable for Afghanistan. With the formation of the new state of Pakistan in 1947 on the southern and southeastern borders of Afghanistan, Afghanistan received a potential enemy who would later become a military and political ally of the United States. In the early 1960s. the aggravation of Afghan-Pakistani contradictions and the deterioration of relations were considered by local opposition conservative forces as a result of a deviation from the traditional paths of political and economic development (limitation of the power of traditional elites and clergy, especially in the Pashtun tribal zone, some social reforms) of the country [12:37]. In such a situation, it was understandable that Zahir Shah demanded in March 1963, in the interests of ensuring internal political stability and restoring relations with Pakistan, the resignation of Prime Minister Mohammad Daud, who was replaced by

Mohammad Yusuf. This was the most visible schism in the system of government, the foundations of which lead to the politics of the Cold War.

In the post-war period (after 1954), not only the economy and military potential grew, but also the intellectual and cultural level of part of society. Foreign investment contributed to the polarization of public opinion, which was an indicator of the political crisis.

The last attempt to modernize the social and state system, the Constitution of 1964, although it established the existence of a constitutional-monarchical system in Afghanistan, provided the executive, legislative and judicial authorities with ample opportunities for independent activity, but did not establish legal restrictions on the power of tribal and religious leaders. This attempt at modernization, despite its progressive elements, did not respond to existing internal and external challenges, as a result of which the country faced new crises and political upheavals [6:535].

The political freedoms and opportunities provided by this Constitution have shaped the possibilities for the progress of Afghan society and political culture. Political parties with their own press and parties began to form in the public sphere. In parallel with the formation of the party system, various political movements and views began to emerge. For example, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan was aimed at establishing a socialist system in the country, and the goal of the radical party layers was the Islamic revival and strengthening of religious ideology in Afghanistan [15:30]. Two opposing factions [5:259] also provided the ideology and finances of these parties, because of which both the Soviet Union and the West used the party system and its potential to resolve political, economic and even cultural issues within Afghanistan.

The task of all governments [1:122] that followed M. Daud was to prevent the collapse of the existing "democratic" value system, and those medium-term solutions with which they tried to solve the existing public and social crisis had the opposite effect.

Along with the activities of those party bodies that developed liberal, progressive ideas, fundamentalist organizations "Muslim Youth" and other organizations that received financial and ideological support from Pakistani, Egyptian and other fundamentalist organizations were also active, i.e. there was also hidden presence of the Western bloc. The crisis was entering its climax.

The development of social and political thought was greatly influenced by the newly created parties and their media, and the main object of their influence was the urban, mainly Kabul, educated mass of the population.

In this context, the activities of the newspapers "Khalq" and "Parcham", published by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, were noted, as well as the ideological and political activities of the teaching staff of the theological faculty of Kabul University [8:12, 56], who, uniting around themselves progressive and radical strata of society have become a real opposition to the current government and an indicator of a split in the elite within the state.

Let us emphasize that in the 1960s the two blocs have reduced not only geopolitical interest in this country, but also financial support and investment policy in Afghanistan.



For example, US investment in the late 1960s decreased several times<sup>3</sup> [17:144], and Soviet ones – approximately twice<sup>4</sup> [17:144].

In the context of such a geopolitical reality, former Prime Minister M. Daoud again came to power in 1973. The coup was accomplished precisely because of his reputation [6:418].

Daoud's domestic political experience, the involvement of various political forces and organizations in the sphere of political and state activities led to the formation of the "Afghan model" of the republican order, as defined by the Afghanist V. G. Korgun – "progressive Afghan nationalism", which then turned into "national nationalism", or "Daudism" – social progress without violence, reforms under the slogans of Islam, ideology without imitation of others [3:379]. There is a noticeable complementary component in Daoud's foreign policy, and in order to ensure the neutrality of foreign policy, the latter excluded from the management levels both representatives of the pro-Soviet (People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan) and the radical, left-wing extremist opposition ("Afghan Mellat", "Shoalei Javid") [3:379, 381]. The main goal of this policy was to contain the growing Soviet presence [14:57].

Despite the warmth of relations with the Soviet leadership and mutual visits, during the last period of power of the Daoud regime, there was a noticeable cooling of relations with the USSR, which was the reason for ensuring the Soviet presence by alternative means. The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, in fact, became the only political organization opposing the authorities. Under pressure from official Moscow, two factions of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, Khalq and Parcham, united under a joint Central Committee (Central Committee) [14:17].

The Daoud regime failed to rally around itself all the forces of society capable of ideology, to create a balance of social justice and foreign policy, the accumulated unresolved problems led to a crisis, the attempts of the Daoud government to change the situation (change the constitutional, foreign policy course) were already able to weaken the internal political crisis, and the success of the Saur (April) Revolution of 1978 was the result of this [2]. Whether the USSR was directly involved in the preparation and organization of the Saur Revolution, to what extent it was controlled by Soviet intelligence services, is still not clear, but the revolution and Daoud's departure from his post were in the interests of the regional policy of the USSR. We can agree with the opinion of M. Slinkin that "the Afghan crisis did not fall from heaven overnight. It was the immanent fruit of the political and socio-economic development of the country and society. At the same time, he was not and could not be free from external influence" [6:540].

After the Saur Revolution, Afghanistan was proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, a new government was formed and Nur Muhammad Taraki became the general secretary of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan. Despite the loud ideas and efforts of the revolutionary government, some Western researchers characterize the program of radical reforms as an "incorrectly implemented

<sup>3</sup> US grants and loans to Afghanistan decreased from \$387.9 million (before 1967) to \$1,440 thousand (aid in 1969-1970).

<sup>4</sup> Soviet-Afghan relations. 1919-1969: Doc. and materials / Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan. Moscow: Politizdat, 1971: 202, 231, 242, 254, 310, 343.

program" [16:29], and according to representatives of Russian historiography, the new government showed "excessive radicalism and unjustified haste, ignorance of the nature of social relations in the village and often ignored national characteristics and historical traditions" [3:407; 2:44]. Some Soviet authors expressed the opinion that Taraki was trying to repeat the experience of the USSR in Central Asia. We believe that the intentions of the new government aimed at implementing the program affected social institutions that are important for Afghan society: the establishment of gender equality, freedom of marriage and choice, the prohibition of child marriage, and compulsory school education for girls, which was not accepted by traditional society. However, when raising these questions, the revolutionary authorities underestimated the important role of Islam and the Muslim clergy in the spiritual and social life of Afghan society.

The Soviet side became the main donor of Afghan foreign policy, numerous memorandums and agreements were concluded, the purpose of which was "to ensure the security, independence and territorial integrity of the two countries"<sup>5</sup>.

Disagreements within the elite of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, the decline in the role of Nur Muhammad Taraki and the conquest of power by Hafizullah Amin, the possible abolition of the dominant Soviet presence, the expansion of US security policy and other problems led to the fact that at the end of 1979, Soviet troops entered Afghanistan and carried out the forced removal of H. Amin from power, after which a new, pro-Soviet government was formed. The entry of Soviet troops was justified by the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed with Afghanistan, which was not understood by the international community. The UN General Assembly (A/RES/ES-6/) adopted a resolution "The situation in Afghanistan and its consequences for international peace and security", condemning the introduction of a limited contingent of Soviet troops into Afghanistan (104 votes in favor, 18 countries against and 18 abstained). With this resolution, the UN General Assembly called for the "immediate, unconditional and complete withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan" and granting the Afghan people the right "to determine their own form of government <...> without any interference, <...> coercion or pressure from outside"<sup>6</sup>.

To give an ideological character to the Soviet presence, the USSR began to spread Soviet ideology and established a system equivalent to the Soviet model of government as in other communist countries, while ignoring the customs and culture of understanding power and its distribution in Afghan society. As a result, a negative attitude towards the Soviets grew, a split occurred in the apparent unity of society, which ultimately led to the expansion and public support in Afghan society of religious ideological movements – Islamic fundamentalism.

In the Afghan policy of the Soviet state, local traditions and social sentiments in Afghanistan were not initially considered a priority. Only later Soviet scientists began to study the ethnic problems of the Afghan community and the cause-and-effect relationships

<sup>5</sup> Foreign policy of the Soviet Union and international relations. 1978: Collection of documents / Compiled by I. A. Kirillin, N. F. Potapova. Moscow: International Relations, 1979:223-231.

<sup>6</sup> 6th session – The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security [Requested by the Security Council on 10-14 January 1980. Available from: <https://www.un.org/en/ga/sessions/emergency.shtml>

of the split in society, but even these measures did not make it possible to restore social unity. Soviet approaches and concepts ignored such indicators inherent to the ethnic community as: the importance of ethnicity, public support for leaders and authorities (heroes) in ruling clan systems, and public sentiment. Those programs and activities that were implemented by Soviet military and civilian representatives received support only among representatives of the elite centered on Kabul, and the majority of society did not support the content nor had benefits from the implementation of these programs [7:191–192].

The introduction of a limited contingent of Soviet troops into Afghanistan received conflicting assessments in Russian and Western historiography. Various authors interpret this event from opposite positions, characterizing it as the “Soviet-Afghan war”, “intervention”, “occupation” or “aggression of the USSR”, and as for the need to send troops, it is presented by Western historiography from two positions: as part of “grand strategy” [4:143] expansion of the USSR or as a continuation of security and defense policy. Russian historiography also expressed different opinions about whether the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan was correct and whether it met the interests of the USSR. It is worth highlighting the recognition of the orientalist V. S. Khristoforov that “the decision of the Soviet leadership to send troops to Afghanistan caused enormous damage to the USSR both in the international arena and within the country” [9:373], and according to Major General A. Lyakhovsky, the political goal of the USSR was “support Kabul regime” [5:617-618] and the sacrifices made for it are not justified.

## Conclusion

As a result of the Second World War, the formation of a new geopolitical balance and political-legal relations was accompanied by the formation of a balance of forces and checks, which we call the “Cold War.” The Cold War policy demonstrated its approaches in different regions and countries where they tried to apply military-ideological influence. The strategic, geopolitical position of Afghanistan and internal problems, disproportionate approaches to responding to external and internal challenges served as the basis for considering Afghanistan as a means of ensuring the security of the southern borders of the USSR. The Soviet side developed the Afghan economy, various industries, directly and indirectly influenced the formation of the Afghan elite and internal political relations, and after the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan came to power, it completely transformed its Afghan policy, considering Afghanistan as a springboard of Soviet influence in the Third World.

The Cold War had a direct impact on the internal political development of Afghanistan, where parties and public organizations were formed and ideologically became political bodies carrying the Soviet or Islamic value system. Internal political unity was not ensured because the Afghan elite could not form an ideology expressing national unity, and its individual parts preferred to serve the interests of one or another player.

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The cover design is based on paintings by N. Goncharova.

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Her works adorn private collections, occasionally appear at foreign auctions, and remain relevant in the 21st century.

