



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIOLOGY IN GEORGIA

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the formation and development of sociology as a science studying society in Georgia. The contribution of Georgian scientists and public figures is shown. It is noted that Ivane Javakhishvili stands at the head of the University School of Sociology in Georgia, and Acad. Paata Gugushvili is one of the founders of the Academic School of Sociology (it should be noted that there are not many founders of sociology in Georgia).

Keywords:

Sociology, Formation of Sociology in Georgia, Development of Sociology in Georgia, Sociology in Georgia, Georgian Sociologists, University Sociology, Academic Sociology, Sociology in modern Georgia.

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INTRODUCTION

Sociology as a science has its modest though very interesting history in Georgia. Sociology has been developing in Georgia since the beginning of the 20th century. Its source was European sociology. Indeed, we have never created a sociological theory of world importance and accordingly, we have never had such sociologists as Weber, Toennies, Merton or Parsons and it had its objective reasons, but the necessity of sociology has always been understood by Georgian society. It is a universally acknowledged fact that sociology cannot originate and develop in such a situation where human beings and society are confined on all sides and there are numerous factors hindering the natural development of society. Such was a historically formed situation that in Georgia. The annexing of Georgia by Russia seriously impeded the development of an open democratic science – sociology; during the Soviet dictatorship the science about society was replaced by false Sovietically ideologized "theories". But Georgian scientists still managed, though sometimes at the risk of their lives, to study sociological problems and build the foundations for the best traditions of sociology as an independent science studying society. The issue of existing of Georgian sociology as a sovereign intellectual phenomenon is arguable, but in this case, we should not confuse the social ideas of certain thinkers with sociological theories as such. Sharing certain sociological ideas does not imply being a sociologist. If it were so, then the majority of people would be sociologists.

One thing is to have certain opinions concerning society and the other is the presence of a scientifically justified and empirically solidified theory about it.

Research methods and sources: The article presents theoretical-sociological analysis of the issue through applying the method of logical-sociological analysis of the primary and secondary sources.

Formation and development of sociology in Georgia: On the 21st of July, 1902, a weekly newspaper "Kvali" that was printed in Tbilisi, informed the then Georgian society that a French positivist philosopher August Comte founded a new science – sociology.¹ It can be said that, in fact, it was then that Georgian society at large made its first contact with sociology. Though long before this fact, the best representatives of Georgian intelligence, who studied in Europe and Russia, had information about this new science. The critique of an organicistic sociological theory of Herbert Spencer, a classic of sociology, by genial Vazha-Pshavelais good proof of it.² From the aspect of the development of sociology, activity by a great Georgian writer Grigol Robakidze is worth noting; in 1902 he published 5 articles titled "Letters in Sociology" in a weekly newspaper "Kvali". His reaction to

¹Kvali, a weekly newspaper, #30, Sunday, July 21, 1902 (in Georgian).

²Danelia S. (1927). Vazha-Pshavela and the Georgian Nation. Tbilisi (in Georgian)

“Sociology of Fashion” by Georg Simmel was original.³ From the aspect of the history of empirical sociology, one of the early sociological researches conducted by P. Mchedlishvili who used the method of participant observation deserves attention. In 1903 he published a work “London Tramps” based on this research.⁴ From the very beginning, sociology in Georgia developed in two -academic and university directions. The first course in sociology at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University was scheduled at the social-economic faculty in 1923, lectures in sociology to the first-year students were delivered by Professor Al. Vacheishvili. The same year he published a textbook “Introduction to Sociology”.⁵ It was the first introductory textbook in sociology, which was designed as the first part of a support book (the second part was not published); since 1923 lectures on sociology at Tbilisi University were delivered by Alexander Vacheishvili.

During the same period Irodion Surguladze, who graduated from Yuriev (Tartu) University was invited to the University as a lecturer, and in 1926 Giorgi Naneishvili who had by then returned from Europe, joined the University. All three of them were lawyers, though they made serious contributions to research of sociological problems at the university school of sociology. It is worth noting that one of the important directions of sociological thought in Georgia was the theoretical study of social structure. At the beginning of the 20th century, two directions were formed in this sphere. The first of them gave priority to national elements of social structure and considered nation and nationality as the main sociological categories. Therefore, any social issue was considered in the context of them. The foundation for this tradition was laid by Ilia Chavchavadze. Due to Ilia’s influence, the nation became the starting principle in the sociological works of many thinkers in Georgia at the beginning of the 20th century. Among them, Mikhako Tsereteli, Archil Jorjadze, Dimitri Uznadze, Sergi Danelia and others are worth noting. Mikhako Tsereteli’s work “Nation and Mankind” which was published under his penname “Baton” is rather important for Georgian sociological thought.⁶ M. Tsereteli’s world outlook was formed on the basis of critical consideration of the dominating social ideas. He built a strong foundation for studying the world outlook of a nation in a sociological aspect; via critical reception of the then sociological theories he put forward the social problems of a nation. In opposition to O. Comte’s principle of sociolatry, he thought that nation was a primary sociological category. Mikhako Tsereteli’s “Nation and Mankind” is the first systematic work in the history of Georgian sociology. Archil Jorjadze’s contribution to the sociological conceptualization of the essence of a national being is indispensable.⁷ In his works, we meet with a critical analysis of Western as well as Georgian sociological ideas and an attempt at an original decision of the meaning of national being. A. Jorjadze did not claim to have worked out the basic principles of a sociological theory, though he discourses on various social problems and reveals an interesting attitude to sociological problems. From this point of view, his review of M. Tsereteli’s book “Nation and Mankind” as well as his own

“Sociological Studies” which in main are concerned with the origin of nations, are of certain interest. In this review A. Jorjadze demonstrates his attitude to the organicist theory and the subject of sociology. According to him, the subject of sociology should be a nation and not mankind. It is impossible to imagine the development of sociological thought without Dimitri Uznadze’s contribution. According to him, nation and national culture have the social function of giving the meaning to lives of society and an individual. From the sociological viewpoint, D. Uznadze’s ideas on human, the environment and society, the meaning of a human’s life, social progress, etc. even today evoke interest.⁸ Professor Sergi Danelia’s contribution to the development of sociological thinking in Georgia is important as well. His ideas on social reality were rendered in articles which he published under the penname Dariani. Like M. Tsereteli and A. Jorjadze, for Sergi Danelia the foundation principle was national identity, and it is not surprising that he was interested in the tendencies of the development of a nation and not this or that class ideology.⁹

All the above is related to the direction of Georgian sociology, for which the primary sociological categories were nation and nationality, which should be understandable in the case of a country that lost its independence and was annexed. It was opposed by a second direction represented by the members of the social-democratic party (the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks). Their attitude to the above-discussed direction was rather radical and terroristic. Nation and nationality as primary sociological categories were unacceptable to them. They replaced national by the concept of class and turned the concept of class and its interests into the primary sociological categories. Georgian thinking met the Soviet period facing these world outlook controversies. Establishing the Soviet regime in Georgia cannot be considered a special period in the development of sociology as this act made a negative impact on everything in general and the development of sociological thinking in particular. Since the early 20s of the XX century a monistic -Marxist tendency dominated the sphere of intellectual activity. In particular, every direction in thinking was measured by the same means – consistency or inconsistency with Marxism (which was jokingly called Marxicism). Any theory which deviated from Marxist theory was doomed to perish, therefore the majority of those, who played important roles in sociological or philosophical thinking, left it and resorted to translating philosophical and literary or other types of texts or began to work in particular sciences. It was the way that Sh. Nutsidze, S. Danelia, D. Uznadze and others chose. In difference from them, other thinkers attempted to declare their ideas as a variety of Marxism and thus save themselves. This way was chosen by Konstantine Kapaneli for his original sociological theory – organotropism, though, in fact, this direction had no points of coincidence with Marxism. K. Kapaneli’s organotropism was a new interpretation of biological direction in sociology. He used the regularity of organotropism to explain the crisis of the social world. His theory was an organic synthesis of Nietzsche’s philosophy, aesthetics and sociology. K. Kapaneli was the first

³Kodua E. (1999). Grigol Robakidze’s Sociological Ideas, Tbilisi (in Georgian)

⁴See, P. Mchedlishvili, London Tramps. Tbilisi, 1903 (in Georgian).

⁵For more, see Gugushvili, P. (1966). On Modern Bourgeois Sociology, Tbilisi, p. 121 (in Georgian).

⁶See, Tsereteli, M. (1990). “Nation and Mankind” (Sociological Analysis), TSU (in Georgian).

⁷See, Jorjadze, A. (2010). Letters. Tbilisi (in Georgian).

⁸D. Uznadze demonstrated his attitude to sociological issues in his reviews on Noe Ramishvili’s work (“Historical Materialism”), where he criticized the author for dogmatism. He thought that every work should make us think on problems, therefore critical attitude that is a special characteristic of sociology is so important.

⁹See, Kartoza, B. (1986). Essays on History of Georgian Sociological Thought (10-30-ies of XXc.). Tbilisi, Ch. III. Sergi Danelia. P. 91-159 (in Georgian).

to discuss Georgian and the world literature and arts from the organotropic aspect and relate Georgian spirituality with its world outlook sources. In this context, we should recall the establishing of an artistic union "Arifioni" initiated by Mikheil Javakhishvili, Leo Kiacheli, Shalva Dadiani, Vaso Gorgadze and others. Among them Geronti Kikodze and Konstantine Kapaneli, who both did their best to establish their world outlook (philosophical, sociological, etc.) principles in social life were especially notable figures. In difference from Kapaneli, G. Kikodze was a sceptic, who considered scepticism as a mechanism of analytical thinking and neared the Nietzschean understanding of individualism. In K. Kapaneli's theory the concept of social is pushed to the foreground. It is also worth noting that K. Kapaneli is the first representative of the sociology of literature in Georgia. He was the first to conduct a sociological analysis of Georgian literature. He is an exceptional figure in Georgian science. His original sociological theory - "organotropism" is proof of the fact that Georgians too had an ambition to create original theories in the sphere of sociology. Work on sociological problems at Tbilisi State University lasted till the end of the 20s of the XX century. From then onwards the problems of social philosophy were replaced by the critical survey of the then bourgeois movements. In this respect, we should name Sh. Nutsubidze's and M. Gogiberidze's works in which Spengler and Keyserling were critically analysed. From the aspect of the development of sociology in Georgia, critical consideration of one of the main movements in the new and modern western sociology - organicistic sociology by Konstantine (Kote) Gordeladze (who was sentenced to death because of an accusation of anti-Soviet activities) is rather important. The critical analysis of this movement is given in his book "Organicistic Movement in Sociology".¹⁰

In the epoch of absolutization of dogmatism and Marxism free creative activity was replaced by subjection to party authorities and as a result, some sciences, among them sociology, were repressed. In 1925 a decision was made on ideological issues by the central committee of the Communist Party of Georgia. As a result of this decision, sociology faced serious barriers, and the 1930 discussion on sociological issues was followed by a complete ignoring of sociology. Therefore, at Tbilisi State University (Ivane Javakhishvili State University nowadays) sociology was removed from the list of educational disciplines. In 1931 a discussion on sociology arrived at the prohibition of sociology. That's why since 1931 works on sociological problems were not published either in Georgia or Russia. There used to be exception e.g. a work by Kita Megrelidze "Problems of the Sociology of Thinking",¹¹ but the book was banned and, accordingly, sociology remained taboo. But despite this, we should say that an outstanding Georgian scientist Kita Megrelidze is the founder of the sociology of thinking, and consciousness in Georgia. He built the basis of this important branch of sociology. According to this theory, the specificity of thinking is revealed in its sociability. Only a structural-functional holistic attitude enables us to understand thinking as a free creative activity, and finally as a source of a cultural activity creating values. K. Megrelidze's ideas are interesting from the aspect of the sociology of science as well. In this sphere, he is not any inferior to the theoretician of science John Bernal. Kita Megrelidze's sociology of thinking

consciousness is really a fresh word and a step forward not only in Georgian sociology but in Georgian science in general (and it should be appreciated). At the beginning of the last century, sociological thinking in Georgia mainly developed in a theoretical aspect and it made the impression that there was no empirical sociology in the first half of the 20th century. This stereotype is refuted by Ivane Javakhishvili's sociological researches carried out by him when he worked at Petersburg University. Ivane Javakhishvili carried out three sociological researches and all three are empirical. It means that the author of them is one of the first representatives of empirical sociology in Georgia, but at that period this tradition did not persist so sociology in our country did not develop in that direction. In this case, we should take into consideration the fact that the first steps in the direction of empirical sociology were made during this period in the world sociology and researches carried out by Ivane Javakhishvili are among the first attempts. Ivane Javakhishvili's empirical researches are concerned with the Georgian villages and those Georgian young people who were studying at Russian and European universities. It shows that certain separate empirical researches were carried out, though they did not have a systematic character enough to establish empirical sociology in Georgia.

In 1957 a discussion on historical materialism, sociology and empirical sociological research started in the USSR, the materials reflecting this discussion are analysed in A. Vacheishvili's letter "On interrelation of historical materialism, sociology and specific sociological researches". The discussion opened the possibility of forming sociology as an independent science, establishing and developing centers for sociological research. The first sociological center was formed at Leningrad University (Saint-Petersburg). Analogical processes started in Georgia (we mean the sociological research laboratory at Tbilisi State University headed by V. Qvachakhia) and the sector for sociological research (head Al. Vacheishvili) at Savle Tsereteli Institute of Philosophy at the Academy of Sciences of Georgia). Since then Venor Qvachakhia is considered as one of the founders of sociology in Georgia and the former Soviet Union: the chair of sociology founded by him at Tbilisi State University in 1968, was one of the first in the whole former Soviet Union. A new turn to sociology in Georgia began during the so-called "Khrushchov period" in particular, in 1962. Professor Venor Qvachakhia got acquainted with the work of the Institute of Sociology founded by that time in Leningrad and the sociological laboratory at Leningrad University. It is his merit that for the first time in the Soviet Union a laboratory of applied sociology was established, and in 1968 based on it a chair of specific-sociological research was founded under the guidance of Venor Qvachakhia. Later centers of sociological research were established in the Academy of Sciences of Georgia, the Institute of History, the Institute of Economics, the Ministries of Culture and Health Care, the Ministry of Education (in parallel with the center of educational activities), A. Pushkin Pedagogical Institute. In the 90s of the 20th century analogical center functioned at Tbilisi Institute for teachers retraining, etc. Professor V. Qvachakhia fruitfully, deeply and fundamentally studied the problems of interdisciplinary, systematic intellectualization of the forms of social consciousness and his studies brought him serious acknowledgement at international congresses of sociologists in Evian (France), Varna (Bulgaria) and especially in Uppsala (Sweden). In fact, this success determined the decision to hold a session of an executive committee of the International

¹⁰See, Gordeladze K. (1985) Organicistic Movement in Sociology. TSU (in Georgian).

¹¹See, Megrelidze, K. (1990), Social Phenomenology of Thinking. Tbilisi (in Georgian).

Association of Sociologists in Tbilisi (August 1981), for the first time in the Soviet Union. At this session, Venor Qvachakhia was once more recognized as an outstanding scientist researcher and sociologist. Various international, all-union and republic symposia and scientific conferences were held in Georgia on his initiative. Due to his endeavours sociology was used in planning the social development of Georgia, lecture courses were prepared, and dissertations were defended.¹² Venor Qvachakhia actively participated in a symposium on the unconscious held in Tbilisi. An association of sociologists was established in Georgia; the presidents were Paata Gugushvili and Venor Qvachakhia, later – Professor Eduard Kodua. At the chair of specific-sociological research existed a laboratory studying the sociological aspects of crime (head Professor Anzor Gabiani). Later it was replaced by a laboratory for sociological study of the youth and students. In 1968 the laboratory of sociological research at the university was transformed into a chair of sociology (head V. Qvachakhia). The chair published several collections of articles on the actual problems of sociology. In these articles, special attention was paid to the sociological problems of the young and the critical analysis of the contemporary so-called bourgeois sociology. P. Gugushvili's, V. Qvachakhia's, O. Jioev's, B. Lutidze's, E. Kodua's, G. Asatiani's, A. Kacitadze's, A. Gabiani's, G. Logua's, M. Beqiaia/s, G. Tsuladze's and others' monographs and studies in sociology were published. During that period sociological research was carried out both in theoretical, general sociological and specific and empirical directions.

In 1982 after Venor Qvachakhia's death, the chair was headed by Eduard Kodua. On his initiative, in 1989 at the faculty of philosophy of Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University, sociology was introduced as a profession, which later transformed into a department of sociology, the chair was renamed into a chair of sociology, and the faculty – into the faculty of philosophy and sociology. The contribution made by Professor Eduard Kodua to the development of sociology in Georgia is really great. Professor Eduard Kodua took sociology as a science up to new heights. As to the present situation, after the reorganization of the university, the faculty of sociology was transformed into a direction of sociology and nowadays it is one of the constituent parts of the faculty of social and political sciences. Later, on the initiative of Professor Iago Kachkachishvili social work was added to the sociological speciality at TSU and now it is presented as the direction of sociology and social work. Sociology especially applied sociology has never been left without “governmental attention”. Governments used it to reach their objectives or rejected it altogether. In this respect, we should recall “The Center for Study of Public Opinion” which was formed at the government of Georgia during E. Shevardnadze's leadership, which, in fact fulfilled the governmental orders. One of the founders of sociology, in particular, the academic school of sociology in Georgia (it should be noted that there are not many founders) is academician Paata Gugushvili. His ideas on the subject of sociology, the specificity of sociological knowledge and, in general, the necessity of sociology are still actual.¹³

¹²See, Ketsbaia K. (2016). Sociologists in Georgia, in “Sociology for Everybody”. Tbilisi (in Georgian).

¹³See, Berdzenishvili, A. Ketsbaia, K. (2021). On the Subject of Sociology According to the Critical Analysis of the Western Sociology by Paata Gugushvili. TSU, Faculty of Economics and Business journal “Economics

It was the period when sociology was called “bourgeois” and it was possible to speak or write about it only using hate speech, though an attentive reader will fail to discover it in academician Paata Gugushvili's sociological works. Even more, he as a founder and promoter of this discipline in Georgia gives a positive evaluation to the role of sociology in solving certain pressing social problems (e.g. family and marriage, etc.); he also had perfect relations with the leading figures of sociology of that period. It should be noted that academician P. Gugushvili for years had been a member of the executive committee of the World Congress of Sociologists and was personally acquainted with many corephaei of sociology. An outstanding American sociologist Charles Wright Mills visited Tbilisi in April 1960; during the visit, he had a dialogue with academician P. Gugushvili on actual issues of sociology. C.W. Mills recalled this meeting in his “Letters” in 1960 and called it a meeting of friends. The fact that the founder of a radical sociological theory found a friend – academician P. Gugushvili in the Soviet Union is rather telling.

The merit of an academic school of sociology which was earlier represented by the Institute of Demography and Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of Georgia (at present Iliia University Institute of Demography and Sociology under the guidance of A. Sulaberidze) is substantial. The institute established a rich tradition of sociological research which due to forcible merging with Iliia State University (according to the decision of Saakashvili's government) is in danger of disappearance. A certain turning in the development of sociology began with the period of the national government when science was completely emancipated from the false Soviet ideology and began to freely develop. Since then the fear of teaching sociology and distrust of it disappeared. Society realised its necessity, though the culture of sociological knowledge has not yet reached the desirable level. As we have said above, in the years of the Soviet dictatorship, a false Marxist-Leninist doctrine on society – historical materialism was given the functions of sociology; in their attempt to avoid it Georgian scientists resorted to philosophical theories and doctrines on society i.e. they transferred the analysis of sociological problems into the sphere of philosophy. It created the second extreme as sociology acquired philosophical tinting. Sociology is acquiring its originality in present-day Georgia. These are the historical and intellectual surroundings that sociology has to form and develop in Georgia. In addition to Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University (which has all three levels of sociological education – bachelor, master, doctor), specialists in sociology on the level of bachelor or master are prepared at Iliia State University, Sokhumi University, Shota Rustaveli Batumi State University. Professors, lecturers and researchers working at these universities together with scientists working at other scientific and educational institutions create a relevant atmosphere in the sphere of sociology. Nowadays in Tbilisi, there are several centers studying public opinion.

CONCLUSION

The present-day Georgian sociologists are in the process of critical assimilation of classical and contemporary sociological paradigms, As a result of this process the

directions, which enable us to properly analyse the social problems of the present society, step by step acquire their outlines. At present it is impossible to imagine that in the civilised countries of the contemporary world ordering and arranging of productive-economic, social-political and cultural life, as well as human interrelations can be reached without sociological service. This process has started in Georgia as well. It will be difficult to succeed in these processes without engaging sociologists in it. We hope that very soon sociologists will work in industrial and agricultural institutions, firms and associations, institutions of political and sociological management, research centers and laboratories, media, advertising agencies and image-centers etc. There is still much to be done from the aspect of institutionalisation and popularization of sociology in our country. The success of this branch of science greatly depends on the "openness" and democratization of society, high levels of sociological knowledge and culture, etc.

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