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SITES OF MEMORY

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Transforming Sites of Memory, Transforming Time: Telavi's Rehabilitation

By Dustin Gilbreath, Tbilisi

Abstract

Sites of memory, under the governance of the United National Movement (UNM), were transformed in their function through rehabilitation programs. Sites took on new functions as sites of reminder of the Rose Revolutionary government and what respondents sometimes described as UNM "terror tactics." Decisions made in the aftermath of the 2012 parliamentary elections about rehabilitation programs, in turn, have again complicated the meaning and memories associated with sites of memory.

Introduction

Claims to 2,000 or even 3,000 years of nationhood are not difficult to find in Georgia (see Pelkmans 2006, Rayfield 2013, Suny 1994). The former president Mikheil Saakashvili was even fond of using the earliest human skulls found outside of Africa, in Dmansi, in southern Georgia, as proof that Georgians were "ancient Europeans." The pride in Georgia over ancient aspects of history is palpable. Yet, the events of more recent Georgian history often have pain and trauma attached to them. Dark events in recent history include the 1992–1993 Abkhaz war, the 1990s during which the country experienced economic and political problems including hyperinflation, civil war and widespread corruption, and the 2008 August war with Russia.

Telavi is a town in eastern Georgia with a large variety of sites of memory varying from traditional sites of memory—e.g. the Telavi historical museum—to less traditional yet still history evoking sites of memory including distinct streets. In this article, I take Pierre Nora's definition of a "site of memory," which coming from French is broader than the English term "site" generally implies. With this definition, sites of memory may include symbols as well as museums, statues, and other monuments. Nonetheless, the sites of memory considered in this article are all physical sites with historical associations attached to them. Sites of memory in the post-Soviet context have received ample attention from social scientists and their work has often focused on the changing meaning of these sites (for another example in the Georgian context, see Baramidze, 2011). This article adds to the numerous examples within the cultural memory paradigm involving sites of memory changing in relation to politics, but also shows the transformation in relation to the frames of time through which inhabitants of Telavi experienced changes in sites of memory.

The article first considers the social context of history in Georgia and its relation to sites of memory. Introducing the "rehabilitation" program initiated by the previously governing United National Movement (UNM), the article describes how memories of the past which sites of memory had evoked were defamed through the

rehabilitation program in Telavi. The article thereafter show how sites of memory, in the socio-political context of the time, were transformed into sites of reminder—a reminder of the then ruling government and as sometimes described by respondents in Telavi, UNM "terror tactics." Thereafter, the article discusses how the UNM tried to project onto the future and eventually how this vision of the future was ruptured after the 2012 parliamentary elections. This rupture in turn, I argue, has likely injected new meaning into the sites of memory in Telavi, and the country more widely, as well as returned the sites to their previous function as sites of memory, but now as sites of memory which potentially evoke both memories of the distant past and of more recent and troubling history in Georgia.

Background

The symbolic association the government attempted to project involved a variety of forms of meddling with the past, but one notable example comes from former President Saakashvili's presidential inauguration in 2004. Before the ceremony, Saakashvili travelled to Gelati Cathedral near Kutaisi in Western Georgia to take an oath on the grave of the 11th–12th century Georgian King, David the Builder. King David is credited with the inauguration of the Georgian 'golden age' during the 11th–13th centuries and is known, as his name implies, for the geographic expansion and architectural development of the country (see Batiashvili & Wertsch, 2012). The symbolism Saakashvili intended to project was clear.

Starting in 2007, ostensibly in an effort to build a tourism industry, the United National Movement started efforts to "rehabilitate" sections of towns, cities, and historic sites throughout Georgia. Telavi was a relative late-comer to the process, as a number of cities, towns, and historic sites had been rehabilitated starting with Sighnaghi (eastern Georgia). In Telavi, the rehabilitation included the remodeling of the town's art gallery, theatre, historic streets, and the Telavi museum which includes the palace of King Erekle II.

The rehabilitation of the Telavi Historical museum is significant not only because museums are one of the

most common sites of memory, but also because its rehabilitation was one more in a long series of alterations made to museums during Saakashvili's tenure. Previously, museums in Batumi, Gori, and Tbilisi had been modified based on the government's political agenda, which attempted to modify historical representations to suit political ends (See Gotfredsen, 2013 for the case of Gori). Yet, these were not the only instances in which the Rose Revolutionary government attempted to meddle with symbolism and historic representation.

Contradicting attempts at symbolic linkage and use of historical representation, three criticisms of the rehabilitation were unanimously agreed upon in Telavi by respondents: the quality of works and materials used in rehabilitation were sub-standard; historical monuments were not well preserved; and coordination with the local population was less than adequate. These complaints are interesting in that they mimic the larger problems present in the country at the time, and, as such, Telavi's rehabilitation can be seen as a metonym for the larger political issues of the time.

The Present's Perfect Past Shifted into the Past Perfect

As noted above, pride in history and particularly in the distant past is common in Georgia. Within the wider MYPLACE project, respondents commonly listed events from the Georgian "golden age" of the 11th–13th century as important events in the country's history, and respondents in Telavi frequently connected local history to King Erekle II, an 18th century King of Kakheti. As such, it is easy to understand that residents of Telavi had taken pride in the various historic buildings and sites in the town which functioned as sites of memory.

Yet, the complaints that materials used for rehabilitation were sub-standard and that the historical monuments were poorly preserved resulted in the defamation of sites of memory for residents of Telavi. Furthermore, the defamation of sites, through their perceived and actual debasement had in some way erased future memories of the past. One respondent noted, "I think that generally what's happening here is the eradication of the old, and the newly made will no longer be able to preserve the history." With the "eradication" of the past, the then ruling government had damaged an image it had consistently attempted to associate itself with. Saakashvili's attempt to join his image with David the Builder's was here unraveled through the shoddy rehabilitation works.

In English grammar, the past perfect tense is generally used to establish that one event occurred before a second one, though at an unspecified point in time. Using this as a metaphor, the rehabilitation appears to have moved then current representations of the distant

past evoked by sites of memory to the past—that is to say that the sites of memory being rehabilitated had evoked memories of the distant past, until rehabilitation. As a result of rehabilitation, the distant past evoked by sites of memory had been defamed and in turn, sites of memory often became associated with new meanings, which were obviously not intended to be created by the then ruling UNM.

The Present Wasn't Quite Perfect

The present perfect tense is used to refer to an event which happened at an unspecified moment in the past—it often refers to change over time as well as, in its negation, uncompleted events. In many ways the rehabilitation forged a present perfective relationship with Telavi residents.

During 2007–2012, the United National Movement grew increasingly authoritarian. The third respondent complaint mentioned above, that consultations with the local population were inadequate, is consistent with this observation. This sentiment was reflected in the following statement which exemplifies a common sentiment found during fieldwork:

"Telavi needed rehabilitation. Telavi needed renewal, but not in the way in which it occurred. It was done in an absolutely ignorant way in the opinions of historians, ethnographers, and I can also say architects, as well as in the opinion of the entire Telavi society. And, it seems to me that a group of five people sat down somewhere far away, and, by the way, of those five people, not one was Telavian, and they decided on the question of Telavi's rehabilitation and not a single [person] knowledgeable of Telavi was asked a question".

Though qualitative data cannot be generalized to the entire population, the lack of local participation in the work was apparent. Not only did respondents feel that rehabilitation works were not under local control, but the fact that they were not is well exemplified by some of the results of the rehabilitation works. After the rehabilitation, residents whose homes were "rehabilitated" often came home to destroyed furniture, damaged interiors, and, most worrying, buildings which had potentially become structurally unsound. These issues quite accurately reflect the problems which came from the democratic deficit in the period from 2007 to 2012.

The latter years of UNM governance were characterized by what some respondents referred to as UNM "terror tactics." In addition to facing problems with damaged residences and other everyday inconveniences associated with construction, Tevalians' lives were disturbed through the meddling with sites of memory. Through

the rehabilitation program, the sites under rehabilitation which had previously evoked affects of pride in the historic past, now often served as a reminder of the tense political situation under which Telavians, and Georgians more generally, lived. One young woman noted during an interview that she tried not to look at what was happening in the historic center and tried not to notice what was new while walking through it. Her avoidance is at least twofold—not only was she avoiding looking at the defamed past, but also the less than democratic present.

Although, generally sites of memory work to inform or remind society of the past, in the context of rehabilitation, the sites had a further function—they reminded Telavians of the present. Sites of memory had been transformed through the rehabilitation program into sites that were attached to a reminder of the present interceding on the interpretation of the past and the less than democratic present.

The Future That Wasn't

The third fold present in the avoidance of the young woman mentioned above was an avoidance of looking into the future. Through rhetoric, the former government attempted to project itself into the future. Giorgi Maisuradze, in a 2009 publication, pointed out that, “Contemporary Georgian politicians see history not as the past, but as a way to shape the future.” a similar idea was put forward by Thomas De Waal, using the analysis of Archil Gegeshidze, a Georgian political analyst, when he characterized the rhetoric of the UNM for the Georgian population as “living in the future perfect” (De Waal, 2011). This meant that the population was told that “we” would have any number of things—material and/or political. The future perfect was also accompanied by projections of tourist visit numbers, economic growth figures, and construction of infrastructure in official discourse. Yet, rhetoric was not the only tool used during this period to project the government's vision onto the future.

Construction, particularly in the form of rehabilitation, was another form in which the government was able to project its vision of the future onto society. Ongoing construction works in and of themselves can inherently be seen as a projection into the future—a building being built today may be in response to the needs of the day, but they are also for a projected future use. In looking at construction as a projection into the future, coming along with it is a projection of what that future will be like. In Telavi, and throughout Georgia, construction was accompanied by glossy brochures which were widely distributed with computer generated images of what finished buildings would look like. Works in progress were not left to the imagination alone, but an

image of the finished site, often with people interacting with the building as part of the environment, was delivered along with the grounds broken for construction.

In projecting onto the future the vision of what would be, the government in effect projected a future in which Georgians as individuals, and young people in particular, needed to find their place. As this projected future became increasingly erratic, it was often difficult for Georgians to find their place in it. In his ethnography, *Young Men, Time, and Boredom in the Republic of Georgia*, Martin Demant Frederiksen noted that his informants, young men in Batumi, were unable to imagine who would be going to an Opera House, then under construction during his fieldwork in Batumi, implying that they themselves could not imagine being there. The following quote is demonstrative of a similar phenomenon in the Telavi context:

“[The rehabilitation] is very bad, not only from the technical point of view, but from the historical, cultural points of view as well. <...> In my opinion, [everything that has been renovated] should be destroyed and renovated again. Can't you see everything gets destroyed? <...> People around me think the same way.”

In addition to exemplifying the instability in the lives of respondents, it also shows uncertainty in how young people envisioned the future—after all, everything gets destroyed and needs to be rebuilt again. Yet, in saying that everything needs to be renovated again, the respondent reflected on a future—presumably a different future than the one which was being projected.

The future which the now previous government had projected was ruptured making it a past future after losing the 2012 parliamentary elections to the Georgian Dream Coalition. In losing the elections, together with losing control over the wheels of government, the UNM also lost its ability to project itself onto the future of Georgian political, physical, and mental landscapes.

After the 2012 elections, works on Telavi's historic center as well as other historic sites were put on hold. As such, the question arises, are the works partially completed under the old regime, if left as they are, going to become sites of memory of the recent past rather than the distant past as they had been prior to rehabilitation, or some combination of both? If the latter, the sites of memory which became sites of reminder shall once again be sites of memory, but ones with a polysemous meaning—memory of both the recent past and the distant past will cohabit the same sites.

Conclusion

This article has shown how sites of memory in Telavi during rehabilitation shifted from sites of memory to sites of

reminder and questions whether they have again turned back to sites of memory, but with a new multi-faceted meaning. It has shown how the future was projected onto Georgian society during the rule of the United National Movement. With this past future ruptured,

what will be projected onto the future now remains to be seen. What is certain though is that the present and future political regimes will continue to attempt to produce effects and affects through the use of the past, as well as through the projection of visions into the future.

About the Author and Acknowledgements:

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Research data was gathered as a part of a EU funded project, MYPLACE: Memory, Youth, Political Legacy, and Civic Engagement (<<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/index.php>>). Fieldwork in Telavi was conducted in order to better understand the role of historical memory in the civic engagement of young people (aged 16 to 25), and the inter-generational transition of memory in families (MYPLACE work package 2: Interpreting the past: The construction and transmission of historical memory). Portions of this article were previously published on the MYPLACE project blog (<<http://myplacefp7.wordpress.com>>). Permission for reprint was generously granted by the MYPLACE project leadership. This article builds upon the arguments and data presented in MYPLACE country reports on Interpreting Participation and Interpreting the past which are listed below in the suggested reading section.

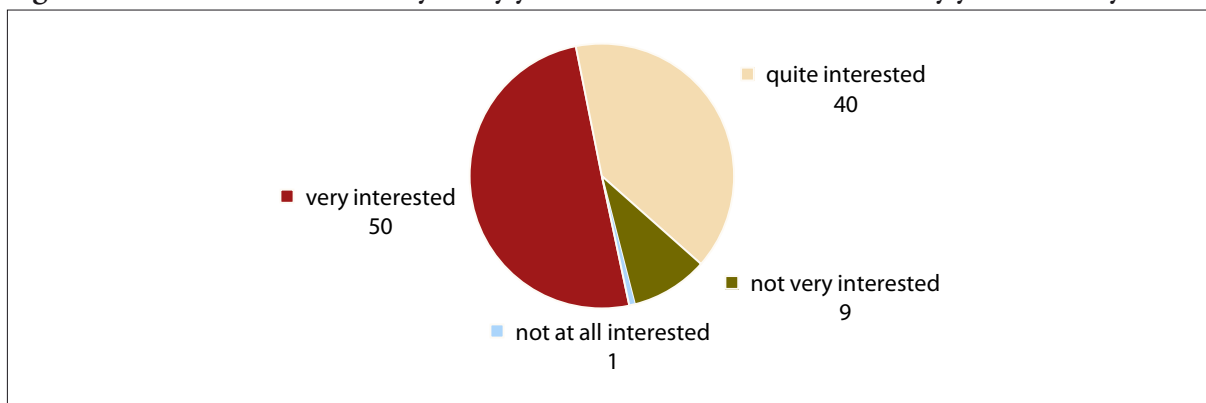
Suggested Reading:

- Batiashvili, Nutsa and Wertsch, James. "Mnemonic Communities and Conflict: Georgia's national narrative template." *Trust and conflict: representation culture and dialogue*. Hove, East Sussex: Routledge, 2012, 38–48. Print.
- Baramidze, Ruslan. "April 9, 1989 as a Site of Memory: The Policy of Commemoration and History Teaching in Georgia." *The South Caucasus and Turkey: history lessons of the 20th century*. Tbilisi: Heinrich Boll Stiftung, 2012. 170–193. Print.
- Frederiksen, Martin Demant. *Young men, time, and boredom in the Republic of Georgia*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013. Print.
- Gotfredsen, Katrine Bendtsen. *Evasive politics: paradoxes of history, nation and everyday communication in the Republic of Georgia: PhD dissertation*. Kbh.: University of Copenhagen, Department of Anthropology, 2013. Print.
- Zurabishvili, Tinatin, and Tamuna Khostaria. "WP2: Interpreting the past (The construction and transmission of historical memory) Deliverable 2.1: Country based reports on historical discourse production as manifested in sites of memory (Georgia)." *MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement)*. N.p., n.d. Web. 6 Sept. 2014. <http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/documents/Partner%2012%20-%20Georgia_deliverable_2_1_submission.pdf>.
- Zurabashvili, Tinatin, Tamar Khoshtaria, Natia Mestvirishvili, Madona Shildelashvili, and Louis-Philippe Campeau. "WP5: Interpreting Participation (Interviews) Deliverable 5.3: Country-based reports on interview findings." *MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement)*. N.p., 30 Nov. 2013. Web. 6 Sept. 2014. <<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/documents/D5.3%20Georgia.pdf>>.

OPINION POLL

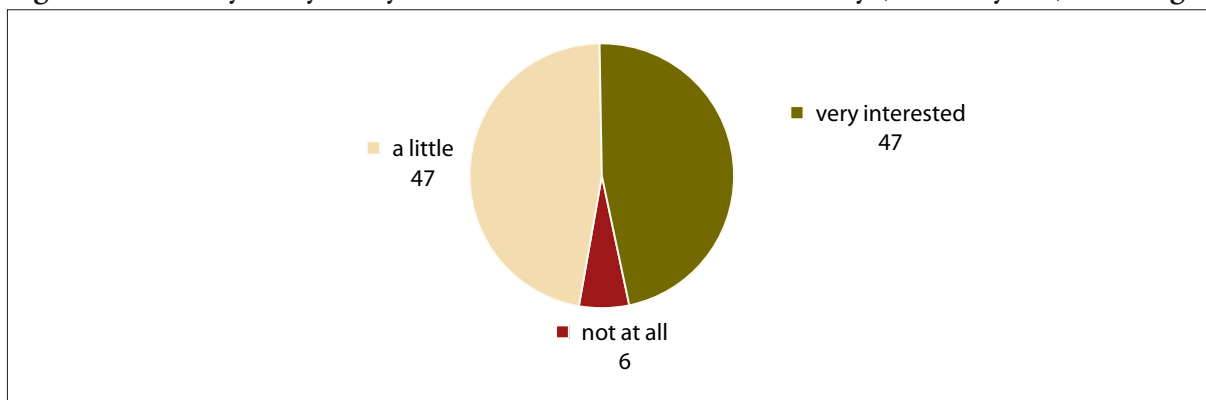
Interest in the Past: the MYPLACE Survey in Georgia

Figure 1: How interested would you say you are in issues to do with the city you currently live in?

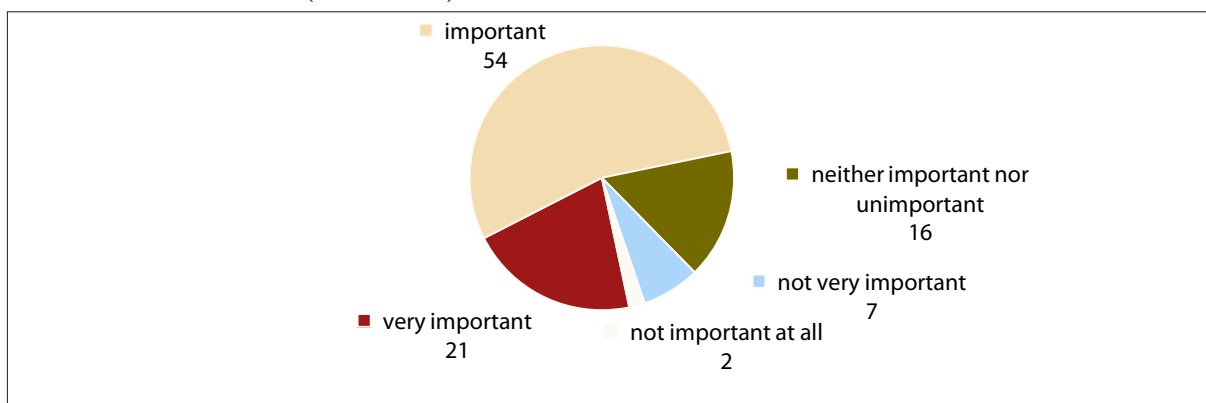


Source: MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement) survey conducted in 2012 in two cities of Georgia (Telavi and Kutaisi) among 1,176 young people aged 16–25, <<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/>>.

Figure 2: Would you say that you are interested in the recent history (last 100 years) of Georgia?

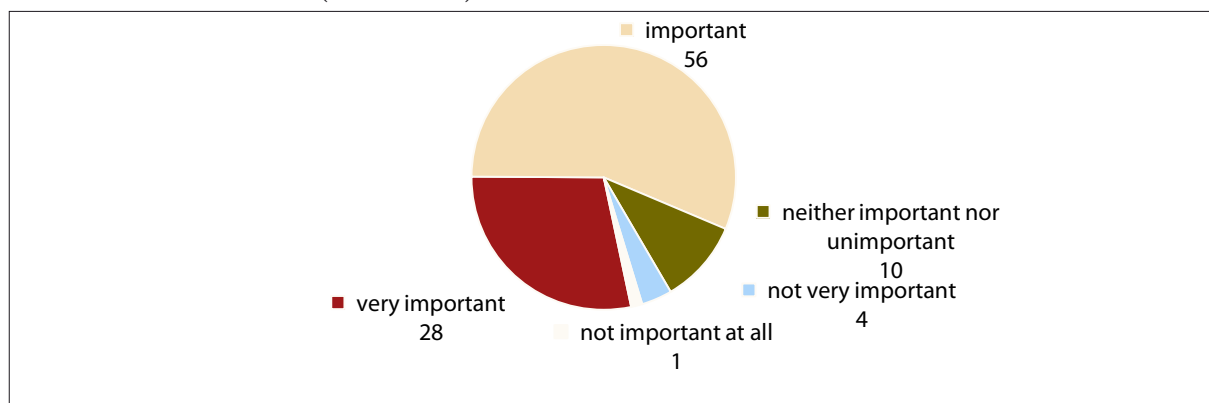


Source: MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement) survey conducted in 2012 in two cities of Georgia (Telavi and Kutaisi) among 1,176 young people aged 16–25, <<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/>>.

Figure 3: How important do you think the following have been in the history of Georgia?
World War I (1914–1918)

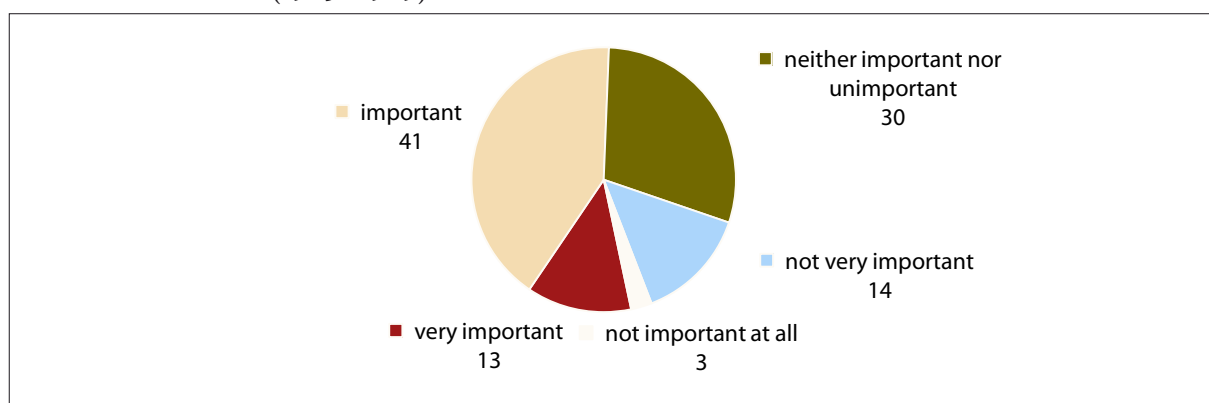
Source: MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement) survey conducted in 2012 in two cities of Georgia (Telavi and Kutaisi) among 1,176 young people aged 16–25, <<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/>>.

**Figure 4: How important do you think the following have been in the history of Georgia?
World War II (1939–1945)**



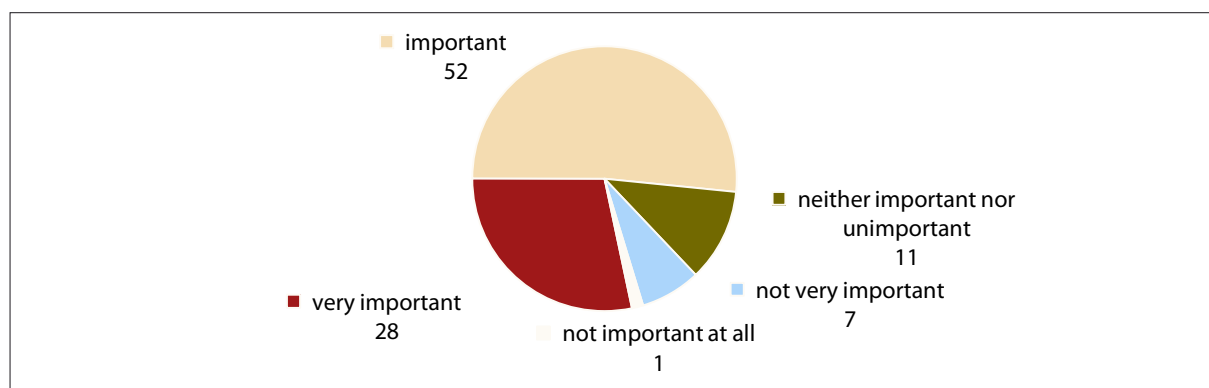
Source: MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement) survey conducted in 2012 in two cities of Georgia (Telavi and Kutaisi) among 1,176 young people aged 16–25, <<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/>>.

**Figure 5: How important do you think the following have been in the history of Georgia?
Cold War (1945–1989)**



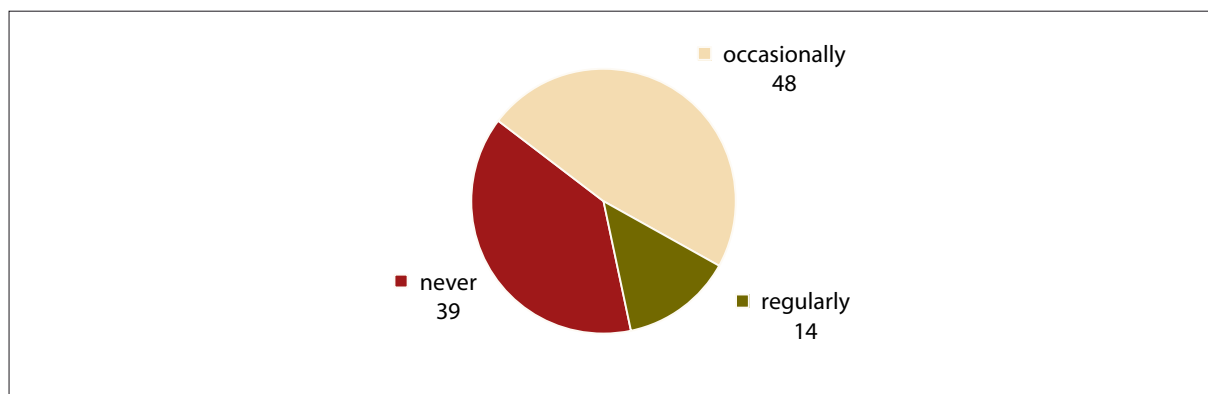
Source: MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement) survey conducted in 2012 in two cities of Georgia (Telavi and Kutaisi) among 1,176 young people aged 16–25, <<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/>>.

**Figure 6: How important do you think the following have been in the history of Georgia?
Communism**



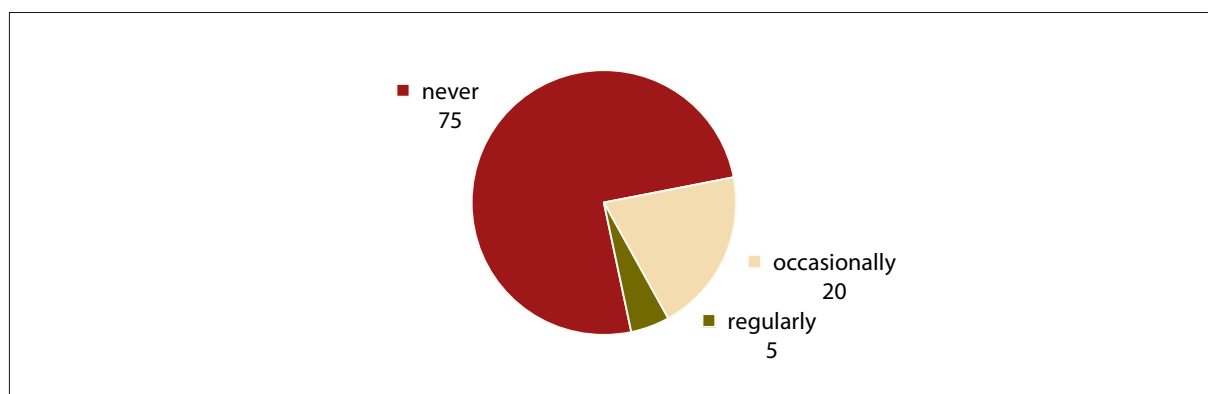
Source: MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement) survey conducted in 2012 in two cities of Georgia (Telavi and Kutaisi) among 1,176 young people aged 16–25, <<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/>>.

Figure 7: In the last 12 months, how many times have you: Watched a film that was set in recent historical circumstances?



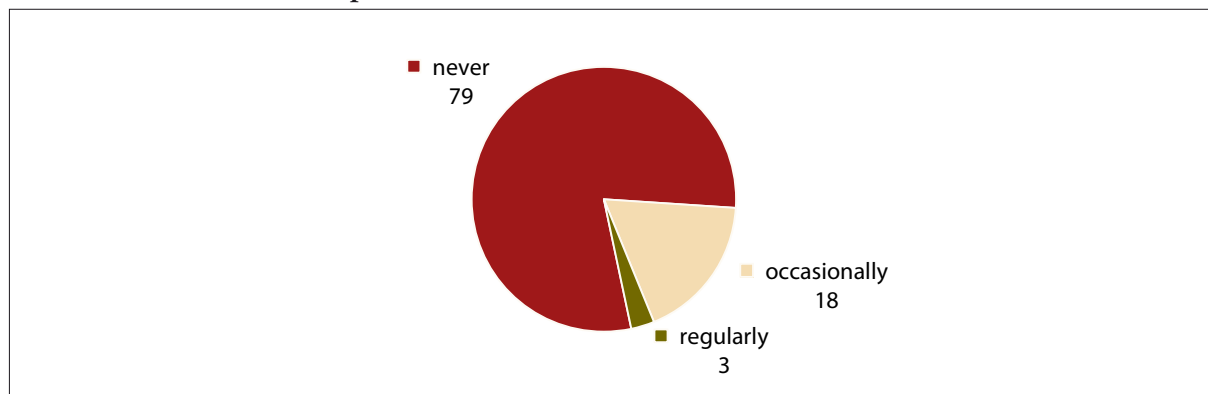
Source: MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement) survey conducted in 2012 in two cities of Georgia (Telavi and Kutaisi) among 1,176 young people aged 16–25, <<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/>>.

Figure 8: In the last 12 months, how many times have you: Read a novel set in recent historical circumstances?



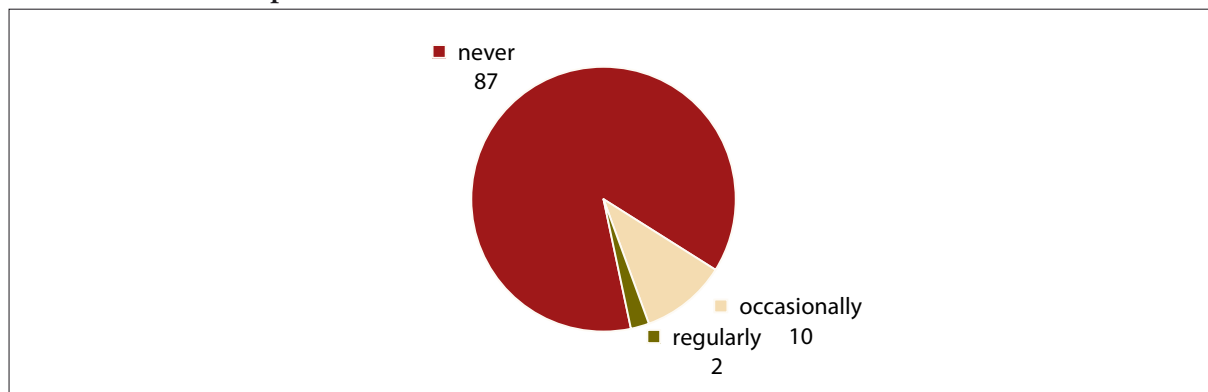
Source: MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement) survey conducted in 2012 in two cities of Georgia (Telavi and Kutaisi) among 1,176 young people aged 16–25, <<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/>>.

Figure 9: In the last 12 months, how many times have you: Visited a museum with an exhibition about the recent past?



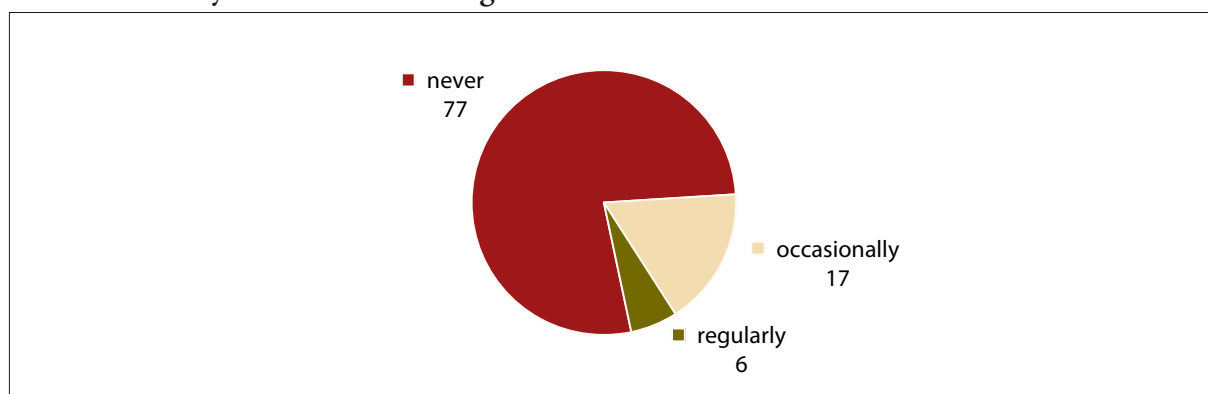
Source: MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement) survey conducted in 2012 in two cities of Georgia (Telavi and Kutaisi) among 1,176 young people aged 16–25, <<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/>>.

Figure 10: In the last 12 months, how many times have you: Read a non fiction publication about the recent past?



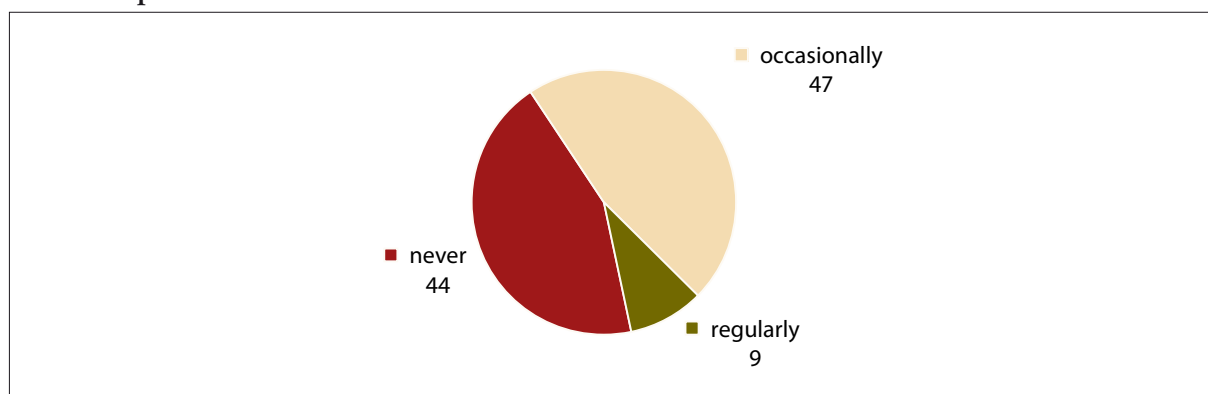
Source: MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement) survey conducted in 2012 in two cities of Georgia (Telavi and Kutaisi) among 1,176 young people aged 16–25, <<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/>>.

Figure 11: In the last 12 months, how many times have you: Participated in a discussion about history at school or in college?



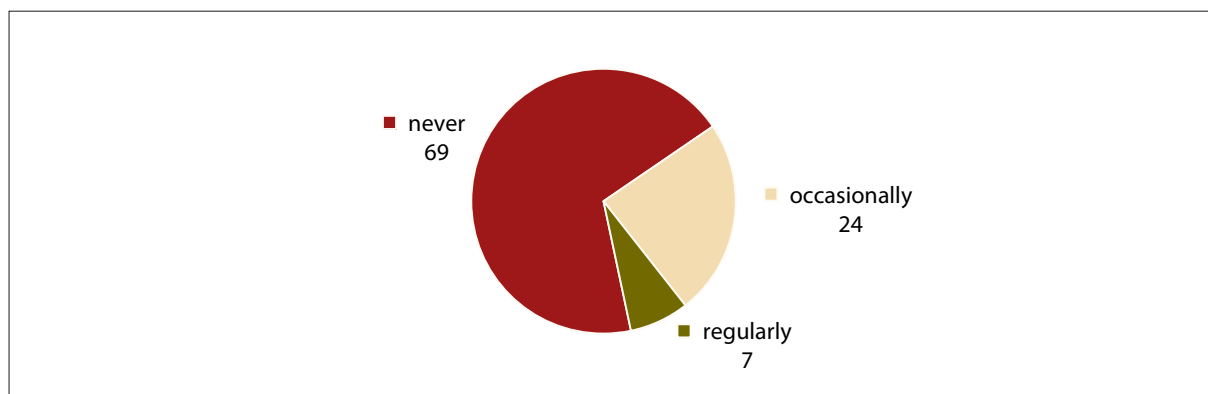
Source: MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement) survey conducted in 2012 in two cities of Georgia (Telavi and Kutaisi) among 1,176 young people aged 16–25, <<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/>>.

Figure 12: In the last 12 months, how many times have you: Talked with your parents about the past?



Source: MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement) survey conducted in 2012 in two cities of Georgia (Telavi and Kutaisi) among 1,176 young people aged 16–25, <<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/>>.

Figure 13: In the last 12 months, how many times have you: Visited a webpage with historic content / discussions?



Source: MYPLACE (Memory, Youth, Political Legacy And Civic Engagement) survey conducted in 2012 in two cities of Georgia (Telavi and Kutaisi) among 1,176 young people aged 16–25, <<http://www.fp7-myplace.eu/>>.

Capturing Marginality: The Social Role of Photography in the Wake of Rapid Urban Development in Batumi, Adjara

By Tamta Khalvashi, Copenhagen

Abstract

This article examines the social role of photographic images in relation to the rapidly changing urban space of Batumi, Adjara. I argue that although photographic images selectively freeze certain moments of the past and render them stable, they simultaneously highlight the ambiguous aspects of the present and capture the socially marginal positions of their authors. I analyze how this tension plays out among a middle-aged and elderly generation of Soviet photographers in Batumi who, by capturing the past through their photographs, try to position themselves in an uncertain present and imagine their future(s).

From the Margins to the “Miracle”

Zviad, a photographer in his early sixties was showing me his photo collection of Batumi’s urban landscapes when he said: “Look at this black and white photo. I took it in the 1980s. Here, as you see, used to be this derelict and ugly Hotel Medea built during Soviet times. Now, look at this new photo. The same place, but with a contemporary five-star Radisson—all fleshy, like in Europe. These photos show that the city has radically changed, but not for people like me. I am no longer able to live with my own profession. There are simply no jobs for people like me.” Zviad kept contrasting the old and new look of Batumi’s urban spaces through his photos as he added: “So, I am going to Turkey this summer to work on a hazelnut plantation while Turks are coming here

to take over our city.” Emphasizing contrasts between the old and new look of Batumi through photographs was commonplace among the middle-aged and elderly photographers while I was doing my fieldwork between 2012 and 2013. These contrasts between past and present were usually called upon to highlight the tangible urban changes taking place in Batumi and to stress the photographers’ marginal positions, shuttered professional lives, and uncertain future paths.

Batumi, with its 137,000 residents, is the capital of the Autonomous Republic of Adjara in Georgia, located on the Black Sea and bordered by Turkey. It had been a peripheral part of the Ottoman Empire until 1878. Hence, when Batumi rejoined Georgia under the Russian Empire, it did so with a distinct Muslim legacy. It

was due to this religious background that Adjara was granted autonomy in 1921, codified in the Treaty of Kars signed between Soviet Russia and Turkey.

With its subtropical climate and favorable location on the Black Sea coast, Batumi became a crucial tourist and cultural destinations during Soviet times. Oil refining, garments, leather, and shoe factories, together with the Batumi seaport, constituted the backbone of the local economy and provided its multi-ethnic residents—Armenians, Russians, Jews and Greeks as well as local Abkhazians, Gurians, Megrelians and Imeretians—with steady jobs and decent salaries. A vibrant cultural and economic life during Soviet times changed the peripheral status of the region and positioned Adjara at the center of socialist Georgia. Intelligentsia and artistic circles—as diverse as the ethnic composition of the city itself—played a major role in reinvigorating cultural life in Batumi. While enjoying advanced social positions and stable jobs in state-sponsored photo laboratories, culture houses, art institutions and unions, the creative class gave the city its rich cultural capital and distinctly cosmopolitan nature. The internationalist outlook of Batumi's residents thus changed the once peripheral status of this region and helped define it as modern and educated, mainly by eclipsing its Muslim Ottoman past.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Aslan Abashidze—a descendent of a Muslim Adjarian noble family who facilitated a revival of Orthodox Christianity in Adjara—became the head of the region in 1991. However, the arrival of a new era in Adjara dramatically shuttered the economic lives of Batumi residents, challenged the widely celebrated cosmopolitan outlook of the city and prevented the central government from extending its sovereignty to this region. During his time in power, Abashidze took excessive control over much of the cultural and economic domains in Batumi. Many industrial factories were shut down or illicitly privatized by Abashidze's political clan, which facilitated a high level of corruption, and controlled most of the market spheres, customs offices, and seaport revenues. Moreover, several state-funded artistic unions or institutions ceased to exist or instead, became tools for promoting Abashidze's political "achievements," as his regime grew more and more authoritarian. While the well-connected intelligentsia was able to maintain privileged social positions in exchange for aligning with Abashidze's authoritarian regime, others who refused to support Abashidze often lost their affiliations with preferred occupations. The lives of many artists who once held advanced social or cultural positions in Batumi became all about making ends meet in this precarious state of affairs in the 1990s. Emphasizing ethno-religious sentiments strongly tied with Orthodox Christianity and downgrading Batumi's once cosmopolitan

nature hence became an effective tool to reposition oneself within the uncertain economic and political domain.

It was against this background that the Rose Revolution government brought down Abashidze's corrupt rule in Adjara in May 2004, and tried to revive central state control over this semi-independent region. The massive infrastructural and construction projects that have greatly transformed Batumi's urban space thus were one of the tools to exercise effective state administration and sovereignty over Adjara. Five-star hotels, casinos and tall apartment blocks mushroomed among the 19th century low Batumi houses, highlighting the neoliberal and internationalist aspirations of the government. Hence, investors, tourists and gamblers, mainly coming from Turkey, Iran, Armenia, Ukraine and Russia, flooded the city thanks to scraped visa regimes and the investment-friendly environment. The city, in this light, was touted as the cultural and touristic "miracle" of the country and as the Las Vegas of the entire Black Sea Region, promising to bring more jobs and better life-styles.

The massive new investments in the construction and tourist sector, however, have not generated the expected economic abundance and sufficient income for ordinary residents of Batumi. The state-driven sectors of the economy—tourism and construction—required the able-bodied and the technically well-educated specialists in the city. However, many residents of Batumi, including unemployed artists, lacked the necessary capital and skills to adapt to the new economic demands. This inability to adjust created a discrepancy between the projected future the government imposed on the urban space of Batumi and people's lived realities, producing popular resentments against the government and exacerbating ethno-nationalist sentiments mainly oriented against the increasing number of Turks in the city.

The built and modernized environment of Batumi in this way resonated not with hopes for a better future, but with ambivalence about the present and nostalgia for the Soviet past. It was not that the artists or other ordinary citizens of Batumi bemoaned the end of Abashidze's rule or the collapse of the Soviet Union. Many of my informants, in fact, recognized that things have improved in Batumi and that the country's independence entailed a certain expense. However, costs for this change seemed too overwhelming. Anxieties mainly revolved around the continued privatization of state-owned buildings—like the publishing house in the city center of Batumi—which were seen as the last hope for the Soviet generation of photographers or writers to fulfill their professional goals and earn minimum salaries. With insufficient employment and retirement benefits, many residents, including middle-aged and elderly artists, in this way started to seek their fortune across the border in Turkey,

others have turned their houses into small hotels, restaurants, or shops, while some lethargically roamed the city knocked out by alcohol or cheap drugs.

The parliamentary elections of October 2012, which brought down the Rose Revolution government after almost ten years of rule, has in this way been seen as a popular reaction to the discrepancy between the future visions of Batumi and the actual lives of its residents. However, my research, based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork among unemployed artistic circles in Batumi, revealed that many middle-aged people continued to be skeptical about the post-election developments, creating even more uncertainty and despair. As one of my informants put it, “nothing is happening in the city anymore, new buildings are not being constructed, new jobs are not being created.” Photographers of Batumi highlight this uncertainty through their photographs and keep certain memories alive in fixed and yet undoubtedly selective ways.

A Captured Past

“I processed and printed photos in this laboratory during Soviet times. This was a very good time for me, as I had a steady salary and published photos in various Soviet newspapers. You see this picture taken in old dolphinarium, right? People look much happier in this photo, don’t they? Maybe they are not as well dressed as today but their faces are much calmer and happier. Now, a new dolphinarium was constructed, but I cannot even afford to go there.” Zuri, a seventy-year-old Megrelian man who was born and raised in Batumi, recounted these and other highlights of the Soviet past while he showed me a few remaining photos from his personal collection. He worked in the photographic laboratory for forty years located on one of the central streets of Batumi. In the 1990s the state ceased funding the photo laboratory and Zuri managed to open a small shop instead together with other painters and photographers. They started to make commercial banners for different shops and restaurants emerging in the city. However, the business was unreliable and it did not bring in enough money to maintain the shop, pay taxes and distribute salaries. It was in this shop that Zuri invoked his memories and photographic images to fix “happier” images of the past and to contrast it with the present.

The relative abundance of artistic or photo laboratory work in Batumi was due to its direct provision from Moscow. Largely an urban phenomenon, photographic laboratories and studios were the kind of privilege that only industrial cities of special cultural or economic significance enjoyed. Amateur photography and photojournalism in this way became one of the effective tools throughout Soviet Union to depict the successful achievements of the socialist state and to promote images of the thriving

cultural and economic lives of Soviet people. State-funded photographic practices however often served to conceal hostile labor conditions in factories, forceful deportations of various ethnic groups and exerted a great deal of censorship on images. In Batumi thousands of Greeks were deported to Central Asia in the 1950s and many laborers suffered from poor working conditions and low salaries. But rather than reflecting the contradictions entailed in the state-encouraged practice of photography, memories of many amateur or professional Soviet photographers in Batumi went back only to happier times and places. My informants only invoked those photos or memories which depicted the availability of jobs, the vibrant social and cultural lives of people—like those happily clapping in the old dolphinarium—or achievements of Soviet Georgian sportsmen, workers or artists. Zuri’s evocation of photographic images thus was both a means of capturing the past—which was not fully real—and to understand the present, which was not entirely certain.

Shuttered Present

“I rarely take new photos nowadays. But if I take one, I prefer to depict beggars or new architecture. It’s because the number of beggars have increased in this city, while these new buildings are being built every day.” Gizo, another photographer in his early sixties was standing in front of the corner of one of the newly renovated streets of Batumi while selling his black and white photo collection depicting Russian tourists and post-independence movements in Batumi to passers-by. This was his way of earning money during the summer period when tourists flocked to the city and sometimes took an interest in buying his photos. However, in my numerous conversations with him in front of his picture stand, no one bought a single photo from him. Later he gave up his hopes to make money from selling photos and left for Turkey to work in a tea plantation.

Gizo, like many of his counterparts in the city, used to work in a state-sponsored local newspaper during Soviet times. At the same time he enjoyed working in his studio allocated by the Soviet state. It was in this studio that he took artistic pictures of nude Russian and Georgian women while experimenting with his lighting equipment to create special contours and shades on their bodies. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the newspaper was shut down and his studio was sold on auction in 2007. Gizo did not have enough money to purchase a technologically advanced camera, which would enable him to find another job. This condition forced him to seek his fortune across the border in Turkey.

During my fieldwork, I learned that many people whose lives fell apart after the Soviet collapse were particularly critical toward the modernized urban space

of Batumi and the Rose Revolutionary government's future-oriented visions. These attitudes reflect Sanders and West's valuable argument that "modernity is experienced by many people as a fragmented, contradictory, and disquieting process," which generates the opaque theories on power that it claims to obviate (West and Sanders 2003). It needs to be noted however that the Georgian modernizing project was not a by-product of the high modernist agenda—stemming from the unprecedented progress in science, technology, and economy—which became the basis of the emergence of modern nation-states in the West (Scott 1998). It was more about making the Soviet and postsoviet past forcefully obsolete in the present, which was sought to give a way to the emergence of western modernity and better life-styles in the future. This aspect explains the abundant number of conspiracy theories specifically built around the post-Rose Revolution urban developments in Adjara, as it also meant to marginalize those who did not fit into these future visions. Critical observers thus always would say—"after the Rose Revolution..."—to denote negative aspects of this shift, when in fact the things they talked about have very little to do with the recent changes, but had existed in previous political orders as well. Gizo's invocation of beggars' photographic images in contrast to new architecture is one of the points in case. Concerns about the discrepancy between Abashidze's construction obsessions (like new bridges or empty modern buildings) and the growing number of beggars had, in fact, been a commonplace in residents' descriptions of post-Soviet changes in the 1990s (Pelkmans 2006). However, Gizo chose to zoom into the shuttered present, which enabled him to validate his marginal social position, as he was shut between the nostalgia for the Soviet past and unavailability of the enforced future in the present. Photographs in this way were used to exert social control over one's own life and status and to shape the worldview about the (un)expected twists and turns of the visions of modernity and the future.

Conclusion: Imagined Future

"Many things have been beatified in this city, but nothing will change for people like me. No matter what kind

of government will come, we will always stay like this." It was one of my last visits to Anri—an unemployed Abkhazian painter and amateur photographer in his sixties when he exclaimed these words. His nihilistic way of imagining the future resonated with other artists' expectations about the future in light of recent political changes brought by the parliamentary elections of October 2012. One hundred new factories, long-term and low-interest loans for debtors, and the availability of jobs, which had been guaranteed in the Georgian Dream Coalition's abundant pre-election campaign, remained like unrealized dreams for many residents of Batumi. Anri's comment tapped into these constantly unrealized promises of the government and unfulfilled future paths.

While the promise of the future is permanently deferred, the past becomes constantly idealized. Photographs have a distinct capacity to imprint and enact this tension between the future and the past and in so doing, to highlight the ambiguity of the present. Thus in this article I argued that although photographers try to freeze landscapes and render them stable and veracious, they simultaneously capture their socially marginal positions and the ambiguous qualities of political and urban changes that currently hinge upon them. I analyzed this tension between fixity and flux as well as absence and presence by looking at how an old generation of Soviet photographers visualized and talked about the instable and uncertain aspects of political changes in Batumi and contrasted them to Soviet times, in which they enjoyed relatively privileged social positions. I showed that in this dialogue between photographers' memories and their photographs, the past is kept alive in fixed and yet undoubtedly selective ways. Hence, photographers and their photographic images not only serve to "freeze" past memories, as self-conscious re-presentations, they also try to tame social realities and imagine their futures.

About the Author

Tamta Khalvashi is a PhD candidate in Social Anthropology at the Department of Anthropology in the University of Copenhagen.

Suggested Further Readings:

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- West, Harry G. and Sanders, Todd 2003. Transparency and Conspiracy: Ethnographies of Suspicion in the New World Order. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Pelkmans, Mathijs 2006. Defending the Border: Identity, Religion and Modernity in the Republic of Georgia. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
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The Alley of Martyrs: Deaths, Memory and the Nation

By Leyla Sayfutdinova, Ankara

Abstract:

This article examines the evolution of Baku's Alley of Martyrs. As different authorities came to power over the course of the last one hundred years, they have transformed the site to serve a variety of purposes.

From Cemetery to Park, and Back

No other place in Azerbaijan's capital Baku reflects the post-soviet transformation with its pain, change and continuity more than the Alley of Martyrs (*Şəhidlər Xiyabanı*).¹ Located on the top of a hill overlooking the Baku Bay and most of the city, this alley had, in the twentieth century, undergone several transformations that followed and accompanied the political history of the city and the region as a whole. The hill, where two cemeteries, Moslem and Christian, were located in the nineteenth century, became a site of burial for the victims (*şəhid*) of the Armenian-Azerbaijani massacre of 1918, and also soldiers and civilians of all sides who died in the bloody conflicts of 1918–1920—Azerbaijani, Armenian, British, Russian, and Turkish. But, in those turbulent years, the memory of the events was not consolidated, and the cemeteries did not turn into memorial complexes. The Soviet authorities, on the other hand, were more interested in erasing the memory of the massacre and the related inter-ethnic strife, so during Soviet times the cemetery was destroyed and transformed into a park. The park was reconverted to a memorial cemetery in 1990, when victims of the Soviet troops' intervention on January 20, 1990 were buried there. Thus, a park that was once a cemetery became a cemetery once again; moreover, it became the main memorial complex in Azerbaijan. This last transformation of the park into a national memorial site and the symbolic representation of Azerbaijan's national history that it has come to portray are the focus of the present essay.

Kirov's park

Hilltop Park (*Nagorniy* in Russian or *Dagustu* in Azerbaijani) was built in the place of the old cemetery in the mid-1930s. The construction involved complex terrace landscaping, extensive use of sculpture similar to other soviet parks of the same period, and recreational facilities, such as cafes, pavilions and an open-air stage. The official name of the park became "Hilltop Park of Culture and Recreation named after Sergei Kirov" (popularly called either Kirov's park or *Nagorniy* park), thus formalizing the association between recreation and com-

memoration. In 1939 a monument to Sergei Kirov was erected on a high terrace with a view of the bay. The commemorative use of the park was expanded in 1949 when a monument to the Great Patriotic War hero General Hazi Aslanov was erected near the park's entrance. This was also the first memorial grave in the park—as the remains of Hazi Aslanov were brought from Latvia, where he was killed in 1945 and re-buried here. But during the Soviet period, the park remained mainly an entertainment area, with new recreation facilities installed in the course of renovations during the 1960s and 1970s.

Throughout those years, the history of the park as a cemetery was largely forgotten; nothing in the park itself recalled the old cemeteries, and official publications hardly mentioned its history. The memory about the cemetery and the tragic events associated with it was transmitted privately and orally, if at all. Yet, the muting of the memory did not mean its full erasure and the orally transmitted memory became a powerful tool in the transformation of the park into a memorial complex in 1990.

Turning Point: January 20th, 1990

The turning point in the history of the park came in January 1990, when the victims of the Soviet military intervention in Baku were buried there. The intervention, killing 168 people, took place on the night of 19th–20th January. It was initially justified by Soviet officials as a necessary measure to stop inter-ethnic violence and protect the Armenian population of Baku, but was more likely aimed at suppressing the national movement that emerged in Azerbaijan in response to the Karabakh conflict that had erupted two years earlier. This national movement was led by the Popular Front of Azerbaijan, a political organization headed by a number of prominent historians and literary scholars critical of the official Soviet version of Azerbaijan's history. The Popular Front and its leadership played a key role in formulating national ideology and demanding independence from the declining Soviet Union. The movement took its inspiration from the brief experience of national independence in 1918–1920 under the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR). The Popular Front sought to establish continuity between itself and the ADR government, as well as between present political conflicts and those that the ADR had to go through seven decades ear-

1 A longer version of this article was published in Therborn, J. (Ed.) *Postsoviet Capitals: Minsk, Vilnius, Baku*. Minsk: pp. 256–265.

lier. Making this link necessarily involved a reinterpretation of the soviet version of Azerbaijan's history, particularly the events of 1918–1920, and the roles played by each of the major parties of that period—Bolshevik, Armenian Dashnak and Azerbaijani Musavat.

In this socio-political context, the disproportionately brutal and poorly justified military intervention served to increase national sentiments rather than put an end to the national movement. The reaction to the intervention was one of shock and outrage. For the first time since the beginning of the Karabakh conflict, all major political forces were united in common grief. The Popular Front meanwhile interpreted the intervention in terms of national struggle. The events of 1918, and particularly the massacre of Azerbaijanis in Baku in March 1918, were invoked. To reinforce that connection and memory, the decision was made to bury the victims of the January days in the same place where the victims of the “March days” had been buried more than seventy years earlier—in *Nagorniy* Park.

The funeral itself took place two days after the intervention, on January 22nd. A huge funeral procession walked several kilometers from Lenin Square (now *Azadliq*—Freedom) in the lower part of the city, the site of largest protests in Azerbaijan's history, to *Nagorniy* Park to mourn and bury the victims. Those who died were represented not simply as victims of a brutal invasion, but as martyrs (*Şahid*) in the struggle for independence, and the Park was then re-named as *Şahidlər Hiyabani* (The Alley of Martyrs). Thus, its official history as a recreation site was put to an end and a new history, of a memorial complex, began.

The Alley of Martyrs

In a few months after “Black January,” as the intervention came to be known, with the escalation of violence in and around Karabakh, those killed in the fighting also began to be buried in *Şahidlər Hiyabani*, in a lane below the Black January victims' alley. While the original layout of the park has not been significantly changed, many objects of the old park design were removed. First were the recreation facilities, followed by Kirov's monument in 1992. At the same time, a number of new monuments began to be erected in the Alley. The first of these were the gravestones of the January 20, and later Karabakh war *şahidlər* in the two upper lanes of the old park. Another early construction was the Martyrs' Mosque (*Şahidlər məscidi*), built in 1996 with the financial assistance of the Turkish government.²

² The mosque was closed “for renovation” in 2009 and has not yet been reopened. Although currently not used for religious purposes, it continues to serve as a memorial.

In 1998 a memorial eternal flame commemorating all victims, from 1918 to the Karabakh war, was erected in the Alley. This is a tall (21 m) octagonal structure with a glass cupola, made of local limestone and performed in the traditions of medieval Azerbaijani architecture. The monument is placed at the end of 20th January lane, at a new viewpoint that was constructed above the platform where Kirov's statue once stood.

In 1999 a monument to the Turkish soldiers who died in Azerbaijan in 1918 was installed. Like the mosque, the construction of this monument was financed by the Turkish government. The Turkish regimen led by Nuri-pasha entered Azerbaijan at the request of the Musavat Government of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. The Turkish forces together with the ADR army took Baku in September 1918, but withdrew shortly after, in November of the same year, after the Ottomans signed Mudros Treaty with the Allies. The monument, a dark red obelisk surrounded by limestone plates with the names of all Turkish soldiers killed in Azerbaijan, is located at the entrance to the Alley.

Behind the Turkish obelisk, somewhat more inside the older part of the park, there is a smaller and less visible monument to the British soldiers who were killed and buried in Baku during the same period. The British regimen was sent to Baku to prevent the taking of the city by Turks in August 1918. The placement of these two monuments so near each other is somewhat ironic, as the two regimens fought against each other in 1918. This monument did raise a lot of controversy in Azerbaijan. Originally prepared and shipped by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in 1997, it was kept in storage until 2003 while Azerbaijani historians and decision makers were debating the role of the British in that difficult period of Azerbaijan's history. The controversy was eventually resolved, at least at the official level, and the monument was installed, so presently both Turkish and British soldiers are commemorated in the Alley.

Only one of the Soviet era monuments still stands in the Alley: the monument to General Hazi Aslanov. A Soviet hero, he is also accepted as a hero of Azerbaijan, someone who had fought for Azerbaijan's interests within the Soviet Union. Moreover, unlike the October Revolution, the memory of the Great Patriotic War, in which many Azerbaijanis participated, did not undergo a significant reinterpretation in the post-Soviet era.

The process of transformation of the old park into a memorial complex is not yet complete. Thus, there exists a yet unfinished project for an Independence Monument that is to be constructed in the place where Kirov's statue once stood. The pace of reconstruction of the old park is also uneven: the cemeteries and the areas around the new monuments are the first to be renovated and are the

best taken care of. The architectural design of the new parts of the Alley is also quite heterogeneous, especially in comparison to the old park. Thus, the monuments here come from different countries and different architectural traditions, including the soviet socialist realism of General Aslanov's bust, Turkish military obelisk, an Ottoman style mosque, and the eternal fire made in the traditions of the medieval Azerbaijan architecture.

The alley is heterogeneous not only in terms of architecture, but also in terms of the use of space. The memorial parts of the Alley naturally are the ones that are used for commemoration, both formal and informal. Relatives and friends come here to visit the graves of their loved ones as they would in any other cemetery. But the Alley is also the site of official commemoration ceremonies on all the major tragic days of Azerbaijan's recent history, such as January 20th, February 26 (the massacre in the Karabakh town of Hocali), and March 31st, commemorating the massacre of 1918.³ In addition, foreign delegations are brought here to honor the victims and the children come on school visits.

Conclusion

It is somewhat paradoxical, but the Alley of Martyrs, as the main national memorial complex, commemo-

rates Azerbaijan's national losses rather than its victories. With the exception of the monument to General Aslanov, all other monuments here commemorate lost battles: in the events of 1918 Azerbaijanis were massacred and the ADR itself eventually fell to the Eleventh Red Army in 1920; in 1990 Soviet troops took Baku; and Karabakh, with surrounding territories, is still in Armenian hands. The importance of such a memorial in the Azerbaijani national imagination can probably be explained by the value of martyrdom that comes from Islamic culture. Dying for a cause is especially important in Shia Islam, which is dominant in Azerbaijan, with its rich traditions of mourning and remembrance rituals associated with the death of the Prophet's cousin Ali and his son Husain. That is why it was the losses and the collective mourning over the victims of the Soviet intervention and Karabakh war that had such a strong impact on the development of Azerbaijani national identity in the post-Soviet period. Yet, despite all these losses, Azerbaijan did achieve national independence, and it can be said that the main message of the Alley of the Martyrs is the triumph of nation despite all its lost battles.

About the Author:

Leyla Sayfutdinova is a PhD candidate in Sociology at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. Her research interests include nationalism, ethnic conflict, post-socialist urban transformation and the sociology of professions.

Recommended Reading:

- On "Black January": De Waal, Thomas. *"Black Garden."* *Armenia and Azerbaijan through peace and war*, New York/London (2003), chapter 6.
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- On the role of martyrdom in Azerbaijani culture: Smith, M. G. (2001). The Russian Revolution as a National Revolution: Tragic Deaths and Rituals of Remembrance in Muslim Azerbaijan (1907–1920). *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 363–388.
- On Soviet recreational architecture: Shaw, D. J.B. (1979) Recreation and the Soviet City. In: French, R.A. and Hamilton, I. F. (eds.): *The Socialist City: Spatial Structure and Urban Policy*. Chichester: John Wiley and Sons. Pp. 119–143.

³ March 31 became an official Day of Genocide according to a Decree of President Heydar Aliiev signed on March 26, 1998 (<http://www.president.az/browse.php?sec_id=56#31>).

CHRONICLE

11 September – 28 October 2014

11 September 2014	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili says that the “strategic partnership” between Georgia and Azerbaijan is further deepening and that Georgia is Azerbaijan’s “reliable partner” during a visit to Baku and a meeting with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev
11 September 2014	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili condemns as a “provocation” the nailing of a pig’s head to the door of a yet to be opened Muslim school in the Kobuleti town in Georgia’s Adjara region on 10 September
11 September 2014	Former Georgian Prime Minister Bidzina Ivanishvili criticizes Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili for “obstructing” government activities through his actions
12 September 2014	Georgia sends a cargo plane to Ukraine to deliver humanitarian including mainly medical supplies
12 September 2014	The US State Department says in a statement that the US is concerned over the risk posed for Georgian democracy by politicized prosecutions, referring to the recent arrests of high-level officials from the Saakashvili administration
16 September 2014	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili visits the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and meets with Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan before visiting Dubai and Ras Al Khaimah
18 September 2014	Foreign minister of breakaway Abkhazia Viacheslav Chirikba says that the Geneva talks should continue but demands a change of format and agenda, in particular regarding the issue of displaced persons and refugees
24 September 2014	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian criticizes Baku for preventing a peaceful settlement of the dispute over the Nagorno Karabakh region in a speech at the UN General Assembly and thanks countries that have recognized as genocide the massacre of Armenians by Ottoman forces during World War I
24 September 2014	Georgian Defense Minister Irakli Alasania visits Yerevan and meets with his Armenian counterpart Seyran Ohanyan to discuss bilateral cooperation in defense as well as regional security
24 September 2014	The US places a Georgian national and native of Pankisi Gorge Tarkhan Batirashvili, known as Omar al-Shishani, and a ISIL commander on a list of 21 “specially designated global terrorists”
26 September 2014	In a speech at the UN General Assembly, Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili says that Georgia is “now another world” which has made significant progress and “restored the rule of law”
28 September 2014	Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili meets with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in Istanbul and discusses regional security issues, including developments in Ukraine and ISIS as well as the deepening of Georgian–Turkish relations and the importance of Azerbaijani–Georgian–Turkish joint projects
2 October 2014	The Russian Foreign Ministry says that it takes seriously the official denial voiced by Georgia that training centers for Syrian rebels are being set up on Georgian territory
8 October 2014	Georgian parliament speaker Davit Usupashvili says during the visit of his Armenian counterpart Galust Sahakyan in Tbilisi and at a meeting of the Armenian–Georgian parliamentary cooperation group that the different foreign policy orientations chosen by the two countries should in no way affect bilateral ties
10 October 2014	Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian signs an agreement to join the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EES) at a meeting of regional heads of states in Minsk
10 October 2014	Thousands of demonstrators rally in Yerevan to demand the resignation of President Serzh Sarkisian and protest against the country’s slow economic growth, corruption and Sarkisian’s decision to enter the Eurasian Economic Union (EES)
13 October 2014	The Abkhaz news agency Apsnipress posts the text of the draft “Agreement Between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Abkhazia on Alliance and Integration” that envisages the setting up a Abkhaz–Russian group of forces for collective defense
16 October 2014	Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Tajik President Emomali Rahmon sign a declaration in Dushanbe stating the “inadmissibility of changing internationally recognized borders” and the necessity to find a peaceful settlement to the conflict over the disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh
22 October 2014	14 people are arrested during a confrontation in a Georgian village in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region after the local Muslim population tries to prevent the rebuilding into a library of a partially destroyed building which was once a mosque

23 October 2014	US State Department spokesperson Jen Psaki says that the US is closely following the prosecution of former government officials in Georgia and stresses the importance for the Georgian government to apply the rule of law in order to avoid the perception of political retribution
27 October 2014	Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili says the project of independent Abkhazia and South Ossetia is a “utopia”
27 October 2014	A group of Iranian lawmakers visit Georgia to meet with their counterparts and government officials as part of the Iran–Georgia parliamentary friendship group
22 October 2014	Former Georgian Defence Minister Bacho Akhalaia is condemned to 7.5 years by a Tbilisi City Court for torturing convicts in 2006
27 October 2014	French President Francois Hollande hosts Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Paris for talks on the disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh
27 October 2014	Russian airline Aeroflot resumes flights between Moscow and Tbilisi six years after the Russian–Georgian war
28 October 2014	Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian says in a statement that talks in Paris on 27 October between Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev on the disputed region of Nagorno Karabakh were “constructive, useful and sincere” with the two heads of state discussing confidence-building measures proposed by French President Francois Hollande

Compiled by Lili Di Puppò

For the full chronicle since 2009 see <www.laender-analysen.de/cad>

ABOUT THE CAUCASUS ANALYTICAL DIGEST

Editors: Denis Dafflon, Lili Di Puppo, Iris Kempe, Natia Mestvirishvili, Matthias Neumann, Robert Orttung, Jeronim Perović, Heiko Pleines

The Caucasus Analytical Digest (CAD) is a monthly internet publication jointly produced by the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (<<http://www.crrccenters.org/>>), the Research Centre for East European Studies at the University of Bremen (<www.forschungsstelle.uni-bremen.de>), the Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies of the George Washington University (<www.gwu.edu/~ieresgwu>), the Resource Security Institute in Washington, DC (<resourcesecurityinstitute.org/>), the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at ETH Zurich (<www.css.ethz.ch>), and the German Association for East European Studies (DGO). The Caucasus Analytical Digest analyzes the political, economic, and social situation in the three South Caucasus states of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia within the context of international and security dimensions of this region's development. CAD is supported by a grant from ASCN (<www.ascn.ch>).

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Resource Security Institute

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