

The Consociational Theory And Challenges To Democratization In South Caucasus Plural Societies

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Abstract : The South Caucasus region is quite diverse in its cultural, ethnic, civilization, religious and social structure. At the same time after the collapse of the Soviet Union, emerged numerous internal conflicts significantly hindered the democratization process in the region. The quarter-century post-Soviet experience shows that with some differences mainly pseudo-democratic or even autocratic regimes are established in South Caucasus countries. Many researches affirm that in plural societies of Azerbaijan and Georgia ethnocratic elements are also observed. In these countries the influence of dominant ethnic groups over other ethnicities not explicitly are encouraged by authorities. Local researchers often explain this situation by the transitional period. However, other numerous studies show that in these countries ethnic-based governments aspire to be strengthened. Therefore, these countries could not lead to a fully democratic transition, and in result, they will be able to build ethnic democracies or authoritarian regimes. In this case, the cultural, religious and linguistic identity of subordinate ethnicities will be in danger. To prevent such possible developments, the article explores the idea of cultural relativism as opposition to the ethnocentrism. The cultural relativism treats all ethnic segments of the same plural society as equal. And in this case, the most relevant model of democracy can be the consociational model which continues to be successfully used for decades in many plural European states such as Netherlands, Belgium, etc. The article argues that in South Caucasus plural states the consociational discourse can be a real tool to build a democratic political culture. Based on the universal objectives and common interests, the consociational discourse tends to create guarantees of equality and security for all segments in South Caucasus plural states. Only on the base of civic culture development, the consociational democracy model implementation can be efficient.

Index Terms : Consociational Theory, Civic Culture, Democratization, Plural Societies, Political Discourse, Post-Soviet Transformation, South Caucasus.

1. INTRODUCTION

Almost three decades of post-Soviet transformation has shown that this process is not a late continuation of the third wave of democratization as it supposed to be (Huntington, 1991). Often this process does not fit even the rules of the third wave. The need to overcome the serious difficulties of establishing democracy in countries being in that process, requires either exploring the possibilities of already applied theories or developing entirely new, specific theories. Given the fact that the experience of political studies in this region is not great and specialists have only been trained for the last three decades, it should be considered natural that the first option is often preferred. Moreover, recent attempts have been made to apply theories to specific cases or to specific groups of countries, taking into account some or all of their general characteristics. For example, given the fact that Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan have plural societies and some conflicts, it is sometimes suggested to use a consociational democracy to overcome the difficulties of democracy development in these countries. In particular, T. Khidasheli (1999) proposes federalism for resolving the conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia based on a consociational model. He believes that the implementation on consociational and federal arrangements is possible if political elites have the will to guarantee the agreements and if the population is ready to support them. At least an economic reform is needed to ensure an equal distribution of economic resources to the constituents of the state as well as regional or federal arrangements have to be built on a culture of self-government (pp. 195-205). Taking into account the above mentioned factors, the opportunities and obstacles of applying this theory in Georgia and Azerbaijan as countries located in the same

region will be discussed. At the same time, the issue will also be considered in terms of the existence of a relevant civic culture in those countries.

2. CONSOCIATIONAL DEMOCRACY IN PLURAL SOCIETIES: OPPORTUNITIES AND DIFFICULTIES

In the case of implementation of consociationalism in plural societies the state authority could not achieve legitimacy without inclusiveness. At the same time, formal state entrenchment of racial or ethnic political power appeared historically to perpetuate and in some instances exacerbate the underlying societal division (Issacharoff, 2004, p. 88). Therefore, the consociational model cannot be regarded as a universal form of democratic regime even in plural societies because it is necessary to clarify the conditions when this model has a real potential to be successfully applied.

First, it should be considered that consociational theory has been initially proposed as an explanation of political stability in a few deeply divided European democracies. According to this theory, the destabilizing effects of subcultural segmentation in these countries were neutralized at the elite level by embracing non-majoritarian mechanisms for conflict resolution. This theory was extended as new consociational democracies were discovered, as the related but broader concept of "consensus democracy" was introduced, and as a normative component was added, recommending consociational engineering as the most promising way to achieve stable democracy in strongly segmented societies. The characteristics of consociational democracy are: segmented society, grand coalition, proportionality, segmental autonomy, and mutual (minority) veto.

As for the characteristics of consensus democracy, they are the following: oversized cabinets (executive body), separation of powers, multi-party system, proportional representation, corporatist interest group system, bicameralism, (non-

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territorial federalism and decentralization, entrenched constitution, judicial review, and independent central bank (Andeweg, 2000, p. 513). It is easy to notice that in consensus democracy there are more specific and detailed characteristics rather than in consociational one. Therefore, in the latter case, the degree of uncertainty is even higher. At the same time, this uncertainty ensures greater flexibility for consociational model and the success depends more on its application skill than completeness of its theory. Although taking into account the fact that consociational democracy model was able to overcome the tensions stemming from ethnic differences in some of plural European societies, this model has always been quite controversial. These debates mainly relate to the validity of the theory. As for the criticism of its application success, consequences and difficulties in different countries, they are less frequent. This criticism can become more effective if consociational theory is formulated less inductively and at a higher level of abstraction, and if the critics of consociationalism focus more on its principles and less on the operationalization. The erosion of social cleavages in many consociational democracies raises the question of whether the very logic of consociationalism should lead to a prescription of more adversarial politics in those countries (Andeweg, 2000, p. 509). The above mentioned characteristics are considered as advantages of consociational model application in plural societies over classical approaches to democratization, as they provide a real opportunity to have certain levers of power, as well as a veto power as a legal mechanism for representing and defending their own interests. A. Lijphart (1996) highlights the following conditions for the application of consociational democracy model in divided societies with split or similar risks: no-majority segment, segments of equal size, small number of segments, external threat, small population, socioeconomic equality, geographical concentration of segments, tradition of elite accommodation, and overarching loyalties (pp. 262-263). Along with its advantages, the consociational model may also have some difficulties in terms of its application. A. Pappalardo (1981) rightly emphasizes that elite predominance over a politically deferential and organizationally encapsulated following is one of only two conditions that regards as unambiguously favorable to consociationalism. The assumption behind this favorable condition is that segmental leaders may decide to cooperate with each other but their followers never want them to switch from competition to a level of cooperation (pp. 365-390). In this case, it is clear that the dominant ethnic group members or followers will start to treat consociationalism with less enthusiasm. Social differences do not become divisive cleavages spontaneously: they are made salient by political entrepreneurs who use them to mobilize support. The more persuasive the politicians have been in this regard, the more difficult it will be for them to carry their followers with them when they start cooperating with "the other side" (Andeweg, 2000, p. 528). This circumstance shows that the ruling elite will not follow the consociational model in terms of maintaining its political leadership, otherwise it may lose its full influence. This may explain, for example, the transfer of power in Azerbaijan, when Ilham Aliev was elected as President, as well as her wife became Vice President. These phenomena further deepened ethnocracy in Azerbaijan and demonstrated the power of the Aliev clan. An important feature of the consociational model is that it provides stability if used properly or when some appropriate conditions exist. If elites of different segments cooperate with each other and if their

followers do not bother them seriously, then strengthening stability is actually predetermined. But at the same time there may be also some unforeseen consequences. A. Lijphart (1977) warns that several of its characteristics may lead to indecisiveness and inefficiency; (1) Government by grand coalition means that decision-making will be slow. It is much easier to reach agreements in a small coalition spanning the entire range of a plural society; (2) The mutual veto involves the further danger that decision-making may be completely mobilized. It may therefore produce the very stagnation and instability that consociational democracy is designed to avoid (pp. 50-51). Assessing these difficulties, A. Lijphart (1977) highlights that a distinction must be drawn between short-term and long-term effectiveness. In the short run, an adversarial system may be a great deal more decisive and effective in a plural society than a consociational democracy (p. 51).

I. Salamay (2009) distinguishes corporate and integrative consociationalism models. He challenges the common belief that the sectarian model of corporate consociationalism is adequate for plural societies undergoing democratic transition. It demonstrates that demographic, spatial, and regional power shifts render corporate sectarian power sharing consociationalism conducive to conflict and national fragmentation. As an alternative, it proposes integrative consociationalism as a more responsive governing option that accommodates national and community-based political power sharing arrangements. National electoral strategies as well as administrative reforms are also suggested within the context of integrative consociationalism (pp. 84-105). P. Norris (2005) puts forward a new approach to consociational theory suggesting that power-sharing institutions have many important consequences, not least that they are most likely to facilitate accommodation and cooperation among leadership elites, making them most suitable for states struggling to achieve stable democracy and good governance in divided societies. His study compares a broad cross-section of countries worldwide, including many multiethnic states, to investigate the impact of formal power-sharing institutions (PR electoral systems and federalism) on several indicators of democratic stability and good governance. He demonstrates three main findings: (1) worldwide, power-sharing constitutions combining PR and federalism remain relatively rare (only 13 out of 191 states); (2) federalism was found to be unrelated to any of the indicators of good governance under comparison; and (3) PR electoral systems, however, were positively related to some indicators of good governance, both worldwide and in multiethnic states. This provides strictly limited support for the larger claims made by consociational theory. Nevertheless, the implications for policymakers suggest that investing in basic human development is a consistently more reliable route to achieve stable democracy and good governance than constitutional design alone (p. 1). B. O'Leary (2005) notes that anti-consociationalists fear that the consociation will lead to racism, radicalism, and patriarchy, while consociationalists fear that the integrationists will incite evitable wars and be biased towards the dominant communities. The intensity that accompanies this debate shows the influence of consociational thought (pp. 3-44). However, it should be noted that despite some of the difficulties that the consociational theory has encountered in practice, it still continues to be used successfully in many plural societies. In general, difficulties must be overcome, because otherwise it will be impossible to solve the deeper problems that exist in plural societies. And

the consociational model provides realistic opportunities to overcome these problems. Consequently, in order to avoid deepening of inter-social conflicts, appropriate mechanisms should also be established for the application of consociational model in South Caucasus plural societies. One of these mechanisms may be the consociational discourse as an important tool of political communication without which it will be quite difficult to form a relevant political consciousness. In the context of cultural relativism, the consociational discourse can become the cornerstone of overcoming inter-ethnic, intercultural distinctions within the same society. In this case, it is necessary to formulate, on the basis of common interest, an appropriate political will which can serve as a goal of equality and security for all segments of the plural society. Plural societies are also distinguished by various internal conflicts. Such are the South Caucasus plural states - Georgia and Azerbaijan, where exist diverse explicit and implicit inter-ethnic conflicts. There are different ways of conflict regulation. But obviously, the most preferred between them is the search for consensus. By their nature, ethno-political conflicts are divided into two major groups: self-determination and non-self-determination conflicts. Their main difference concerns the legal component (Torosyan, 2015, pp. 1-19). This seems to simplify the task, as legal issues are easier to handle than political ones. However, this is true when there are appropriate instances and mechanisms to impose their decisions on the parties. Of course, there is also a possibility for the consensus solution of conflict. However, this becomes an effective mechanism when the parties are convinced that in the absence of agreement, legal solutions are unconditionally imposed. However, as the international experience shows, the political component has a huge impact on the solution of self-determination conflicts, when the solution is not always in line with legal norms and, at best, the solution is internationally imposed. Theoretically, there are two perceptions of consensus: narrow, as a means of political resolution of conflicts and disputes, and broad, also called civil agreement. The broad perception of consensus is closely linked to the socio-political component, according to which the consensus is the consensus of the vast majority of people on the social order in which they act. It is noteworthy that conflict and consensus types of discourse are also distinguished within the framework of political discourse theory. The conflict discourse narrows the consciousness of parties, removing the prospect of its resolution, while the consensus discourse widens the consciousness of parties and creates a more realistic opportunity for its resolution (Ordukhanyan, 2009, p. 79). Referring to consensus methods, A. Aklaev (2005) notes that they are of particular importance for the strategies of ethno-political conflict management. In this respect, he identifies consensus and arbitration as consensus methods (pp. 346-354). The first of these two methods is the consociational one, as it not only aims to overcome internal conflicts in plural societies, but also envisages a transition to democracy. However, it should be noted that the problem is not limited to the choice of consensus method, since a number of factors are important for the development of democracy: civilization, values, situation and other factors. Moreover, an important precondition for applying the consensus method is the quick and decisive use of arbitration by the international community, when only the parties will define the preference of consensus method. Otherwise, it would be desirable for at least one of the parties to reach a favorable solution through political methods.

Although the consociational theory has been largely developed for the peaceful resolution of problems in plural societies, it has also a potential to be expanded (Rubinstein, 2017, pp. 71-102). K. Basta, J. McGarry and R. Simeon (2015) consider that disputes regarding territorial pluralism remain conflict-generating phenomena in the former Soviet Union, such as Ukraine, Moldova, Azerbaijan and Georgia (p. 3). Recent internal developments in Azerbaijani society indicate that probably these conflicts may aggravate if ethnocentric and authoritarian approaches continue to deepen. They also note that there are two broad alternative strategies for accommodation territorially concentrated communities. The first strategy is integrationist which emphasizes unity over diversity in plural states and is inimical to the institutionalization of difference, including in its territorial form. The second strategy is accommodationist. It advocates the autonomy and integrity of substate political communities through a wide variety of institutional approaches, perhaps the most important of which is federalism. Elsewhere, territorial self-government can be combined with consociational features, recognizing cultural or other differences and institutionalizing them within central governments through devices such as proportionality and mutual vetoes (K. Basta, J. McGarry & R. Simeon, 2015, pp. 4-7). Taking into account the conflict management in internally divided plural societies S. Wolff and Ch. Yakinthou (2012) also discuss consociational theory to which they attribute two main dimensions of institutional design: power sharing and territorial self-governance. They consider the theory of centripetalism that favors electoral systems that give more chances to parties with a cross-ethnic appeal. They also examine power dividing or the multiple-majorities approach. This theory is based on the idea that where power is concentrated on too few sets of hands, it is difficult to manage conflict in divided societies. The same situation can be observed in the Azerbaijani society, when the real political power is completely concentrated in the hands of one ruling family. Consequently, the overcoming of conflicts in Azerbaijan remains a serious problem. NGOs have contributed significantly to conflict management by creating channels of communication and consequently building trust between conflict parties (Kewir, 2012, pp. 136-138). Without denying the usefulness of NGOs, however, it is difficult to pinpoint at least one conflict resolution process where this factor had a huge impact. However, in this respect, civil society organizations in Azerbaijan are also subject to various pressures, which again proves the consolidation of an ethnocentric authoritarian regime. In Georgia, the problem is milder because NGOs operate with sufficient efficiency. If the goal of conflict management is to seek or support institutional mechanisms, then there are more incentives for conflicting parties to follow political rules rather than return to violence because of their incompatible goals (Wolff & Yakinthou, 2012, p. 79). However, it should be noted that the realities may be different in each case, as each conflict has its specificity. A number of researchers are focusing solely on conflict resolution or transformation issues in divided societies. This is mainly due to the fact that conflict management is traditionally identified with conflict containment (Hamad, 2005, pp. 1-31). However, in divided societies, in addition to the institutional approaches to conflict management, it is also important to consider the question of satisfying human needs because the realization of them can be crucial for conflict management in these societies (Azar, 1990, pp. 135-154). Moreover, in

addition to institutional approaches and besides of satisfying the needs, it is also necessary to take into account the cultural characteristics of the environment in the process of conflict management, which mainly include the non-political needs of the relevant groups (Burton, 1990, pp. 89-112). In this respect, when observing the possibilities of applying consociational democracy mechanisms in Georgia and/or Azerbaijan, it may seem at first glance that if the perception of broad consensus is fully consistent with consensus discourse theory, so in such societies the consociational discourse can become efficient for overcoming the contradictions between different ethnic, religious and cultural groups and building a harmonious society. However, if the problem is observed according to the above mentioned three dimensions (institutional approaches, satisfying needs, and cultural peculiarities of the environment), the solutions face complex challenges and serious obstacles to resolving the conflict, especially during democratic transition.

3. ETHNOCRACY AS AN OBSTACLE TO DEMOCRATIZATION

In the two post-Soviet South Caucasus states, Azerbaijan and Georgia, a clear manifestation of an emphasized ethnic dominance of the titular people can be seen, which is highly characteristic of ethnocratic political regimes. Usually ethnocratic aspirations are characteristic of plural societies where the population has ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural and other segmental distinctions. It is no coincidence that although the differences between Georgia and Azerbaijan in a number of factors such as democratization degree or integration policies, these countries are affected by different forms of ethnocracy. In ethnocracy, rights are determined by ethnonational descent, not by universal citizenship. The source of legitimacy of the regime is not the citizenry ("the demos") but rather the dominant ethnic nation. The founding ethnic group appropriates the state apparatus and administers discriminatory policies toward other groups. A dichotomy separates the two ethno-nations of the settlers and indigenous, although both are at the same time internally divided into ethno-classes. Ethnocracy is non-democratic although it exhibits democratic features, like universal suffrage and democratic institutions (Smootha, 2001, p. 22). Moreover, Azerbaijan is a member of the Council of Europe. Georgia is also a member of the Council of Europe, has signed an Association Agreement with EU. Georgian authorities repeatedly state their determination to join the EU. In the case of ethnocracy, democracy is flawed because it lacks the "democratic structure". Ethnocracy seeks to break a number of democratic principles, such as equal citizenship, the existence (demos) of territorial political communities, and protection from the tyranny of majority (Yiftachel, 1999, pp. 364-390). In particular, although Georgia has been a member of the Council of Europe for almost two decades, it has not yet fully implemented the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages which is the European convention for the protection and promotion of languages used by traditional minorities¹. The purpose of such behavior is to consider the complaints of non-titled ethnic groups illegal by the dominant ethnic group, creating a "basis" for suppressing them. It is obvious that the addition of "non-ethnic" epithet to

"democracy" (in the case of Georgia), or the use of the term "normative democracy" (in the case of Azerbaijan) cannot conceal the manifestations of ethnic discrimination in those countries. In such states public and elite commitment to democracy, universal suffrage, fair elections, free media, and full and effective use of means of democratic, non-violent struggle by non-dominant groups, to name just a few of the components of democracy, are treated as trivial and deceptive. This myopic view misses the essence of regimes that are characterized by an inherent contradiction between democratic and non-democratic tendencies but also by incremental change, flexibility and relative stability (Smootha, 2001, p. 23). Such kind of situations have a realistic potential to unleash ethno-political conflicts. It is no coincidence that ethnic democracies have a high incidence of conflict, and violent methods, sometimes even military force, are often used to resolve these conflicts. N. Medvedev (2001) believes that in the context of radical modernization of society (which is also proper to post-Soviet transformation) ethnocentrism becomes a dominant worldview through which are assessed all fields of social development, from economy to culture, dividing people into two categories: ethnically identical and ethnically different (pp. 66-79). The opinion of the titular ethnic group that their lifestyle is the best and that they are better than others is easily transformed into discrimination against other groups. Even they can be ready to destroy them (Pashukova, 2015, pp. 50-61). In particular, such manifestations occurred towards the Armenians and other ethnic groups in Azerbaijan and Artsakh in the late 1980s and early 1990s by the Turkic ethnicity of Azerbaijan (Cox & Eibner, 1993). The incorporation of non-democratic elements into the model of ethnic democracy has become a major reason for criticism and even rejection of the model by some scholars. Ethnic democracy is criticized for being illegitimate (a non-democracy posing as a democracy), unstable (a political system built on inherent contradictions cannot be stable) and inefficient (conflicts are left simmering) (Smootha, 2001, p. 84). S. Smootha (2001) rightly points out that ethnic democracy is especially attractive to ethnic states that are democratizing. The transition from a non-democracy to a liberal, multicultural or consociational democracy is too big a jump to make for some of these ethnic states, discovering ethnic democracy as a compromise that allows them to retain ethnic dominance and ethnic nationalism along with democracy. Some of the independent states of the former Soviet Union, especially Estonia, Latvia, Georgia and the Moslem states (especially Azerbaijan), are moving in this direction (p. 85). In this context T. Torosyan and H. Sukiasyan (2014), analyzing political regimes established in post-Soviet states, include Georgia in a "waiting group" (pp. 51-61), with those states where political regime transformations are still ongoing. The latest results of regime types' assessments by Freedom House (Nations in Transit-2018) prove this record: a transitional government or hybrid regime established in Georgia, and a deep authoritarian regime established in Azerbaijan.² Referring to the type of political regime in Georgia, N. Sabanadze (2005) characterizes it as ethnic democracy. The basic argument is that the main source of Georgia's instability is the combination of its weak statehood with the regime of ethnic democracy. The Georgian example, however, shows that the combination of weak statehood with

¹ The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. Retrieved December 07, 2019 from: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages>

² Nations in Transit 2018 (Confronting Illiberalism). Retrieved November 04, 2019, from: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/nations-transit-2018>

ethnic democracy can result in a highly volatile and unpredictable situation. Ethnic democracy is likely to be perceived as an unjust regime, because it is biased in favor of a core ethnic group. Instability in this case stems from the state weakness and not from the nature of the state regime, be it ethnic or liberal. However, authors of the model often refer to ethnic democracy as a transitory stage from no democracy to better democracy, which is particularly characteristic of weak and democratizing states in transition (p. 115). Ethnic democracy therefore becomes the source of instability in two main ways: first, it alienates minorities and by doing so undermines their loyalty to the state and legitimizes their claims which disrupts state security and stability; second, it ethnicizes mundane political and socio economic grievances and by doing so removes them from the sphere of normal political bargaining and transforms them into an uncompromising struggle over nonnegotiable categories, such as ethnic identity, national pride and recognition (Sabanadze, 2005, p. 116). Societies that combine low quality democracy with politicized ethnicity can be described as ethnic democracies. According to Smootha (2001), "this is democracy that contains the non-democratic institutionalization of dominance of one ethnic group" (p. 24). The state is designed to serve the interests not of all its citizens, but of the members of the majority group. Membership in groups cannot be acquired; it is given and is defined in terms of ethnicity, blood and descent (Sabanadze, 2005, p. 117). P. Järve (2000), also has a similar approach to this model. He believes that ethnic democracy should shift from authoritarian regime to democratic transition. It cannot be considered the last stop of the transition process. Rather, ethnic democracy is only one phase of an incessant journey to democratic society (p. 29). Therefore, it can be argued that the above mentioned approaches on this model cannot fully characterize all states with plural societies, since their aspirations from a non-democratic regime to democracy transition by an interim use of ethnic democracy model in some cases have not a transitional character. They are really rooted regimes, as the regime established in Azerbaijan. The aspirations for consolidated democracy by an interim use of ethnic democracy transition from non-democratic regime may in some cases lead to the re-establishment of the non-democratic model, but with other features. In this case, the final destination of ethnic democracy as a transitional regime is the ethnic authoritarian regime, where the dominant ethnic interest (ethno-authoritarianism) again reigns. It is obvious that ethnic democracy cannot be an intermediate path to democracy, as in such cases ethnic democracy is a direct path to ethno-authoritarianism. Very often, ethnic democracy serves as a political tool to hide the real preferable regime type or to conceal existing problems. By using this model, states are trying to show that they are striving for democracy, but are actually trying to strengthen the authoritarian regimes. N. Sabanadze (2005) points out that the case of Georgia, however, shows that the presence of the determining conditions is not always sufficient for the stability of ethnic democracy, which in combination with weak statehood may display not only destabilizing but also disintegrative tendencies which can become a real threat to the national security. As an important factor she emphasizes the Soviet legacy which played a very important, if not the decisive, role in the development of post-communist nationalism in Georgia and in its transition from communist authoritarianism to flagging

ethnic democracy (pp. 118-119). Certainly, the same can be said in the case of Azerbaijan, but with the reservation that the nationalism of the Azeris continues to grow up, threatening even the physical security of the indigenous ethnic groups. Georgia has failed to institute a viable ethnic democracy. Georgia is simply a weak state whose weakness stems mostly from non-ethnic factors. Multiethnic Georgia is as weak as ethnically homogeneous Armenia. Possible causes for weakness are poor resources, political divisions within the majority, corruption, mismanagement and an undemocratic culture. The ethnic democracy in Georgia will further weaken the state (Smootha, 2005, p. 247). In this case, it should be noted that despite the democratization progress in Georgian society especially due to the efforts of the West, however, the factor of ethnic supremacy continues to be maintained. The pressure on other ethnicities also continues to be maintained, as other ethnicities do not yet have more or less proportional representation in state representative bodies. M. Deutsch (1973) notes that overcoming intergroup hostility and building positive relationships can help deepen the relations between members of different groups. For this reason, it is essential that representatives of different groups work together towards the same goal, that is, pursue the same goal. In this regard, the consociational model can serve as a positive activation tool for intergroup relations, and the collective security of all groups can serve as a collective goal. If these groups tend to live in safety, they should not only view that security as a policy of self-interest, but must consider everyone's safety a common goal, as the security threats to their groups come from other ones. Thus, in Azerbaijani of ethnocratic and Georgian ethnic democracy models, the interests of non-dominant ethnic groups are de facto suppressed by the dominant ethnic groups. Such a situation creates the illusion of democratization, which is explained by the circumstance of regime transition. In the case of Azerbaijan, the problem is much more complex than in Georgia, as the Georgian society has reached a certain level of democracy in recent years. In Azerbaijan, however, there has been a steady return to ethnic authoritarianism. In this regard, the consociational democracy can be an effective way to democratic transition in South Caucasus plural states by the precondition of political culture modernization, which initially rejects the dominance of one ethnic group over other ones as the equality is one of the mandatory principles of classical democracy. R. Inglehart (2002) believes that economic progress is gradually leading to social and cultural change that strengthens democratic institutions. This explains why democracy has recently become more widespread, mainly in economically developed countries, that is, where "self-expression values" are preferred to "survival values" (p. 125). Of course, this approach is not universal and is true only under certain conditions. This is also confirmed on the example of South Caucasus states where Azerbaijan has the highest economic indicators and the lowest level of democracy (consolidated authoritarian regime³). It means that the economy is not an essential but an auxiliary element for democratic progress. The key element of democracy is the culture (Almond & Verba, 1992, pp. 122-135) or civilizational belonging of people. In this regard, L. Harrison (2002) shows that how culture influences social progress. He identifies a few elements that allow to classify cultures as

³ Nations in Transit 2018 (Confronting Illiberalism). Retrieved November 04, 2019, from: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/nations-transit-2018>

progressive and static cultures. These elements are: education, encouragement, social solidarity, justice, honesty, etc (p. 294). For example, in progressive cultures, education is the key to progress, and in static cultures, education is seen as a secondary value. In progressive cultures, individual abilities are an important factor in personal career growth. In static cultures, this role is played by social origins and personal connections. In progressive cultures, the circle of social identity and trust goes beyond the family and encompasses a much broader social whole. In traditional, static cultures, the boundaries of trust are limited to family circles. Social systems with a low radius of identification and trust are more prone to corruption, nepotism, tax violations and do not strive for humanity. In progressive cultures, justice and honesty are the most expected qualities. Conversely, in static cultures, justice as a personal success is a function that can only be accomplished by the power of money or personal connections. In progressive cultures, power has a horizontal distribution, whereas in static cultures it is centralized and vertical (Harrison, 2002, p. 295). It is easy to be convinced that all the elements of static culture exist in Azerbaijan. In the case of Georgia, some phenomena characteristic of static culture have already been partially overcome, but that does not mean that this culture is fully progressive. In Georgian plural society, as in the case of Azerbaijan, the distribution of power remains vertical to different ethnic groups. Equality in terms of cultural autonomy and political initiative is still an unresolved issue. The explored issue has different perceptions in consolidated and emerging democracies. Ch. Anderson (1998) argues that in consolidated democracies, political culture and the effectiveness of the system depend on the level of political satisfaction. In addition, the influence of political culture is weaker than indicators of current performance once alternative explanations are taken into account. In contrast, political satisfaction levels in emerging democracies are unrelated to political culture or system performance. Overall, the results indicate that the structure of democracy satisfaction is dissimilar in consolidated and emerging democratic systems (p. 22). This confirms that in plural societies, democracy cannot have a prospect if the absence of conditions of equal competition between different segments of society as sub-cultures weakens the influence and importance of political culture on the stability of political system. This is also conditioned by the conflicting potential of inter-ethnic, religious or other issues existing in plural new democracies, which not only threatens effective democratization but also undermines public security. Consociational democracy can therefore be seen as a model for overcoming the above issues if there is a possibility to use a consociational discourse between different segments, not for the private or group, but for the formation of common interests and their satisfaction. And in this case, political culture will become a more important factor for democratization, as it is in consolidated democracies.

4. CONCLUSION

Considering the impact of various factors as well as the analysis of possibilities and difficulties of consociational democracy model implementation in South Caucasus plural states, we concluded that in addition to the general difficulties of democratization in post-Soviet countries, due to the unique features of this unprecedented transition process, there are also a number of specific issues. These problems in the two

plural states of the South Caucasus - Georgia and Azerbaijan - are a consequence of both the multiethnic structure of their societies and their civilizational belonging. Because of the last factor, if the issue of Georgian democratization is related to the value system modernization and the political culture formation, then Azerbaijan's prospects are in practice unpredictable, as the vast majority of its population belongs to a totally different civilization than democratic one. Consociational democracy is not an opportunity to establish democracy in plural societies, but an opportunity to overcome pluralism issues in democratic societies through the elaboration of democratic mechanisms for organizing public life. In Georgian society where exist ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural and other segmental differences, as well as are created some elements of ethnocentricity, nevertheless there are some favorable factors for the implementation of consociational democracy model such as the small population and the geographical concentration of the segments. These factors may contribute to the formation of consociational discourse in condition of the gradual reinforcement of civic culture as they can create additional potential for segments to pursue a common goal. In this case, security can serve as a universal goal, otherwise the dominant ethnic groups will always strive for dominance, imposing their own political culture. And subject ethnic groups, as subcultures, will try in every way to counter, deter the various threats posed by the dominant ethnic groups, which will always create conflict situations. Such processes can exacerbate the internal crisis and lead to the entrenchment of authoritarian, ethnocentric regimes in order to preserve the advantage of a superior ethnic groups. However, it is not possible to permanently suppress the natural need for self-realization of subject segments by force. And violence can create permanent threats to instability and security that is the situation manifested with some differences in the two South Caucasus plural states.

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