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### **Clothing consumption characteristics in post-Soviet Georgia**

*To present modern Georgian fashionable process more comprehensively, We addressed our work to post-Soviet period, particularly to 90-ies retrospective review of clothing. We believe that in spite of the fact that there is clearly defined westernization and global trends in clothes, in the 90-ies Georgian clothes we can see the semiotic significance of the Soviet past so far.*

*Keywords: Fashion, Post-Soviet, Everyday Life, Consumption of clothing, Style.*

On the eve of the XX-XXI centuries there were observed significant changes in Humanitarian Sciences. The sphere of interest of sciences included the “general” human life practice. The main plot of everyday life such as: the existence, clothes, labour, holiday, traditions and habits in some aspects were studied earlier too, but their systematic researches began in the last decade. One of the important problem and prospective issue in the contemporary Culturology became dressing experience, that we gain in everyday life. To reflect clothing consumption style and its characterization as one of the phenomena of the everyday culture is the first attempt in the Georgian Humanitarian knowledge

With connection to the abovementioned, the problem of a phenomenon of fashion in relation to the Georgian reality is extremely important. The new socio-political and economic relations in Georgia touched the world of culture of the certain citizen and the Georgian society as a whole. With formation of open society of a world civilization,

stereotypes and styles of behavior of the West inevitably enter our life, on the one hand, and aspiration to universal values - with another. In various spheres of public life in our country there are noted such essential changes as are: economy transformation on the principles of the market relations, democratic principles system development in management of society, and transformations in the spiritual sphere. One of the most important elements of this transformation is formation and functioning new cultural stereotypes, values and norms. There are essential changes of person’s behavior in the sphere of life and interpersonal communication. These relations are reflected not only in the elements of spiritual culture that deals to norms and traditions, but also in such major phenomenon as are fashion and clothes. It is undoubted that the Georgian culture cannot do without search of new cultural meaning paradigms and beside the paradigms, the generation phenomenon of fashion.

Today in Georgia is observed the surge in interest of fashion national history. "The fashionable boom" represents the public process absorbing all layers of society. Obviously, it is natural reaction of society to release from ideological fetters and strict moral and valuable norms of times of the USSR. Everything became possible and available. Fashionable boutiques and salons, model houses, exhibitions and fashion shows, specialized fashion magazines and articles in usual mass media, active advertizing of fashionable production, popularity of fashion designers and crowd of the girls, dreaming to become "models" – it is already today's reality of the fashionable world of Georgia. The Georgian world of fashion learned a set of new Georgian names. Their author's studio and boutiques were opened in Tbilisi and other cities. In 2000 year, the Amarta Media Group issued the Georgian fashionable magazine "Amarta". "Amarta" is the first glossy magazine not only in the history of Georgia but even in the Caucasus. The magazine informed the readers about fashion and art news from all over the world, via printed exclusive interviews with Hubert de Givenchy, Christian Lacroix, Maria Cristina Buchchellati, Giovanna Ferragamo, Luciano Benetton, Victoria de Castellan and others. However, of course, the situation in Georgia noticeably differs from similar one of the Western world. European concept in Georgian fashion has arrived in recent years. At present in Georgian fashion everything goes according to the scheme which, the French fashion passed more than one hundred years ago. The Georgian society is the consumer of tendencies but not their founder. And it is very natural, because the fashion in Georgia is still passing a long and difficult way from "Forbidden Fruit" to social-economical institutions.

As we know the fashion is a reflection of constantly changing public and cultural contents, with this it is reflection of the imperious relations and in turn, it itself is a power resource. As P. Bourdieu writes "Structural changes in the field of fashion - only effect on the changes of structure in the field of power (Field of objective structures between fractions of a dominating class)" (1, p.87-96). Therefore, the analysis of essence of fashion without studying socio-cultural context remains at the level of usual superficial judgments. It is also important

to consider that, touching on the existential, mental problems related to search of global meanings of human life, the Georgian fashion cannot ignore the Georgian cultural traditions, which are necessary for stabilization and productive development of social system. Therefore, by our opinion, modern Georgia development and perception of fashion is an actual problem. Studying of this problem will allow us to come nearer to understand an essence of fashion and many public processes, as in fashion also in their reflection essence. Especially that today in Georgia there is no scientific informational base concerning to contemporary problems of the Georgian modern fashionable process

In contest of the present work, we are interested about clothing style transformation in the 90-ies Georgia. At present, we submit scientific attempt to explain everyday culture phenomenon,

in particular the clothing consumption peculiarities for the mentioned period. We are interested how city style has been changed, and what has been remained from the Soviet citizens visual. For carrying out researches and study fashion, we used observation method in Tbilisi Streets. According to the research practice of observation method to fix study object (13). The most number of fashion theories are based on the observation data of human's sincere actions and separate individuals behavior. We have chosen the same method. As observation objects we meet separate individuals, human groups, events, processes and so on. Collecting database in such way because first of all we wanted to show you maximum number of clothes styles variations and on the other hand their most typical styles, that we could see in Tbilisi streets and at the same time chasing to the semiology ideas, we are considering the clothes as the system of signs of semiology ideas. Consequence of this we will watch changes of fashion signs and the transformation process from the Soviet to the contemporary view of the society; also, we would show how fashion signs reflect society changes in Georgia. The present work is first attempt of the similar research and undoubtedly requires further systemic understanding.

“Consumer revolution” has a great influence on the modern fashion and consumption culture. The researchers use „Consumer Revolutions” concept toward to those countries which from the “necessary consumption” turned into “overconsumption”. From the samples of those countries who recently suffered or is suffering “Consumption Revolution” are named the following countries: from the post-Social Countries (Hungary, Estonia), from Latin American countries (Brazil and Argentina) and from Asia (China). (6; 2; 4; 5; 7; 8). When the researchers are talking about “Consumption Revolution”, they imply the political changes - transition into socialism, post socialism and capitalism, changing in social economy and market economy, developing retail market and consumption structure. Researchers have taken into account the formation of the middle class, and individual consumption increasing. (2; 4; 5; 7; 8). If we follow the logic on the background of mentioned transformations clothes social cultural practice and Soviet fashion values must be changed or disappeared. However, the anthropologists have approved that consumption

objects and models, which are circulated with joint denationalized channels, cannot simply invasion in “root” cultures and completely and fully change local everyday life. It is more likely that the consumers adapt new trends take into account the habitual practice in the consumption sphere. Therefore, “modern consumption culture is formed in the coexistence conditions of old and new styles and objects.” (8, p.286). We are trying to watch this process in Georgian reality and to introduce its peculiarities. After the observation, we assert that Georgia has already been confronted with consumption revolution. The new issue is so: how will be reflected the ongoing micro changes on the customer culture. Based on the visual observation (arising from the discussed problems specifics) in Georgian consumption culture we outline the

tendencies, which determine the changes in the clothes style. These tendencies are: westernization, globalization, localization, and more and more significant visualization of clothe styles.

Semiotic things “household consumption items always had symbolic content and consequent of this they indicated on socio-cultural property of those persons who used this thing. For example, Roman “Toga” or Georgian peasant “Chokha” indicated social property but not person’s psychological condition. Now the situation is changed: berets, cap, hat (“Shlapa”) combination with suit or sweater, boots “espadrilles”, “sneakers” or “Moccasin” allows person to express individual feelings and emotional attitude toward the reality. More precisely, we would like to say that suit esthetics tries to overcome confrontation between everyday life and officially, when collecting together “willing”, “beauty” and “decency”. Therefore, the everyday life and its attributes take over themselves emotional self-expression function, which were represented ideological and high art monopoly for a long time. To describe contemporary consumption sphere, and namely clothes “Semiotic Baggage” is considered more or less appropriate category (3). This category implies those footprints of Soviet culture (signs, meanings, practices, and different semiotic codes) by which modern culture is saturated so far. In this particular case, we are interested in west-mental fashion as a cultural phenomenon. Costume visual language has its own system of signs, in which some particular codes are input. One of these codes is traditional, it has its roots in past, another is modern, which was created under the influence of latest technologies. There are many clichés and stereotypes in the first one; they are changing very slowly. The second one quickly responds to the technological, art, science, and ongoing changes in the fashion. Accordingly, the costume has some kind of socio-code, which transfers information from the past to the future. Costume includes information about person’s age, gender, profession. We can judge and guess the epoch according to the costume, the country where lives its owner and many others. Beside this, the clothes complete person’s visual. Consequence of the above mentioned we could consider the clothes as disambiguation phenomena. Thus, we can say that cloth, as a sign is a particular mediator between person and social environment. Through these phenomenon is carried out social relation, conditioned not only by the relation content, also with the fact how

person can portray itself in particular situation or environment. By this sign, which has social content the man defines its place in the social relationship system and cooperation form with the various groups of individuals. Via clothes on the one hand he offers to the society this or that form of relationship and on the other hand it itself is forced to obey the norms which are established in the society and applies to the various types of the clothes

In this particular case, our sphere of interest is to study socio-cultural aspects of the signs system in modern costume market. In accordance to the observation we believe that despite the

widespread westernization and global tendencies, in 90-ies Georgia the fashion was not fully westernized – the clothes still preserves the Soviet past semiotic “baggage”. We will try to strengthen our reasoning with arguments. In 1990-ies years Georgia non-Soviet dressed person was prominent. You could notice “Sovietness” in the costume at first glance. The word “Soviet” toward the costume in 1990-ies year nun ambiguously has negative note. Is dressed in accordance “Soviet style” or “none-Soviet Style”- this was differentiation principle, according which was differed attire. This deny toward to the cloth characterization is still preserved. We can argue, that in this period was established post-Soviet dressing transition culture, which is applicable to that culture of dressing that researchers call “hybrid” (14). You could often meet such dressing culture in Tbilisi streets. They were used as the exhibition sample to illustrate how is gathered together completely irrelevant items: Old-fashioned gray green coat, white leather boots with thin nose, big white metal ring and polyethylene package for woman instead of a small handbag. Based on R. Bart definitions, here we are talking about discord between clothe language and “one inserted fashion item power” (9). In the aforementioned case, we should consider white boots as an item. The tendency, which causes such eclectic approach, in general is typical for post-Soviet culture. Thus eclectic reason was very typical for 90-ies Georgian dressing culture, in accordance our opinion this reason can be considered as a deficit, which significantly limits clothes “expression” possibilities and promoted intensive influx of Turkish and Chinese goods. Appearance of new rules of clothes consumption, which are offered by foreign magazines and catalogues, force old rules and habits to weaken and disappear. Finally, we believe that the main reason of eclectic approach was the aspirations for individuality. Georgians as soon as they were released from willing binding agenda, regulations, and laws, and were able to reveal themselves via clothes, could breathe freely.

In 90-ies Georgia, the dressing culture peculiarities were observed not only in objects and style election, but also in colors combination. We should remember that in Soviet fashion ensemble the election principle by colors mainly was stylistic parameters. Other parameters – objects, facture and conformity to genre were not important. Color selection for that time was tightly connected with Soviet style clothes features – indistinctness. By researchers opinion such indistinctness of clothes style belongs to the “indiscernible”

category. Indistinctness, colorless daily items, neutral (gray tan, black, white) colors, characterizes it. Reject any outstanding details, (10, c.187–232). This feature, more or less is extended during the entire Soviet period. (12). It must be noticed that in 90-ies Georgian woman clothes are not in light colors. Maybe we must think that this element is remained from the soviet mentality. But it is likely that shadowed, dark tones abundance in that time Georgian women’s clothes was caused due their existential condition, in which they were from the

beginning of 90-ies years, after the dramatic events. On photos, the women from Tbilisi in the 90-ies look like twins. This was caused due to the various stylistic directions absence. They dressed in accordance only a few commercial shops offers, selling Asian origin cheap tasteless clothes.

Thus, based on the visual materials chosen by us, can be concluded that in spite of the fact that in the clothes there are clearly defined Westernization and other global trends, in 90-ies years Georgian clothes so far include the semiotic significance of the Soviet past. We think that in general 90-ies year Georgian clothes are sample of eclectic style, when Soviet clothes indistinctness make neighborhood with contemporary tendencies of clothe design and with this demonstrates their “hybrid” style.

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### ტანსაცმლის რეტროსპექტული მიმოხილვა ანოტაცია

ჩვენს შრომაში მივმართავთ პოსტსაბჭოთა პერიოდის, კერძოდ, ტანსაცმლის რეტროსპექტულ მიმოხილვას ვფიქრობთ, მიუხედავად იმისა რომ ტანსაცმელში ნათლადაა გამოკვეთილი ვესტერნიზაცია და სხვა გლობალური ტენდენციები, 90-იანი წლების საქართველოში ტანსაცმელი ჯერ-ჯერობით მოიცავს საბჭოთა წარსულის სემიოტიკურ მნიშვნელობას.

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