

Paper Number 422

The problem of the psychology of perception of the sociology of intergroup relations on the example of conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia

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Paper Number 422

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“The problem of the psychology of perception of the sociology of intergroup relations on the example of conflict in Abkhazia, Georgia”

Goal of research:

To raise the effectiveness of peace processes on the settlement of Abkhazian crises via reducing threats from the deformation of perception of the structure of the conflict.

Objectives of Research:

1. To compare reductionists and holistic approaches in determining the structure of the Abkhazian political crises.
2. To decompose the conflict separating ethnic and political components of the conflict.
3. To demonstrate possible alternative proposals for strengthening of the peace process.

Our study showed that holistic approaches to the study of the structure of the Abkhazian political conflict were not actually carried out.

Ethnocentrism and Ethnic reductionism

Scientific and political texts reduces multiple conflict to the so-called “*Georgian-Abkhaz conflict*”

Comparative analysis of the Abkhazian and Karabakh crises

Abkhazia	Nagorno Karabakh
<p>Abkhazian society is not two-ethnic, but multi-ethnic and the boundaries of ethnic division do not coincide with the boundaries of the political division of society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="1414 546 1974 696">• Armenians and Azerbaijanis<li data-bbox="1414 811 2127 1053">• Clear coincidence of ethnic borders with political ones

The tragedy of a divided society of Abkhazia



12,000 dead.

Up to 1,000 missing persons.

Up to 300,000 Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.

Discrimination of the rights of opponents of the separation of Abkhazia from Georgia - unionists and sanctions against secessionists of Abkhazia.

The occupation of Abkhazia by Russian Federation under the pretext of preventing armed conflict.

Life in the conditions of occupation.

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The Abkhazian society
is ideologically divided

Pomegranate

*– a symbol of a divided
society of Abkhazia.*



The propaganda of supporters of the separation of Abkhazia from Georgia:

Abkhazian society is politically homogeneous space

The propaganda of supporters of the separation of Abkhazia from Georgia:

Abkhazian society is politically homogeneous space

- all ethnic Abkhazians are secessionist, and all Georgians are unionists;
- conflict is – “Georgian-Abkhazian”;
- Abkhazia – is a separatist region.



Exile of unionists from Abkhazia

Method of decomposition:

To separate the ethnic component of the conflict from the political

decomposition of the political component of the conflict

Decomposition allowed to de-ethnized perception of the political conflict

Holistic model of Abkhazian political crises

1 Politically divided society of Abkhazia

Secessionists – discriminatory group	Unionists – Discriminated group
Separatists - supporters of the creation of an independent state: with a Russian orientation western-oriented with Turkish orientation	Unitarists
Irredentists - supporters of the secession motivated by joining another state: Pro-Russian Pro-Caucasian Pro-Turkish Pro-Armenian	Autonomists Federalists Confederalists

Holistic model of Abkhazian political crises

2 The Conflict between central authorities (CA) of Georgia and divided society of Abkhazia

CA - Georgia	Secessionist of Abkhazia
CA – Georgia	Unionists of Abkhazia

3. International conflict

Georgia	Northern Caucasus groups
Georgia	Russia
Turkey	Russia
Turkey	Armenia
“West”	Russia
Non-regional players (“West”)	Russia-Turkey Union “Erdogan-Medvedev” (2008)

Problems of unresolved conflict and opportunities for the peace process

Cognitive Causes of Unresolved Conflict	Methods of influence
Controllable deformation of conflict perception, manipulation of consciousness	Establishment of a system of civil control and process evaluation with the participation of scientists
Ethnized perception of the structure of political conflict under the influence of ethno-nationalist attitudes.	De-ethnization of the perception of political conflict.
Confusion of terminology in the description of ethnic and political conflicts.	Decomposition of ethnic and political conflicts. Alignment of terminology. Description of political conflicts without using ethnic terms.
The dominance of destructive reductionism.	Popularization of the culture of holistic thinking.
Primitivization of the image of the structure of the conflict and its reduction to the Georgian-Abkhazian and/or Georgian-Russian conflict.	Creation of a full-fledged (holistic) structure of political conflict.

Problems of unresolved conflict and opportunities for the peace process

Cognitive Causes of Unresolved Conflict	Methods of influence
Ethnic groups favoritism	Promotion of civil society culture.
Conflict over perception of the status of conflict (some consider it as an internal conflict, while the others – as international one).	Assignment to the conflict a status of a mixed conflict (both positions are correct).
The dominance of terms that provoke an escalation of conflict.	Creating a dictionary to describe the various components of the conflict.
Squeezing unionists out of political processes.	Integration of the discriminated group of unionists into the political process
Lack of negotiation formats for resolving the internal Abkhazian conflict.	The development of the negotiation process between unionists and secessionists.

Conclusions:

The absence of an internationally recognised scientific assessment of the Abkhazian crisis, in particular, its multi-level structure, leads to its incorrect perception and construction of an unproductive peacekeeping process.

The international scientific community, which does not respond to such processes within its professional competence, shares responsibility for the tragedies taking place against this background.

The International Society of Political Psychology can support the idea of an international audit of this conflict and its processes.

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Q/A

Thank you!

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Abkhazian Crisis in a “crooked mirrors”

The complex system of the Abkhazian crisis is reduced to an ethnic component and its role is extremely exaggerated.

The Abkhazian crisis is perceived either as Georgian-Abkhazian, or as Russian-Georgian.

The peace process does not take into account the real structure.

It is essentially quasi-peacekeeping.



Confluence of ethnic and political

Comparative analyses:

the Karabakh conflict vs the Abkhazian conflict

Mono-ethnic
ethnic Armenians are all
secessionists, and ethnic
Azerbaijanis are all unionists

The level of diffusion or ethnic
interpenetration is high
society of Abkhazia is not two-
ethnic, but multi-ethnic