

**Ilia State University**

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**TRAUMA CAUSED BY THE REPRESSIONS OF  
TOTALITARIAN REGIME IN GEORGIA AND ITS  
TRANSGENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION**

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## Statement

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*As an author of given dissertation I state that it is my original work and does not contain published or unpublished works by other authors without proper citation.*



Jana (Darejan) Javakhishvili

February 23, 2018

## Gratitude

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## Abstract

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**Introduction:** Among the large number of studies focused on intergenerational transmission of trauma, there are very few studies exploring impact and transmission of repressive political regime-related traumas. This study tries to fill this gap and considers the case of Georgia as a post-totalitarian country.

**Objectives of the study:** The aim of the study is to explore impact of the traumas related to Soviet repressions on Georgian society and its inter-generational transmission. To achieve this, the impact of repression trauma was studied on the following levels: 1) individual level (the second- and third-generation representatives of repressed families); 2) family level (the families whose family members were repressed in 1930s); 3) societal level (concrete cases from the current socio-political life of Georgia); 4) in addition, the mechanisms of trauma transmission at these different levels were explored.

**Methodology:** The research methodology is based on the phenomenological approach, implies qualitative methods and consists of two components: 1) In-depth interviews with the second- and third-generation representatives of the repressed families, which were analyzed based on the *Grounded Theory* approach; 2) Analysis of the current socio-political processes of Georgia, based on the psycho-political analysis paradigm by Vamik Volkan and *Theory of Basic Assumptions* by Earl Hopper (whose work is based on Wilfred Bion's and Melanie Klein's works).

**Results:** The study revealed that traumatic experience related to the totalitarian traumas/past is dissociated from and incapsulated within unconscious mind of the Georgian society. Consequently, it is not mourned authentically, and causes societal regress and destructive psychodynamics, based on the basic assumption of *Dependency, Fight & Flight, Paring* and *Incohesiveness*. The study revealed assumptions-based dynamics in those families who failed to deal with repression-related traumatic experience. At individual level, repression-trauma

related problems and resilience strategies were identified among the second- and third-generation representatives of the repressed families. Based on the study findings, *the psycho-socio-political model of intergenerational transmission of trauma* was elaborated, which demonstrates interplay between the different factors influencing intergenerational transmission of trauma at individual, family and societal levels. The model could be used as a foundation for initiation of a series of studies exploring different aspects of intergenerational transmission of trauma at individual, family and societal levels.

**Key words:** post totalitarian country, totalitarian repressions, inter-generational transmission of trauma, family trauma, societal trauma, un-mourned traumatic experience, basic assumptions

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## Abbreviations

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APA(a)	American Psychological Association
APA(b)	American Psychiatric Association
CRRC	Caucasus Research Resource Center
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders
DVV	Deutschen Volkshochschul-Verbandes
FKBP5	FK506 Binding Protein 5
ICD	International Classification of Diseases
NDI	National Democratic Institute
PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
SovLab	Soviet Past Research Laboratory
USSR	Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics
КГБ	Комитет Государственной Безопасности/ Soviet KGB

## Definition of Terms

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**Basic Assumptions:** the term introduced by W. Bion, to describe how groups cope with the anxieties by the means of the basic assumptions of Dependency (1), Fight & Flight (2) and Pairing (3), which inter-changing each other kaleidoscopically in the group dynamics. If the trauma is of such a large scale that triggers shared feeling of helplessness, fears of annihilation and identity loss, the constructive coping might be disabled, and the three basic assumptions start to rule societal life, which develops features of collective psychosis. Earl Hopper added to these three one more basic assumption: Incohesion, revealing itself via Aggregation and Massification. According to Bion and Hopper, these basic assumptions could be described via three key social properties: patterns of interaction, norming and communication;

**Basic Assumption of Aggregation:** “it turns the group into a conglomerate of individuals with excessive role differentiation, polarization, cross pressures between the polarized fragments and corresponding conflicts, encapsulated sub-groups and contra-groups, with an absence of solidarity due to the absence of norms or ignorance of norms” (Hopper, 2003, p.70).

**Basic Assumption of Dependency:** Group members perceive themselves as helpless and at the same time perceive their leader as omnipotent. They try to avoid risks, tolerate stagnation and do hope that the leader will change the situation for better;

**Basic assumption of Fight & Flight:** Group members divide into two major groups who do not tolerate each other and make emphasis on the differences, which they exaggerate and perceive as major;

**Basic Assumption of Massification:** “It turns a large group into a homogenous conglomerate of individuals united around pseudo-solidarity, where individual autonomy no longer exists and is not tolerated. Instead anonymity and minimal role differentiation occurs; total uniformity of beliefs, values and norms are presumed and

any deviation is considered as dangerous for the group's identity and therefore not tolerated" (Hopper, 2003, p.67);

**Basic assumption of Pairing:** The group tries to cope with anxiety related to the fears of annihilation and identity loss by the means of pairing – producing new members;

**Fear of Annihilation:** "The fear of annihilation is a response to the experience of profound helplessness arising from loss, abandonment and damage within the context of the traumatogenic process which spans generations and involves the relationships between victims, perpetrators and bystanders, and patterns of responses to the traumatized" (Hopper, 2003, p.56);

**Identified Victim:** I am introducing this term to denote the repressed by the totalitarian regime people. The totalitarian regime was repressive for the whole Georgian society, but the victims of the repressions and their family members were the most vulnerable/victimised part of the society, therefore, I am calling them "Identified Victims" of the totalitarian system;

**Inter-generational (or, Transgenerational) Transmission of Trauma:** Transmission of un-processed (un-mourned) trauma from one generation to another via narratives, prevailed discourses, patterns of interactions, and other relevant transmitters. "When members of a victim group are unable to mourn such (catastrophic) losses, and reverse their humiliation and helplessness, they pass on to their offspring the images of their injured selves and the psychological tasks that need to be completed. This process is known as the *transgenerational transmission of trauma*" (Volkan et al, 2008, p.207).

**Large Group Identity:** "a sense of sameness shared by thousands or millions of people, which explains what they mean when they say, "We are Finnish," "We are Arabs," "We are Jews," or "We are communist. Members of a large group share... concrete or abstract symbols and signs ranging from physical body characteristics, language, nursery rhymes, food, dances, flags to myths and images of historical events." (Volkan, 2013, p.210)

**Large Group Narcissism:** “A “normal” degree of shared narcissism necessarily is attached to large group identity. A healthy degree of narcissistic investment in a large-group identity provides a sense of belonging and trans-generational continuity among members, and in turn supports individualized self-esteem of the members“ (Volkan, 2009, p.214);

**Large group’s exaggerated narcissism:** “When large-group identity and its amplifiers are threatened, the result is a shared narcissistic hurt associated with shame, humiliation, helplessness or feelings of revenge. An exaggerated large-group narcissism describes a process within a large group when people in it become preoccupied and obsessed with the superiority of almost anything connected with their large-group identity, even when such perceptions and beliefs are not realistic.” (Volkan, 2013, p.222);

**Large group’s masochistic narcissism:** “A society’s assimilation of chronic victimhood and utilization of a sense of suffering in order secretly to feel superior or at least entitled to attention represent the existence of a masochistic large-group narcissism.” (Volkan, 2013, p.222);

**Large group’s malignant narcissism:** “Malignant large-group narcissism explains the initiation of a process in a large group when members of that large group wish to oppress or kill “others” either within or outside their legal boundaries, a process motivated by a shared spoken or unspoken notion that contamination by the devalued “others” is threatening their superiority.” (Volkan, 2013, p.222);

**Melanie Klein, Paranoid-Schizoid position:** describes the state in infants development (the first 4-6 months) when “the ego is still in a primitive state, the infant is unable to maintain a unified mental image of the self or of others. Therefore, relationships are maintained with parts of objects (e.g. breast rather than mother), and split between good and bad... the infant in essence creates two individual mental images of objects, existing as unrelated individual entities. For example, ‘the bad

breast' exists when the mother is unable to fill the infant' needs immediately, causing a desire to destroy this object. Meanwhile, 'the good breast' exists when needs are fulfilled, causing feelings of love towards the object." (Klein, 1997, p.191);

**Melanie Klein, Depressive position:** describes the state in infants development (6 months +) when "the infant comes to the understanding that the good mother and the bad mother are one. In addition, the fragmented view of partial objects develops into the awareness of the object as a single entity. Here begins a developing capacity to view the self and objects as including both good and bad, thus forming the basis for an integrated ego." (Klein, 1997, p.197);

**Object relations (Kleinian):** Melanie Klein's theory of objects relations derived from Freud's psychodynamic approach and offers "a model of human psyche, transitioning from Paranoid-Schizoid to Depressive position, while emphasizing the critical role of parental care during infancy" (Klein, M., 1997, p.197). The psychodynamic interaction of paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions goes on throughout the whole course of life;

**Societal Mourning:** "A slow process of "a slow process of internally reviewing our real or wished-for relationship with the lost person or thing again and again until the reality of the loss or change is emotionally accepted. If the normal mourning took place and it is accomplished, the group develops a new – post-trauma identity, and is able to free and invest own energy into new developments." (Volkan, 2006, p.118). In the process of mourning the group can deal with the emotions related to the loss, put meaning into what happened (via explanation of the loss in this or that theoretical - religious, ideological, or any other frame, and gain experience which contribute to societal development). Thanks to these processes, accept the loss (Bogensperger & Lueger-Schuster; Neimeyer, 2000, Neimeyer et al, 2002; Neimeyer, 2006);

**Societal Trauma:** trauma of the societal scale, caused by the large-scale traumatic stressor, resulting in significant loss; in response individuals (members of a large

group/society) share feelings of helplessness and fears of annihilation and identity loss;

**Totalitarian Objects:** “Mighty authorities which are internalized (in the totalitarian society) by every individual in the course of socialization. It seems that early outer parental objects have a totalitarian character for the child, because the child perceives them as mighty from its dependent position. The totalitarian objects, inner and outer, are intrusive, they have a tendency to own the other and to manipulate him, and they have no respect for individuality and for social and individual differences. Instead of individual values, they strive for the establishment of an ideology, obligatory for all. The totalitarian objects are threatening but it is possible to seek safety in their shadow, if one identifies with them.” (Michael Sebek, 1996, p.289)

**Totalitarian Situation:** I am introducing another new term – Totalitarian Situation, describing societal psychodynamics existed during the totalitarian regimen as a dynamic interaction between the three co-existing within the totalitarian society inter-penetrating subjects: aggressor(s) victim(s) and bystander(s) (Javakhishvili, 2014);

**Totalitarian Society:** “The totalitarian society may appear from the psychological point of view as an emotionally immature society, consisting mostly of emotionally immature individuals whose inner world is ruled by the inner totalitarian objects.” (Michael Sebek, 1996, p.289);

**Totalitarian Trauma:** To analyse an impact of the totalitarian past on the Georgian society, I would like to introduce a new term - Totalitarian Trauma - implying the following meaning: shared trauma of the society, which is caused by the shared experience of living in the Totalitarian Situation (Javakhishvili, 2014).

## I. Introduction

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### *1.1. Background of the Problem*

The impact of the totalitarian past is over-looked and denied in Georgia: the issue has never achieved a serious scale of public attention, and does not attract enough attention from academicians and civil society, except for the small community of social and political scientists and civil activists who speak about the need for “de-Stalinisation.” Discussion remains limited to a very narrow circle of those interested in the issue.

Denial reveals itself in the professional community of psychologists as well, where the issue is completely ignored. In spite of a developed tradition of psychological research, until now not a single psychological study in the country has been dedicated to the impact of totalitarian trauma, while it is well known from the professional literature, that “(in) societies that are treated inhumanely due to political systems, such as... totalitarian regimes in former communist countries. ... Even when political and legal systems change and traumatizing elements within the society are removed, individual and societal responses to the previously existing and devastating political system do not disappear overnight. Depending on the severity of the traumatizing events and how long they lasted, the influence of the shared trauma on the victimized group and their descendants may continue for decades”(Vamik D. Volkan, 2002, p.83).

### *1.2. Problem Statement*

Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma is one of the most researched topics in the newly emerging field of multidisciplinary science – psychotraumatology. In fact, studies of the intergenerational transmission of the Holocaust trauma contributed to the development of psychotraumatology a lot. The studies in this field go in the two

directions. The first direction tries to explore transmission of trauma on the individual and family levels. Here such factors as attachment type, prevailed defense mechanisms (Wardi, 1992; Kogan, 2012, etc.), up-bringing strategies and social learning (Kellermann, 2001; Maerker & Horn, 2013; Maerker & Hecker, 2016, etc.), family openness, interaction patterns and paradigm (Bowen, 1976; Figley, 1988; Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Young et al, 2003) are considered as the main modes of trauma transmission. The methodological approach implied here is qualitative research on the one hand (clinical case studies, in-depth interviews, etc.) and quantitative studies on the other hand, which are focused at tracking such variables related to transmission, as are: common mental health problems, life quality, characterological features, emotional regulation, resilience, etc. Another direction of the trauma transmission studies explore impact of collective psychological traumas of societal scale – like societal trauma related to armed conflicts, disasters, terrorists attacks, etc. The main method of exploration here is psychodynamic psychopolitical analyses (Volkan, 2006) which tracks impact of massive trauma via observing and reflecting on the certain societal phenomena. In this regards, works of the American psychoanalyst Vamik Volkan, and British psychoanalysts Wilfred Bion and Earl Hopper are of great importance, as giving both methodological background and tools for analysis (Volkan, 1994; Volkan, 1997; Volkan, Ast & Greer, 2002; Volkan, 2006; Volkan, 2013, Bion, 1961, Hopper, 2003).

The biggest massive of these studies on intergenerational transmission of trauma are done on the second and third generations of the families who survived Holocaust; less studies but still big enough amount are conducted with the Vietnam war veterans' family members. A very little amount of studies is conducted to explore impact of the totalitarian regimes on the life of the family members of the repressed. There are just few clinical studies from Latin America (Becker & Diaz, 1998, Edelman et al, 1998), two studies on Ukrainian Holodomor trauma (Benzo & Magi, 2015a,



Benzo & Magi, 2015b), one study of the influence of Stalin's purge on the repressed families in Russia (Baker & Gippenreiter, 1998) and a number of studies in Lithuania (Vaskeliene, 2012, Gailiene & Kazlauskas, 2005, Kazlauskas & Zelviene, 2015, Kazlauskas et al, 2017). Nobody ever studied impact of totalitarian repressions in Georgia, neither on individual or family, nor on the societal level.

The findings of the studies focused at intergenerational Transmission of Trauma are very controversial. At the very beginning of exploration of the topic the researchers were trying to look for mental health problems among the second and third generations of the survivors and they were succeeding (Aleksandrowicz, 1973; Danieli, 1981; Epstein, 1979; Freyberg, 1980, Katz & Franklin, 1980; Miri Scharf, 2007). As a response to that, there were a number of studies, which did not reveal psychopathology among the studied group, which led the authors of these studies to the conclusion that there is no such a phenomenon as intergenerational transmission of trauma (Baron et al, 1993; Van IJzendoorn et al, 2003; Sagi-Schwartz et al, 2008, etc.). In response, the researchers started to search for not only psychopathology but also characterological and other features of the second and third generation and found out that not psychopathology but physical health problems (Shrira et al, 2011), characterological features and certain attitudes to the social surrounding are transmitted to the next generations of the survivors. At the same time, some studies revealed that the second and third generations are even more resilient than those who did not have family trauma history (Sigal, 1998; Zerach & Solomon, 2015; Kazlauskas & Zelviene, 2015). The very last study by the Lithuanian authors still reveal mental health problems amongst the second and third generation of the survivors (Kazlauskas et al, 2017). So, if we will track the dynamics of the study findings, it could be considered as a pendulum, moving from 'pathologization' pole to 'trauma is even useful' one, and the movement still continues.

The described inconsistency of the research findings could be explained not only by methodological diversity but also by the following factors: the target groups of the listed above studies differ significantly by the character of the stressors they were exposed to (Holocaust, disasters, war, repressive political regimens, etc.), as well as by the family and cultural background and surrounding which contributes to or hinders their resilience (1); According to the newest study of the Dutch colleagues, resilience and PTSD symptoms could co-exist and do not exclude each other (Sleijpen et al, 2017) (2); And finally, impact of trauma is not limited to psychopathology, or characterological features, or physical health – it should be tracked via life style of the second and third generations, motivation for making important life decisions and other psychosocial (and not only mental and/or physical health) characteristics (3).

Such a discrepancy of the studies' results reveal that each big scale trauma should be studied in the unique context where it occurs, and all the contextual factors should be taken into consideration. This stresses importance of our study, studying impact of Stalin's repressions on the second and third generations of the repressed as well as on the societal life of Georgia. Considering impact of the totalitarian trauma at all these three levels (individual, family and societal) and their interaction, we could contribute, on the one hand - to the ongoing discussion on the intergenerational trauma at the international academic level, and on the other hand – to the overcoming silence re totalitarian trauma existed within the Georgian society.

### ***1.3. Purpose of the Study***

Overall purpose of the study is to explore impact of totalitarian trauma and its transgenerational transmission in Georgian on individual, family and societal levels.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To explore impact of totalitarian trauma on the individual level, among the second and third generations representatives of the families who survived Stalin's repressions (so called 'Grand Terror'): namely, to study how parents'

- repression influenced life trajectories of the second and third generations representatives of the repressed families;
- To explore impact of the totalitarian trauma on the family level: namely, how transgenerational transmission of the trauma related to repressions of the family member(s) influenced family life;
  - To explore impact of totalitarian trauma on a larger societal level, via studying Georgia as a post-totalitarian country, from psychotraumatological perspective.

To achieve study purpose and specific objectives, study consists of the two parts:

The first part of the study explores the impact of totalitarian trauma on a micro-social – individual and family - level, via in-depth interviews method with the second and third generations' representatives of the repressed families.

The second part of the study focuses on analyses of Georgia, as a post-totalitarian (post-Soviet) country, from the perspective of psychotraumatology. Namely, we try to track impact of the totalitarian period (and related traumatic experience) on the contemporary socio-political life of the country via exploring how Basic Assumptions of Dependency, Fight & Flight, Paring and In-cohesion (Massification and Aggregation) reveal themselves on a societal stage.

#### ***1.4. Research Questions***

In order to shed light onto micro and macro societal dynamics resulting from traumatic events, the following research questions were formulated:

Micro level: the first component of the study – in=depth interviews with the family members of the repressed:

- How family member(s) repression related trauma affected individual and family life of the second generation of the survivals?
- How Family member(s) repression related trauma affected individual and family life of the third generation of the survivals?

- Does trauma related to the repressions transmit from generation to generation and if so, what are mechanisms of transgenerational transmission of trauma?

The second component of the study (Macro Level – analysis of Georgia as a pot-totalitarian country, from a psychotraumatological perspective):

For the second component of the study, we formulated the following hypothesis:

During the totalitarian period, Georgian society was exposed to the system of traumatic stressors, which caused societal traumatization; trauma related to the totalitarian period is not mourned out in the country; un-mourned societal trauma reveals itself as Dependency, Fight & Flight, Paring and In-cohesion Basic Assumptions based psycho-political dynamics in the country.

Stemming from this hypothesis we formulated the following four questions for the second component of the study:

- What system of stressors was the Georgian society exposed to during the totalitarian period?
- At what extend the trauma caused by this system of totalitarian stressors was mourned out by the Georgian society.
- If totalitarian trauma is not mourned out, what are the barriers for mourning it out?
- How basic assumptions based psychodynamics reveal itself within contemporary socio-political life of the Georgian society?

Finally, we tried to reflect on the findings of the first and second components of the study to respond to the following question:

- How all these three levels (individual, family, societal) interact with each other?

### ***1.5. Significance of the study***

The number of studies exploring the Soviet period of Georgia are very limited, and majority of the existed studies examine the problem from historical, sociological or political science perspective. As mentioned above, the problem is not studied at all from the psychological perspective, while psychological dimension of impact of the Soviet legacies and especially totalitarian repressions on the contemporary socio-political life of Georgia is solid. In the last decade, there are number of attempts to collect oral histories from the family members of the repressed (Cholokashvili et al, 2010), but again, no psychological analyses is conducted to explore psychological dimension of the problem. The given study tried to fill in this gap.

The study is actual and important, first of all, to the Georgian society, as will provide it with the scientific evidence on the psychological impact of the totalitarian past. Results of the study will help the Georgian society to gain insight in the Soviet legacies affecting contemporary socio-political life of the country. This will contribute to the dealing with the past, learning lessons and freeing societal energy, which could be invested in the democratic development of the country.

The first part of the study implied interviews with the second and third generations' representatives of the repressed. The second generation of the repressed are in their 80-ies and 90-ies, which makes this study even more important, as we need to get "the first hand information" before this generation are available for data collection. The second generation interviewees participated in the study with enthusiasm, stressing that for their generation conspiracy of silence is still an issue.

Besides described above, the study is important for Psychotraumatology – the rapidly developing young interdisciplinary science, which is in a process of formation since 80-ies of the last Century. As the study examines Soviet legacies from the perspective of Psychotraumatology, it will contribute to the development of the discipline in general and in Georgia in particular. Since 2012, a Psychotraumatology

Masters' program is functional at Ilia State University and the study results, which shed light on the transgenerational transmission of trauma, will be incorporated into curricula of the Societal Trauma course of the program.

The novelty of the research is stemming from the fact that it is the first attempt in the country to study Soviet legacies from the perspective of psychology and psychotraumatology, and it explores the problem both in micro and macro levels, showing their interaction. It also sheds light on the micro and macro mechanisms of the transgenerational transmission of trauma.

### ***1.6. Chapter Summary/Conclusion***

Stemming from the described above the study represents the first attempt to study impact of totalitarian trauma on Georgian society at micro and macro levels from the psychotraumatological perspective. It explores mechanism of transgenerational transmission of the trauma of Stalin's' period's repressions on the second and third generation of the repressed, and attempts to track Soviet legacies in contemporary socio-political life of Georgia. The study implies qualitative methods (in-depth interview and case study), phenomenological approach and is based on psychodynamic psychopolitical paradigm. The results of the study shade light on the contemporary problems of the Georgian society hindering its development, which makes study findings important. Presentation of study findings will help to start discussion on the necessity of dealing with the totalitarian past within Georgian society and hopefully will trigger corresponding reflections and relevant actions.

## 2. Literature Review

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### 2.1. *Introduction*

This particular chapter of my thesis refers to literature review and starts by describing the search mechanisms used, afterwards highlights the conceptual framework of research and describes main phenomena that the research is focused on. Specifically, the chapter addresses psychological trauma, transgenerational transmission of trauma and psychodynamics of a traumatized group as Vamik Volkan understand it, Melanie Klein's object-relationship theory and theory of traumatized group's basic assumptions by Bion and Earl Hopper. Accordingly, the chapter reflects these authors' works but also the newest scientific publications about transgenerational transmission of trauma. The last part of the chapter gives a brief overview on totalitarian repressions in Georgia based on the works of the contemporary historians working on covering and analyzing this period.

### 2.2. *Search Description*

The search was implemented in electronic databases of Ilia State University and Cardiff University. The databases of the latter became accessible within the frames of Erasmus Plus Academic Exchange Program, in July 2016 and July 2017. For searching, I mainly used the following electronic databases: Cochrane, Jstore, PsycINFO, PsycEXTRA, PRO-Quest, Web of Science. The searching strategy included terms related to individual, family and societal trauma, also usage of search words related to the influence of totalitarian regime on society. The following word combinations were used for searching: Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma, Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma, Historical Trauma, Collective Trauma, Cultural Trauma, Family Trauma, Totalitarianism, Totalitarian Object, Posttraumatic Stress Injury and Resilience. In parallel with key word search, I was also searching for the works of authors whose studies deal with transgenerational transmission of

trauma on individual, family and social levels, specifically: Wilfred Bion, Yael Danieli, Earl Hopper, Rachel Yehuda, Vamik Volkan. In addition, I used bibliographies of their key works to find relevant contemporary publications.

### ***2.3. Review of literature relevant to the conceptual framework of thesis***

The given sub-chapter describes the essence of trauma, its explanatory theories, characterization of trauma related key phenomena such as resilience, post traumatic growth and transgenerational transmission of trauma; Additionally, theories of transgenerational transmission of trauma are highlighted.

The conceptual frame of my work is based on works of Wilfred Bion, Earl Hopper, Melanie Klein, Michal Sebek and Vamik Volkan, therefore the explanation and understanding of transgenerational transmission of trauma by these authors holds important place in this particular part of the dissertation.

#### **2.3.1. Psychological trauma**

##### **2.3.1.1. Essence of trauma and development of its understanding**

Psycho-traumatology is a multidisciplinary scientific field that developed quickly after post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was described as a diagnosis and American Psychiatric Association introduced it into International Classification of Diseases. (APA, 1980).

PTSD implies an individual's problematic bio-psycho-social condition, which develops as a response to traumatizing stressor. The traumatizing stressor is related to "actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others" (Bessel van Der Kolk et al, 1996, p.427) and causes feelings of fear, helplessness and uncontrollability of the situation. These are violence, witnessing violence against others, accidents, natural or man-made catastrophes – i.e. earthquake, war etc.



The understanding of trauma as a mental health problem is closely intertwined with development of human rights protection and non-violent movements. These movements drew society's as well as professional community's (mental health protection professionals) attention to such tabooed themes as women's rape, child abuse etc. Formation of PTSD (APA, 1980) as an independent diagnosis was directly preceded by four important pre-conditions in 70-ies and 80-ies.

- recognition of post war mental health problems experienced by Vietnam war veterans (in post war years the suicide number of former American soldiers significantly exceeded the number of soldiers who died in war, which drew psychiatrist's attention) (Figley, 1978, Ochberg, 1988);
- Breaking of silence by feminists about violence against women and protesting it, which triggered the onset of research on mental health problems of women victims of violence, etc. (Holsrom and Burgess, 1974; Judith Herman, 1981).
- Breaking the silence about family violence, children's' physical punishment and other forms of violence against them, followed by relevant studies (Carmen & Munson, 1978, Gelles & Strauss, 1979, Kampes (1978), Strauss, 1977, Walker, 1979, etc.);
- The need to study mental health problems of terrorism victims and terrorists and specifics of relationships in victim-terrorist dyad, description of the so-called *Stockholm syndrome* in the 70-ies, etc. (Ochberg, 1982).

Historical prerequisites of psycho-traumatology are also closely related to the history of a large scale wars: the notion of "traumatic neurosis" appeared already during the First World War and its understanding deepened even more during the Second World War and afterwards.

Freud treated people who had developed traumatic neurosis through the First World War and he described two models of trauma: first - unacceptable impulse model, which emphasizes the intrapsychic life, and accordingly problematic behavior,

caused by internal impulse that is unacceptable for consciousness. The second - unbearable situation model highlighted reactive condition caused by external stressors (Freud, 1920; Krystal, 1978) which in fact corresponds to the modern understanding of psychological trauma. However, based on his scientific interest Freud was focused more on the first model – the model of internal impulse.

The traumatic conditions developed by external incidents were left without attention for many years (Van Der Kolk, 2007), even though since the First World War, Abram Kardiner, an American psychiatrist had been treating the patients who had developed “traumatic neurosis of war”. Based on Freud’s *unbearable situation model* Kardinger described the traumatic condition very accurately in his book - *Traumatic Neurosis of War* (Kardiner, 1941). Describing the condition, he pointed out such symptoms as hypervigilance, easily generated fear reactions, atypical dreams, chronic irritability, startles, aggressive attacks, dissociative conditions, flashbacks, etc. – all those symptoms that were introduced into ICD in the 80-ies as a syndrome of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (APA, 1980).

The Second World War created one more important wave of attention towards traumatic stress. In parallel with treatment of traumatic conditions, a whole range of psychiatrists and psychologists - Roy Grinker, Lawrence Kolb Lawrence Kubie, Walter Menninger, Herbert Spiegel, John Spiegel – were studying the effectiveness of various treatment models, this accumulated important material for deepening the knowledge on trauma (Van Der Kolk, 2007). One of the most important bodies of research in this regard was the study of Holocaust Jewish survivors (the study of the so-called “concentration camp syndrome” (Eitinger & Storm, 1973, etc.), which emphasized not only Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as such, but also the personal changes caused by a traumatizing experience, as well as transgenerational transmission of trauma.

By the 1980-ies, a lot of the important evidence was accumulated through research and as a result, PTSD was introduced into the International Classification of Diseases; this in fact was the acknowledgment of psycho-traumatology as an independent field. Based on the intensive research that was going on within the field, the newly gained information was being considered and PTSD diagnosis was reviewed several times. In DSM classification the diagnosis was reviewed 4 times: DSM III (R) (APA, 1987), DSM IV (APA, 1997), DSM IV (TR) (APA, 2000) and DSM5 (APA, 2013). In the European Classification of Diseases which is supervised by WHO, the diagnosis was first introduced in 1994 (ICD-10, 1994). For the past several years an intensive work has been going on to review PTSD and it is planned that in 2019 its modified version will be introduced into ICD-11, based on up-to-date research results.

In DSM-5 Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder diagnosis is described according to five criteria – A, B, C, D, E. Criterion A describes the specifics of traumatizing stressors and other four criteria describe four key clusters:

- Criterion A refers to direct or indirect exposition to the traumatic stressor. The traumatizing stressor has to be related to danger of death and/or serious risk of injury. The incident maybe experienced by a person or the person may be a witness or hear about the incident that happened to a close person or a family member. A new type of exposure is added to the classification, when a person has to encounter the tragedy because of occupation (i.e. policemen, firefighters and others who have to be on the site of the incident, collect pieces of bodies, etc.).
- Criterion B refers to repeated experience of a traumatic event in the form of distressing reaction caused by intrusive memories, nightmares, flashbacks, traumatic games or other similar stimuli.

- Criterion C refers to avoidance or an attempt of avoidance of thoughts, emotions things and places that are related to traumatic experience.
- Criterion D refers to such negative changes in cognition and in mood that are manifested in constant anticipation of something bad, inability to trust, low self-esteem, irritability, anger, negative mood, inability to experience positive emotions, estrangement for others etc.
- Criterion E refers to the changes in reactivity and agitation, such as: attention concentration difficulties, sleep problems, anger outbursts, startle responses, etc.

If a person experiences symptoms relevant to the above-described criteria one month after the traumatic event and causes “clinically significant distress or dysfunction in social, professional or other important areas of functioning” (APA, 2013), then the clinician may consider a PTSD diagnosis.

PTSD is not the only mental health condition that can develop after experiencing a traumatizing stressor. As a result of traumatization, a number of common mental health problems can develop - panic attacks, generalized anxiety, depression, use of psychoactive substances, borderline personality disorder (Carmen, 1984, Roberts, 2015, Roberts, 2017).

In 1991, Lenore Terr differentiated Type I trauma and Type II trauma (Lenore Terr, 1991). Terr studied the specifics of psychological trauma in children and her classification refers to children’s traumatization. Type I trauma implied a one-time experience of a traumatizing event. In Type II trauma, she meant experiencing multiple incidents of violence and neglect during childhood, which accumulate and leave their mark on child’s personal development.

Bessel van der Kolk, a Dutch psychiatrist in the United States dedicated a lot of attention to research on children and for years has been working so that the specific mental health condition that develops due to grave childhood experiences, enters the

International Classification of Diseases as a diagnosis of “developmental trauma”. So far, this diagnosis has not been reflected in DSM-5 that was introduced in 2013 or in ICD-11 project, which is currently being elaborated. However, a decision has already been made that ICD-11 will include a new diagnosis - complex PTSD (Maerker et al, 2013). Complex PTSD is a complex post-traumatic condition caused by strong and prolonged stressors which refer not only to grave experiences in childhood but also to such violent experiences in adulthood as forced displacement, domestic violence, abduction, captivity etc. As Judith Hermann writes: „In contrast to a single traumatic event, prolonged, repeated trauma can occur only where the victim is in a state of captivity, under the control of the perpetrator. The psychological impact of subordination to coercive control has many common features, whether it occurs within the public sphere of politics or within the private sphere of sexual and domestic relations.” (Herman, 1992).

At the first stage of diagnosis' description, PTSD was categorized as an anxiety disorder, however, in DSM-5 it was moved to the category of Stress-related disorders (APA, 2013). According to the preliminary information, discrepancy between DSM-5 and ICD-11 is more than 50% (Linderman, 2016). Shift in the category, adding of complex PTSD diagnosis, significant discrepancy between DSM-5 and ICD-11 - all these indicate relativity of the PTSD diagnosis and predicts that it will change again considering up-to-date research data.

It is also noteworthy that a number of problems that arise as a result of exposure to traumatizing stressors are not reflected in the Classifications but still significantly diminish the life quality of traumatized people (Linden & Maerker, 2011; Volkan, 2007).

### **2.3.1.2. Psychological theories of trauma**

Various psychological schools offer different trauma theories.

#### ***Psychodynamic approach***

The psychodynamic school has a key role in modern understanding of trauma. The postulates elaborated by Freud within the frame of above-mentioned *unbearable situation model*, encompass key principles of understanding trauma in modern psychotraumatology:

- Freud describes trauma as a fixation on traumatic incident (unbearable situation);
- he emphasizes that the mind has not finished (“closed”) working on the incident;
- while the incident is unbearable, the contents related to it are suppressed from consciousness;
- because these contents are suppressed, they have the tendency to actualize;
- since the mind has not “closed” working on a traumatizing experience, they actualize not in the form of past memories, but actual disturbing conditions.

Based on these postulates, Freud viewed the trauma caused by external stressors, as an internal conflict. Specifically, in case of trauma he emphasized conflicts between two contradictory trends: (a) tendency to recall negative traumatic memories and re-experience them in order to assimilate them, versus (b) tendency to suppress and deny these traumatic memories, in order to avoid negative emotions.

Later, Judith Hermann called the internal conflict of trauma described by Freud, the core dialectics of trauma: “The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma... Denial, repression, and dissociation operate on a social as well as an individual level.” (Herman, 1992, p.388).

Mardi Horowitz, an American psychiatrist, representative of psychodynamic school built one of the first theories of psychological understanding of trauma on the above-mentioned internal conflict. He called his theory a Stress Response Theory. According to this theory, in a traumatized person two contradictory trends

fight each other - a person's tendency to protect himself/herself from distressing content, which is achieved through oppression of trauma-related information from consciousness and avoidance of traumatic memories. The second tendency is the tendency to process and assimilate this content and because of this, the person receives back the oppressed contents in the form of flashbacks, distressing memories and nightmares. In order to cope with trauma a person's task is to bring together these two tendencies and reconcile them through processing and assimilation of traumatic contents (Horowitz, 1987).

The modern psychodynamic understanding of trauma is in fact based on psychoanalytical ego-psychology, which began, by Freud's description of a person's structure. According to this approach during impact of a traumatizing stressor, the psychological trauma develops in case if a traumatizing stressor violates, damages an ego-defense system. This means that if ego defense and coping mechanisms cannot cope with a traumatizing experience, a traumatic condition develops and a person regresses to the lower level of functioning: "[Ego-psychologists] define trauma as an external event, or series of events, that specifically overwhelms ego defenses, causing the traumatized person to regress to earlier modes of functioning" (Chertoff, 1998, p.36).

In this case, an actual traumatic experience is laid onto the earlier internal conflicts (according to Freud's terminology - onto the trauma caused by unacceptable impulse). As a result, this can cause breaking of a person's social attachment system. How well can a person cope with the influence of the traumatizing stressor depends on „the intrapsychic capacity to synthesize and master the emotional impact of both external events and internal stimuli" (Chertoff, 1998, p.36).

Nowadays, regardless of through which paradigm we look at trauma (psychodynamic, cognitive-behavioral, existential, etc.), the main principles of trauma

approach suggested by psychodynamic psychology are acknowledged and shared by every school. These principles are (Brewin & Holmes, 2003):

- looking at trauma symptoms not only as disease symptoms but also as the meaningful symptoms and as the attempt to cope with the traumatic experience;
- the importance of being aware of suppressed and therefore unconscious aspects of trauma;
- the importance of establishing a connection between symptoms and traumatic experience;
- the importance of understanding the traumatized client's transfer onto the therapist as well as therapist's contra-transfer;
- the importance of putting meaning into traumatic experience by a traumatized person.

### ***Cognitive -behavioral approach***

*Trauma focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy* – one of the most widespread evidence-based methods of psychological therapies of trauma is built on *Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy*. In order to assess effectiveness of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy large amount of research has been going on for the last two decades (Bisson et al, 2004), which provides the opportunity to verify the theories that emerge from this paradigm. Therefore, cognitive-behavioral psychological theories of trauma are the largest in number and most developed today.

Cognitive Behavioral approach views psychological trauma at the intersection of two key paradigms: behaviorism and cognitivism. The key concepts of behaviorism are learning and conditioning, and key concepts of cognitivism - information processing.



In behaviorism, trauma can be defined as the learnt psycho-emotional condition affected by a traumatizing event. In behaviorist paradigm, there have been attempts to explain PTSD with Conditioning Theories that have been elaborated to explain anxiety disorder (Keane et al, 2006). According to *Conditioning Theory*, in a traumatizing situation reactions of fear and anxiety generalize onto a wide range of stimuli related (similar, symbolic) to that situation, which in future cause stressful responses.

According to *Anxiety Apprehension Theory* (Jones & Barlow, 1990), in the moment of influence of a traumatizing stressor, an immediate learning of aroused, very powerful basic emotions takes place - the so-called “true alarm” and other distressing emotions (like rage, anger and fear), afterwards this learning is manifested through the so-called “learnt alarm”. Based on this, any neutral (internal or external) stimuli, which is similar or symbolizing traumatic experience, causes an alarm reaction in person. As a result, a person tries to avoid the stimuli.

According to Cognitive Psychology, trauma can be defined as a person's failure to process information related to traumatic experience. We can differentiate several cognitive theories on trauma, based on what accents they make in terms of information processing.

According to *Information Processing Theory*, which is based on Lang's research on fear and phobia conditioning (Lang, 1979), in case of trauma a person cannot integrate traumatic memories into memory system. The contents of these memories that cannot be integrated create active memory networks that function through association – the so-called “fear networks”. Fear memory consists of three types of “memory nodes”: memories of traumatizing situation (visual images, sounds, smell, taste, etc.), memories of own emotional and physiological responses to traumatic situation, and finally, memories of meaning/interpretation that was given by a person to the perceived danger (Brewin & Homes, 2003). As a result, a person

activates the “fear memory” on the stimuli that are similar or symbolize a traumatizing situation, which is followed by the reactions of anxiety, repeated symptoms (memories, flashbacks) and avoidance.

According to *Shattered Assumptions Theory* (Janoff-Bulman, 1992), trauma causes a system of person’s basic assumptions to shatter and break, because traumatic experience does not correspond to cognitive skills that a person has developed throughout his/her life. According to Ronnie Janoff-Bulman, three most important basic assumptions are damaged in case of trauma, these are benevolence of the world, meaningfulness of the world and self-worthiness. In case of trauma, a person faces two challenges: to cope with negative emotions, which are related to shattering of the assumptions, and also to change those “expired” cognitive skills based on the new (traumatizing) experience.

Three most up-to-date psychological theories on trauma were developed based on the above-mentioned theories of Cognitive Behavioral paradigm and they represent a theoretical base of modern methods of trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. These are:

The *Emotional Processing Theory* of trauma (Foa et al, 1998), elaborated by guidance of Edna Foa, which is also a theoretical basis of her prolonged exposition method. This method was mainly elaborated based on studying the patients who had rape trauma. The theory relies on the idea of memory’s “fear networks” (Foa et al, 1989). Here the main accent is made on specifics of cognitions before trauma, during trauma and after trauma and their interrelation that can cause activation of negative schemes of one's own incompetence and feeling of threat, and thus contribute to the onset of PTSD. For example, based on research, Foa and colleagues found correlation between rigidity of assumptions (no matter positive or negative) about self and the world before trauma, and onset of PTSD symptoms. They also found correlation

between a person's negative assessment of own behavior (passivity, freezing) during traumatization process and onset of PTSD symptoms.

According to *Dual Representation Theory* by Brewin (Dual Representation Theory, Brewin & Holmes, 2003), storing of information about trauma takes place in two different systems of memory; the authors call the first one a verbally accessible memory, that stores the information that was being consciously perceived by a person during traumatization process. This information is consistent, includes memories before, during and after trauma, and therefore, can be integrated into a biographical memory. According to the theory, in parallel, a person has stored a traumatic information in another system of memory – “situationally accessible memory”, which is not under a person's control; it switches on voluntarily only in certain situations, as a response to concrete “triggers”. The situationally accessible memory stores the information on the stimuli that were under the threshold in a traumatizing situation and the information about body/ physiological sensations. According to this theory, the task of psychotherapy is to integrate verbally accessible trauma memory into autobiographical memory and to learn the skills to manage a situationally accessible memory.

Anke Ehler and Clarck's *Cognitive Model* emphasizes that traumatized people experience feeling of actual threat; according to the model, on the one hand this happens due to negative assessment of their own condition following the trauma, and others' attitudes towards them. On the other hand, this is defined by the specifics of traumatic memory, which lacks the context and is not integrated into autobiographical memory system.

### ***Existential-humanistic approach***

The representatives of existential humanistic approach view trauma as a failure to give meaning to the experienced traumatic event, and an existential crisis

developed on this background (Sarfati, 2016). According to existential-humanistic school representatives, giving meaning to a traumatizing experience, or reconstruction of meaning is expressed by two phenomenological acts:

1) explanation of traumatizing events – in the view of religious, medical or any other paradigm (what happened, why it happened, what does it mean) and on the other hand, and

2) finding a certain personal benefit in this painful traumatic experience – what did this traumatic experience give me as a person, in terms of personal growth (Davis et al, 1998; Gillies & Neimeyer, 2006; Bogensparger & Luerger-Schuster, 2014).

### ***Post-modern approach***

Post-modern understanding is characterized by eclectic approach and combines the above-described psychodynamic, cognitive, emotional, behavioral and existential aspects in a holistic integrative model, as it is done in the *Brief Eclectic Therapy* by Berthold Gersons (Gersons et al, 2011).

### **2.3.1.3. Risk and protective factors of trauma**

In 1967, Anna Freud separated the factors that determine vulnerability towards trauma, these are:

- the strength of a traumatic stressor itself (1),
- previous history of traumatization which can make a person more vulnerable towards the future trauma (2),
- acquired or inherited problems that limit the ego defense mechanisms (3),
- age and development stage during traumatization (4),
- environment and its support in the moment of traumatization (5).

In 1987, an American psychotraumatologist Bassel van der Kolk added a sixth factor to these 5: character traits that form in the process of personal development and, facilitate the influence of trauma (van der Kolk, 1987).

Factors distinguished by Anna Freud are partly covered by Terence Keane, Amy Marshall and Casey Taft's classification of PTSD risk and protective factors. However, since their classification is based on substantial amount of research, it is more comprehensive. Keane, Marshall and Taft have grouped the risk and protective factors into three categories: pre-trauma, during-trauma and post-trauma risk and protective factors (Keane et al, 2006).

Pre-trauma factors are: inherited (family) psychopathology, demographic factors (age, sex), experience of early traumatization and violence, history of psychopathology before trauma, non-adaptive cognitions before trauma (Brewin et al, 2000, Briant & Guzri, 2005, Lloyd & Turner, 2003, Norris et al, 2002, Ozer et al, 2003, Pitman et al, 2002). In other words, according to evidence, if a person or a person's close relative has psychopathology, if that person is a female youngster or elderly woman, if she has experienced violence or traumatizing experience before trauma, and has non-adaptive cognitions, she is under higher risk of developing PTSD.

One of the main factors that exists during trauma are the strength of a traumatizing event and its type. According to evidence, manmade catastrophes – war, rape, violence, also traumatic events that cause physical injuries, are more related to the risk of developing PTSD. In addition, it is important to what extent a person perceives a traumatizing stressor as life threatening. And finally, it is important to what extent the person developed peri-traumatic emotional responses in the moment of traumatization (feeling of helplessness, fear, shame, guilt etc., and negative beliefs related to them) as well as peri-traumatic dissociation (Dunmore et al, 2001, Ozer et al, 2003, Schnurr et al, 2004).

Post-trauma factors: meta-analysis revealed that in this case the perceived social support is the most important factor, which is negatively correlate with the strength of PTSD symptoms (Brewin et al, 2000, Ozer, 2003). Meta-analysis carried out by Prati and Pietrantonio showed that not only the perceived but also the real social support is in negative correlation with the strength of PTSD symptoms (Prati Pietrantonio, 2010).

#### **2.3.1.4. Resilience**

According to Ann Masten's definition, resilience is „the capacity of a dynamic system to adapt successfully to disturbances that threaten system's functioning, viability, or development” (Masten, 2014).

Resilience studies began in the families with schizophrenic patients, by studying the adaptation skills of their children. Specifically, Norman Gamrezy described good adaptation skills of children whose mothers had schizophrenia and therefore were facing high risks of developmental delay (Gamrezy, 1983).

In psychotraumatology special attention is paid to the phenomenon of resilience, because epidemiological research as well as empirical observation show how high is the statistics of exposure towards traumatizing stressors, compared to PTSD statistics. For example, in North America the population's likelihood of exposure to traumatic stressors varies from 50% to 90 %, whereas the prevalence of PTSD in general population varies from 8-12 % (Norris & Slone, 2007). Apart from this, there is a high spontaneous remission in cases of developed PTSD, which also points to resilience (Maerker & Hecker, 2016).

American Psychological Association defines resilience as a person's general skill of good adaptation - both in stressful situations and during the impact of highly traumatizing stressors. Based on analysis of large amount of resilience research, the association's strategic document separates four factors defining this phenomenon:

- skill (ability) to elaborate and implement realistic plans;
- viewing oneself as skilled and positive;
- effective communication and problem management skills;
- strong emotional regulation and impulse control skills.

In addition, the association separates 10 key steps of resilience (American Psychological Association, 2012), these are:

- establishing and strengthening social relationships in family and community (1),
- refusing to see the crisis situation as an unsolved one (2),
- accepting changes as a given reality of life (3),
- orientation and movement towards setting goals and fulfilling them (4),
- taking real action versus avoidance to solve the problem (5),
- searching for and using opportunities to raise self-awareness (6),
- self-encouragement to see oneself as positive (7),
- looking at events in context and perspective vs narrowly focusing on them (8),
- being hopeful (9),
- taking care of oneself (10).

Michael Ungar casts doubt on resilience as a personal trait, and defines it rather as a function of interaction between a person and his/her environment. In his *Eco-social model of resilience*, he emphasizes that we should shift the accent from “persons’ vulnerability to stress” to how well the eco-social environment provides a person with access to social resources. According to Ungar, resilience is the function of interaction between a person and available resources (Ungar, 2011).

Like Ungar, via describing the *Social – interpersonal model of trauma*, Andreas Maerker argues that a person’s resilience is largely defined by his/her interaction with social-cultural environment (Maerker & Hecker, 2016). Maerker’s view is confirmed by the newest research on resilience, which was conducted among young migrant by the Dutch team of researchers. Based on the research, they defined resilience as a

dynamic process influenced by a specific context (specifically, by available support systems within that context) and the ongoing changes that occur over the time (Sleijpen et al, 2017).

#### **2.3.1.5. Trauma outcomes: Social-interpersonal model**

Andreas Maerker and Tobias Hecker elaborated the *Social-interpersonal model of trauma*, through which they analyze the impact of trauma on social and interpersonal levels (Maerker & Hecker, 2016). They differentiated factors on three variables that mediate impact of trauma at social level: social affects (1), close relationships (2), society and culture (3).

**Social affects** originate from relation to others (individual person, group of people, community or society). According to the evidence, social affects such as feelings of guilt, shame and aggression are closely associated to PTSD. (Dutra et al, 2008; Lee et al, 2001; Maercker & Horn, 2013; Marsee, 2008; Taft et al, 2011; Saile et al, 2014; Hecker et al, 2015). Whereas shame and guilt tend to socially isolate a person, the PTSD associated reactive and pro-active aggression sets a person and the environment on a violent cycle, which puts the affected person's treatment outcome (in case if the person is undergoing treatment) and his/her social integration under risk (Annan et al, 2009).

On the level of **close relationships**, Maerker and Hecker observe how the style of sharing of information about traumatic experience between the traumatized person and his/her closest social environment (husband/wife, partner, family member) affect their wellbeing. Since sharing a traumatizing experience with "the important others" is in negative correlation with the severity of PTSD symptoms (Grey et al, 2012), the researchers paid attention to dysfunctional sharing. Pielmaier and colleagues differentiated three types of dysfunctional sharing:



- a) Silence from the side of a traumatized person (in case of “important other”, avoidance to listen), which Yael Danieli called “the conspiracy of silence” (Danieli, 1981);
- b) Oversharing by the traumatized person (in case of “important other” – stimulating oversharing);
- c) Sharing that is accompanied with too much emotional reaction (the same in case of “important other”).

Pielmier studied relation of PTSD symptoms’ manifestation and the type of sharing. It was revealed that PTSD symptoms’ manifestation was in correlation with the type of sharing by the traumatized person, as well as with the type of sharing by the important other and interaction of these types. According to the study findings, the higher is the dysfunctionality of sharing, the more manifested are the PTSD symptoms (Pielmaier et al, 2013). Therefore, the type of communication about traumatic experience in the person’s close environment can play a role of a risk or a protective factor for development of PTSD. In case of the latter, it will support resilience.

On the **level of society and culture**, Maerker and Hecker point out two factors: recognition by the society (of trauma, inflicted damage, the rightfulness of the position of a victim) and values. According to their study, the perceived social recognition is in negative correlation with PTSD, and therefore is an important protective factor – which again supports resilience (Mueller et al, 2008; Maercker et al, 2009; Lis-Turlejska et al, 2012; Schumm et al, 2014). As for values, the research confirms that modern values (hedonism, self-definition, stimulation) and traditional values (power, submission/obedience) differently mediate the impact of trauma on individuals. Specifically, traditional, strict values intensify manifestation of PTSD symptoms, whereas modern values serve as protective factors and support resilience (Maerker et al, 2008; Zimmermann et al, 2014).

Burri and Maerker studied prevalence of PTSD in European countries, the statistics of people who died in war (Second World War and former Yugoslavia war), change in values and interaction between these factors. According to research results, the higher the number of people dead in war, the higher the tendency to return to traditional values and the higher the PTSD prevalence (Burri & Maerker, 2014).

#### **2.3.1.6. Post traumatic growth**

Like resilience, the posttraumatic growth phenomenon is under intensive focus of modern research in psychotraumatology. Whereas resilience implies that a traumatized person adapts and factually goes back to the condition before the exposure to trauma, posttraumatic growth implies that person goes even further: "...the processes of [post-traumatic] growth involve a movement beyond pre-trauma levels of adaptation and represent rather ongoing development as an outcome." (Alexander & Oesterreich, 2013).

According to studies, posttraumatic growth is significantly related to the extent to which a person managed to put meaning into traumatic experience. Reconstruction of meaning is a two-stage process. The first stage implies explanation of traumatic event in any explanatory system (scientific, religious, etc.). The second step that cannot be implemented by everyone is to find out what benefit the traumatic experience brought to the person, in terms of personal growth (Neimeyer et al, 2002; Neimeyer et al, 2006; Bogensperger & Lueger-Schuster, 2014).

Based on results of empirical research, the following levels of psychosocial functioning which undergo transformation in case of post traumatic growth are identified (Alexander & Oesterreich, 2013; Tedeschi, & Calhoun, 2004; Tedeschi, & Calhoun, 2006; Bogensperger & Lueger-Schuster, 2014; Alexander & Oesterreich, 2013):

Me: a person views him/herself as a stronger person (“what does not kill me makes me stronger”);

Social interactions: improvement of quality of relationships with others, a person develops feeling of being closer to others;

World view (ideology): a person manages to reconstruct meaning, changes the attitudes towards oneself, life and others change, values life more, develops priorities easier and tries to live every single day in full;

Social activity: a person becomes socially more active, tries to help others, and works on changes that will reduce social injustice;

Spiritual domain: after exposure to traumatic stressor a person may re-evaluate own religious, spiritual and philosophical views, and dedicate more time and energy to the domain of spirituality.

Despite a large number of studies, there is no direct evidence suggesting if there is a relation between post traumatic growth and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms, and what type of connection it is (Frazier et al, 2001; Widows et al, 2005; Solomon & Zekel, 2007; Hall et al, 2010). Some studies indicate that there is a positive correlation, some – show negative one, and some argue that there is no correlation. The latter is confirmed by the most recent quantitative study by Dutch authors (Sleijpen et al, 2016). These differences can be explained by diversity of methodological approaches on the one hand, and on the other hand, by implementation of the studies in different cultural contexts and among different traumatized groups, exposed to wide range of traumatic stressors (starting from sexual violence and ending with oncological diseases).

According to the evidence, dispositional optimism is an individual level predictor of posttraumatic growth (Kolokotroni et al, 2014), while social support is a social level predictor of posttraumatic growth (Shand et al, 2014).

### 2.3.2. Transgenerational Transmission of trauma

Traumatic event can be individual (i.e. accident, which happens to a single person), interpersonal (i.e. violence) or collective (i.e. natural catastrophe, war. Etc.) (Kira, 2004). Even individual trauma affects not only traumatized individual, but also his/her social surrounding – family, community, society. Social factors in turn influence outcomes of individual, family and collective trauma (Maerker & Hecker, 2016).

An American psychiatrist Charles Figley already in the 1980-ies pointed out that a family member's trauma affects the entire family system: „As catastrophes affect individuals, so do they affect the families of these victims: these families should be viewed as the “families of catastrophe.” (Figley, 1988, p.129). Figley introduced the concept of *secondary traumatization*, through which he described the fact that trauma symptoms are manifested not only in the person who was exposed to traumatic stressor, but also in other people, who are in close contact with that person – family members, caregivers, professionals working with them, etc. Lisa McCann and Laurie Anne Pearlman described transfer of trauma during professional assistance and called it *vicarious traumatization*, in order to emphasize the contagious character of trauma (Lisa McCann & Pearlman, 1990).

Lenore Terr described the mechanisms of secondary traumatization in 1990. She showed that the children engaged in traumatic games, who had not been exposed to trauma (fire) showed similar kind traumatic symptoms as those children who were exposed to traumatic stressor, because they were involved in common activity (game) with traumatized children (Lenore Terr, 1990).

American researcher Ibrahim Kira suggests classification of secondary traumatization, which is presented in the following table (Kira, 2004):

**Table 1: Classification of secondary trauma (Kira, 2004).**

	Type of trauma	Mechanism of transfer	One step	Multiple step	Effects	Responses
<b>Individual to individual</b>	Any	Empathy	***	-	Professional burn out	Supervision
<b>Individual to family</b>	Family trauma	attachment Projective identification	***	Transgenerational transmission of trauma	Triangulation, reversal of roles	Family therapy
<b>Individual to community or/and community to individual</b>	collective	identity	***	Transgenerational transmission of collective trauma	Social/structural dysfunction, gangs, terrorist groups	Social political activism, group interventions, group dynamics

As we can see from the table, trauma can be transmitted in two directions: - horizontally – from a traumatized person to family members, or community (which Ibrahim Kira calls “one-step transmission”) and also vertically – in family, community or society, from one generation to another (which Kira calls “multi-step transmission”).

In vertical transmission, Kira differentiates two types of trauma:

- Historical trauma affecting a group that is united through ethnics, religion, race or any other sign. This type of trauma becomes especially important as plays significant role in forming of group identity (i.e. Holocaust trauma for Jews, or trauma of Serbian nation related to its occupation by Ottomans analyzed by Vamik Volkan (Volkan, 1997);

- Trauma of structured violence, that develops on the basis of accumulation of traumas caused by injustice (i.e. extreme poverty) towards a society or a strata of the society, is transmitted to further generations and increases risk of community violence and drug abuse (Schwebek, 1998).

### 2.3.2.1. Theories of transgenerational transmission of trauma

Clinical work with Holocaust Jewish family member survivors on the one hand, and work with family members of Vietnam War veterans on the other hand, laid the foundation for research on transgenerational transmission of trauma. The clinicians found that there was a special psychological atmosphere in Holocaust and Vietnam veterans' families; based on this atmosphere the children in the family (or the family in general) developed their parents' trauma symptoms (Figley, 1988, Danieli, 1998). These clinical findings set the ground for large amount of research on transgenerational transmission of trauma.

Various psychological schools describe and explain the mechanisms of transgenerational transmission of trauma differently:

#### *Psychodynamic theory of trauma transmission*

According to psychodynamic model of trauma transmission, a traumatized parent oppresses from consciousness the undigested, unexpressed, unmoored and thus unprocessed feelings; according to trauma dialectics (Herman, 1991), the suppressed feelings seek actualization, because of the tendency of actualization the parents' suppressed feelings are projected onto the family relationships and children. As a result, a child unconsciously (through projective identification, introjection) assimilates these feelings, and as a result deviates from development trajectory and continues to exist in parents' traumatic reality (Rowland-Klein & Dunlop, 1997).

One of the explicit illustrations of parents' suppressed feelings and the psychological phenomena that cause them is the so-called *concentration camp syndrome*, which the Holocaust researchers described through studies of psychological condition of the survivors (Wardi, 1992, p.18):

“1. *Self-preoccupation*. A depressive state, state of unworked chronic mourning, accompanied by guilt feelings and sense of emptiness;

**2. Emotional dullness and inhibitions.** A state of chronic anxiety stemming from the loss of basic trust and healthy narcissism. The anxiety floods the ego functions and threatens the person's emotional existence, while damaging the capacity to give verbal expression to feelings and limiting the capacity for symbolization and the creation of fantasies;

**3. Various physical and psychosomatic disturbances.** Nightmares, drastic mood changes and other symptoms;

**4. Defective functioning of superego.** Splitting of the ego and the objects reflected in the superego. The defects are caused by identification with and denunciation of Nazi morality;

**5. The Ego function remain automatic.** The ability to relate to other people is considerably weakened, together with the capacity of empathy, while the avoidance of mourning and of the internal processing of grief causes the loss of the capacity to relate to others;

**6. Damage to the bodily self-image** is caused by the physical tortures, humiliations, and lack of intimacy. This is sometimes accompanied with the identification with the Nazi message concerning Jewish image; this message was partially internalized by some of the survivors and became part of their World-view.”

A Holocaust researcher, Haim Dasburg, formulates the psychodynamic understanding of the family atmosphere in which children of parents with the *concentration camp syndrome* were being raised: „They [children of the survivors] grew up in the shadow of psychic conflicts stemming from bereavement, mourning, guilt feelings, excessive anxiety, overprotection and over-expectation with parents who were irreparably damaged both physically and psychologically.“ (Wardi, 1992, p. xi). In order to describe the generation that was raised in such an atmosphere, a Jewish psychoanalyst Dina Wardi suggested a metaphor – “generation of memorial candles” – a modern chrestomathy metaphor in psychotraumatology.

According to psychodynamic approach, transgenerational transmission of trauma is implemented through three mechanisms: projective identification, primitive identification and depositing.

*Projective identification* is a defense mechanism described by Melanie Klein; during projective identification a person sees (projects) his/her own suppressed, unacceptable side in another person and through own behavior awakens in that person the feelings and behavior that are relevant to that side. In this case, the second person becomes complementary to the first, projecting person and because of this can drift away so far from own self that may lose independence (Klein, 1946).

*Primitive identification implies a child's* unconscious introjection and assimilation of the parent's damaged self-image, in the process of communication with the parent. As a Jewish psychoanalyst, Ilany Kogan writes: „This process is an attempt to heal the parent and help him recover. This identification leads to a loss of the child's separate sense of self and to an inability to differentiate between the self and the damaged parent... this type of identification is at the core of the offspring's inability to achieve self-differentiation and build life of his/her own.“(Kogan, 2012, p.7).

*Deposition* is described by Vamik Volkan (Volkan, 1987, p.73). According to this mechanism, parent “deposits” the unprocessed trauma-related feelings into their children; in contrast with identification phenomenon, which is implemented by a child as an independent subject, depositing turns a child into an object of projection of parent's suppressed feelings. In this case, parents project not only unprocessed feelings to their children, but also certain tasks they could not fulfill (completion of mourning, restoration of dignity etc.). Children introject parents' unprocessed feelings, which turns them into reservoirs of parents' deposited images, feelings and emotions.



### *Social-cultural approach*

Theoretical foundation of this approach stems from anthropology, sociology and social psychology. All these three sciences have accumulated evidence about cultural and social norms, customs, values, beliefs, rituals and transgenerational transmission of myths.

In transmission of parent's trauma to the child, social-cultural approach points out two mechanisms: upbringing style and social learning (Kellermann, 2001). According to *Social-interpersonal model of PTSD*, elaborated by Maerker and Hecker in recent years (Maerker & Horn, 2013; Maerker & Hecker, 2016), a traumatized person impacts the immediate social surrounding through social affects (anger, guilt, shame) and style of trauma sharing (silence/concealing, or oversharing, or sharing with too much emotions). If a family becomes a target of a traumatized parent's social affects and/or the parent implies dysfunctional sharing of trauma, the upbringing style in the family is damaging. In this case, parents represent maladaptive role models for their children. This contributes to transgenerational transmission of trauma.

### *Transmission of trauma according to family system theory*

Murray Bowen, one of the founders of family system theory gives the following definition of family: „The family is a multigenerational emotional system that consists of the individuals, nuclear family and the extended family. It includes all the living members of the family, usually three generations and sometimes more” (Titelman, 2014, p.22).

According to the family system theory, family reacts to trauma as a system. Each member of the system visibly or invisibly is involved in dynamic interaction with other members and thus affects others and the entire family system. Trauma brakes homeostasis of family system and therefore requires the reorganization and change of the system. How family system will manage to change in response to traumatic

experience will define effectiveness of its coping with traumatic experience and accordingly, transgenerational transmission of trauma (Bowen, 1976; Murrey et al, 2005; Titelman, 2014).

In terms of coping with trauma and transmitting the trauma from generation to generation, the family system theory points out such important variables as: openness of family system, patterns of communication, coherence of family, adaptive skills of family, family system and family paradigm (Bowen, 1976; Figley, 1988; Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Young et al, 2003). Below each variable will be described in more details:

*Openness of family system.* According to the studies of Holocaust survivor families, if in a result of traumatic experience family system is shutting down, family members are becoming too concentrated on each other, which increases the risk of pathology and trauma transmission. Nathan Kellermann notes „...pathological families are described [in scientific literature] as tight little islands in which children came into contact only with their own parents, with their siblings and with other survivors. In such highly closed systems parents are fully committed to their children and children are overly concerned with their parents' welfare, both trying to shield the other from painful experiences” (Kellermann, 2001, p. 262).

*Patterns of family communication.* According to clinical observations and research, often the traumatized parents have a double-binding style of communication with their children. Gregory Beitson described this phenomenon based on studies of families whose member(s) suffered from schizophrenia (Beitson, 1956). The double-binding means that an authorized (more powerful) person gives the dependent person two or more contradictory instructions, in the setting, where the dependent person cannot escape the communication field and in case of disobedience is threatened by punishment (real or symbolic). These mutually exclusive messages by an authorized person, and impossibility to fulfill as well as not

to fulfill them, causes anxiety and internal splitting in person. A trauma researcher Gerald Fromm suggests an illustration of this phenomenon in introduction of the book “Lost in Transmission. Studying Trauma across Generations”. Specifically, he brings an example when at the end of a tragic year of September 11, American parents brought their children to Christmas celebration at Rockefeller center but at the same time, at the sight of Santa Claus, they were nervously quenching their children’s hands so that the children would not approach Santa (Fromm, 2012, p. xvii).

The Holocaust researchers describe separation difficulties in traumatized families: i.e., in Felice Zilberfein’s research, there were significantly more problems related to separation in traumatized families compared to the control group, on the part of both parents and children (Zilberfein, 1996). In this context, the Holocaust researchers emphasize the double messages sent by the parents, which are oriented on the one hand to encourage their children’s independence and on the other hand, to keep them closely attached (Danieli, 1981; Kellermann, 2001; Lichtman, 1984).

*Family coherence.* According to the family system theorists, one of the important variables that describes a family system is its coherence. It is about how well a family can balance the dialectically contradictory tendencies of separation and togetherness. If the family can balance these tendencies so that the family members have sufficient autonomy and at the same time the unity as well, this is an important protecting factor from stress. If the balance is disrupted and the family tends overly towards separation, this family is called a switched off family. If the family deviates too much towards unity, this is called the family merging (Figley, 1988; Olson et al, 1983; Olson, 1985) and the deficit of self-differentiation (Titelman, 2014). According to evidence, family merging is one of the important psychological mechanisms of transgenerational transmission of trauma (Figley, 1988; Kira, 2004).

*The family's adaptive skills or capacity to respond to changes.* this variable is about how families respond to development or any other changes. If the family rigidly opposes changes, it becomes fragile and may collapse. If the family goes to another extreme and changes to such extent that loses its identity, this is called a chaotic family. If the family has capacity to change cohabitation rules and power balance, as well as the roles according to external changes without losing its functionality, this is an important protective factor in case of stress.

*The family system.* The family system consists of sub-systems: family members' dyads and triads, and their composition changes during family's development. In case of trauma, the family's sub-systems may become stiff and rigid. According to Holocaust studies, in a traumatized family, a child and parent can develop such symbiosis, when the shifting of roles takes place, and the "parentization" of the child occurs – in such case, child becomes the parent of a traumatized parent. Felice Zilberfein called this phenomenon a "parent-child role diffusion" (Zilberfein, 1996).

*The Family paradigm.* The beliefs that give family a conceptual framework to perceive the world and themselves, is called the *family paradigm*. It significantly affects the family's ability to cope with trauma. Janoff-Bulman describes "benevolence of the world" as one of the common paradigms. According to this paradigm the world is just, the family members are worthy, life is predictable, therefore, if they behave well, they will receive what they deserve (Janoff-Bulman, 1992).

Consequently, the family paradigm ensures the family's extent of trust towards the world, feeling of safety, family members' self-esteem etc. Traumatic experience that contradicts the family paradigm and destroys its belief system. The Holocaust researchers stress on the impact of parents' maladaptive paradigm ("trust no one"), formed as a result of trauma, on their children's generation, and on formation of constant anticipation of threat in them (Kellerman, 2001).

According to findings of the study conducted by Luciana Braga, Marcelo Mello and Jose Fiks, conducted among the Holocaust survivor families who migrated to Brazil: „Some participants claimed their parents had failed to provide an affective framework of security, stability and predictability; instead, many survivors transmitted a terrifying view of the world to their children. The offspring of these parents feel the need to always be ready to react to imminent catastrophes and potential threats to their survival. “(Braga et al, 2012).

*Transgenerational transmission of trauma in the light of attachment theory*

Dan Bar-On together with the group of colleagues conducted a meta-analysis of three Holocaust studies carried out in three countries (Holland, Canada, and Israel) and concluded that Bowlby’s attachment theory is an effective paradigm to integrate diverse and sometimes contradictory results of research on transgenerational transmission of trauma (Bar-On et al, 1998). Specifically, he targeted two paradoxical moments confirmed in all the three studies that referred to the relationships of Holocaust survivor first and second generations, and tried to explain these moments in the light of attachment theory. The first moment refers to the paradox between hyper-protection from the side of parent and parentization from the side of child.

According to Bar-On, the mechanism here is as follows: based on trauma related high anxiety, the parent over-protects child, limits his/her freedom and thus hinders child’s separation and individualization. The child that could not manage to separate, is attached to the parent even in adulthood, and in response to the parent’s anxiety, takes on the role of the parent’s protector, basically a role of a “parent”. According to Bar-On, such relationship can be explained by anxious-ambivalent attachment.

The second paradox is about the contradiction between parent’s desire to spare the child (and accordingly to conceal the Holocaust past) and as a response, feeling of insecurity emerging in the child (due to parent’s unclear/unexplained nonverbal

signals or symptoms). According to Bar-On, such context causes disorganized attachment. Anxious-ambivalent or disorganized attachment do not mean for Bar-On psychopathology or maladaptation, on reverse, the researcher concludes that probably these were the best/optimal attachment strategies in those conditions under which the second generation was raised; however, in stressful situations, people with insecure attachment are more vulnerable.

#### *Biological-genetic model of trauma transmission*

This model emphasizes the biological results of trauma and their influence on person's biological and genetic vulnerability towards trauma.

In the early 2000-s, an American researcher Rachel Yehuda found out that children of Vietnam war veterans with PTSD, and children of Holocaust survivor parents with PTSD have equally low cortisol levels, which makes them vulnerable towards development of PTSD and a range of other mental disorders (Yehuda, 2000).

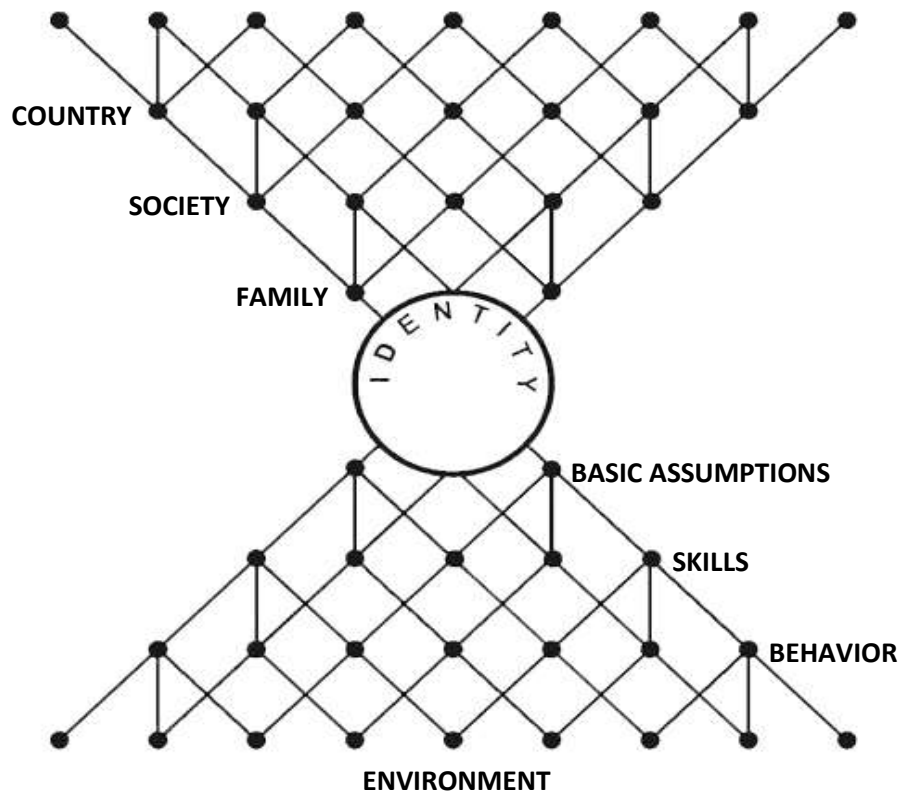
In the newest epigenetic research, Yehuda and colleagues found evidence that there is an associative connection (relation) between parent's trauma and the epigenetic changes both in parents and in their children. Epigenetic processes change the gene's expression without changing the DNA bind. One of such processes is DNA methylation (the genome's form of regulation by joining the DNA and methyl molecules or separating them), which changes "the reading" of a specific gene. The research team led by Yehuda found the relation between the Holocaust survivor parents' PTSD and DNA FKBP5 methylation in parents as well as their children. According to research results, FKBP5 methylation is higher in traumatized parents than in control group, and is lower in traumatized parents' children, than in respective control group; this confirms the genetic basis of transgenerational transmission of trauma (Yehuda, 2016).

#### *Integrated approach*

The above described theories partially overlap – for example, transgenerational transmission of family paradigm, or in other words, the belief system is the core of social cultural explanatory model; also, the merging mechanism, described by family system theorists basically describes the deficits of object-relationship non-regulation and self-differentiation – key aspects of psychodynamic approach. Nathan Kellermann points out the importance of holistic understanding and integrated approach, which means understanding the transgenerational transmission of trauma as a bio-psycho-social process that simultaneously takes place on different levels. Here it is important to consider genetic vulnerability, as well as social learning, communication patterns in the family and the psychodynamics of relationships between parent and child (Kellermann, 2001).

*The Theory of Systems* (Beitson, 1972) could serve as the integrative framework for trauma transmission theories. It views a person as a system enrolled into larger systems. Each system has logical levels. Change on any of these logical levels causes transformation of the entire system, and this happens not linearly, but through transformation of system's binding type. Gregory Bateson's scheme, modified by Robert Dilts (Dilts, 1994) explicitly shows the described relations.

Figure 1: "Person-Environment" System, (Dilts, 1994).



The basis of the diagram is a person's physical surrounding – environment of existence. The lower triangle reflects the person. Bateson and Dilts differentiate the following logical levels of a person, as a system: behavior, skills, basic assumptions and identity. According to the scheme, the person is involved in such larger systems (the upper triangle of the scheme), as are family, society, country, etc. According to Bateson and Dilts, no matter on which logical level the change takes place in these systems (behavior, skills, or societal level), it causes entire transformation of the system.

Based on systemic approach it is clear how a person's traumatization can change his or her social environment, and how a family or community trauma can change a person's basic assumptions, identity or behavior. In other words, systemic



approach provides a relevant conceptual basis for horizontal as well as vertical (from generation to generation) transmission of trauma.

### **2.3.2.2. Theories of transgenerational transmission of societal trauma by Volkan and Hopper**

#### ***Societal trauma and its transmission according to Vamik Volkan***

An American psychoanalyst, founding father of psychopolitical analyses, Vamik Volkan focuses his attention on psychodynamics of “large groups”. He defines a large group as the unity of large number (“thousands” or “millions”) of individuals, who share religious, ethnic or other kind of identity.

Volkan looks at the large group through psychodynamic paradigm. He defines the group leader as an Oedipal father (“a person who functions as a shared ‘transference figure’ for many members of the large group“(Volkan, 2013, p.223), and a large group itself, as an idealized (breastfeeding) mother, who has the potential to heal the narcissistic wounds of its members.

According to Volkan, three shared processes represent the important markers of a large group identity (Volkan, 1991; Volkan, 1997; Volkan, 2009, etc.):

- Projection of undesirable parts of own identity onto “other” (another large group);
- Dynamics of leader-followers relationships, where leader determines group’s responses to the situations, which threaten its identity;
- Group’s mental representation of real or mythologized historic events, which refers to victory (“Chosen glory”) or traumatic experience (“Chosen trauma”), and in fact, nurtures the narcissism of a large group.

Societal trauma is a societal response to the large-scale traumatic event, and/or series of events, and/or social-political conditions that threaten the society’s

wellbeing, affect societal life at all – social, cultural, political – levels and influence the group’s identity (Volkan, 1991; Volkan 1997; Volkan, 2004, etc.). Societal trauma creates conditions for development of group’s shared traumatic identity. Trauma becomes integrated into collective narrative and is passed on from one generation to another through collective memory (Volkan, 1997 and elsewhere).

According to Volkan, societal trauma, which develops because of armed conflicts and political regimes, has a higher potential of transgenerational transmission, compared to traumas caused by natural disasters. “When a massive trauma results from wars, war-like conditions or from existing devastating political systems, there is an identifiable enemy or oppressing group that has deliberately inflicted suffering and helplessness on its victims. Such trauma affects the victimized society in ways that are different from those of natural or accidental disasters or unexpected loss of a leader. Sharing shame, humiliation, dehumanization and guilt, inability to be assertive, and identification with the oppressor complicate large-group mourning and this complication in turn becomes the main reason for the transgenerational transmission of trauma.” (Volkan, 2009, p.1).

According to Volkan, when a large group becomes the target of political or other man-made aggression, it develops a range of destructive psychological phenomena, which determine the psycho-dynamics of its social-political life (Volkan, 1997; Volkan, 2006; Volkan, 2013 and elsewhere):

- Sense of shared victimization;
- Sense of shared humiliation due to helplessness in the face of a traumatic stressor;
- Shared feeling of guilt for surviving, in the face of those who died;
- Shared difficulties to act assertively;
- Increased shared projection of own unacceptable and “bad” part onto “other” large group;

- Increased shared narcissistic investment in own group identity;
- Shared envy towards aggressor and identification with the aggressor;
- Difficulties to mourn out trauma at group level;
- Based on all of the above mentioned – transmission of trauma related unresolved psychological tasks to the next generation, through shared mechanisms of transmission.

As Volkan argues, not only psychopathological symptoms of trauma are transmitted from generation to generation, but also many other psychological patterns and phenomena: “There are many forms of transgenerational transmission. Besides anxiety, depression, elation, worries and fantasies, there are various psychological tasks that an adult may assign to a child. An adult may “deposit” his or her own injured self-images within the child along with images of others who were involved in the traumatic event – even sometime the image of the perpetrator – and then give psychological tasks to these transferred images that aim to ease the pain and terror of the original trauma or control the outcome of the trauma.” (Volkan, 2013, p.233).

In terms of transgenerational transmission of trauma, Volkan, along with other psychoanalysts (i.e., Klein, 1946; Bion, 1961; Hopper, 2003, etc.), deems the mourning of loss especially important. In case if a large group was unable to “normally mourn” the trauma, (i.e. because the mourning was hindering survival, as it was case of Serbia, during its occupation by Ottoman empire, Volkan, 1997), then the large group “deposits” psychological tasks related to the un-mourned trauma, to future generation (Volkan, 2013).

According to Volkan, depositing is close to identification, however, during identification a child is an active subject while in case of “depositing”, the parent has an active role, and child becomes a passive “reservoir” of parent’s traumatic

experience (Volkan, 1997). Volkan views Melanie Klein's projective identification defense mechanism, as the analogy to depositing at individual level (Klein, 1946).

In the context of large group, Volkan describes depositing as "a process shared by thousands or millions that starts in childhood and becomes like 'psychological DNA' creating a sense of belonging... After experiencing a collective catastrophe... individuals are left with self-images similarly (though not identically) traumatized by the shared event. Tens of thousands or millions of individuals deposit such images into their children and give them tasks such as: 'Regain my self-esteem for me', 'Put my mourning process on the right track', or 'Be assertive and take revenge'." (Volkan, 2013, p.234). If the second generation cannot handle these "deposited" tasks, they are transmitted to further generation. The transmitted tasks actualize differently in different generations but it is common to all generations to share the mental representation of trauma of earlier generation. According to Volkan, this becomes the most important marker of a large group's identity, and calls it "Chosen trauma". Identification of some of the large groups' chosen trauma is difficult because it is not related to a single traumatizing event.

According to Volkan, in case of man-made (enemy) catastrophe, the transmission process takes place in the group of aggressors as well. Whereas the victimized group experiences feelings of shame and humiliation due to hopelessness, and transmits these feelings across generations, the aggressor group transmits the feelings of conscious or unconscious guilt. What these two groups have in common is the failure to mourn the catastrophe of the past (Volkan, 1997; Volkan, 2006a; Volkan, 2013, etc.).

According to Volkan, not every large-scale catastrophic event becomes the reason for development of chosen trauma. Chosen trauma is partially constructed by the large group itself, through narratives that are transmitted from generation to generation, and also by the political leaders – when constructing a group identity, or

through utilization of past trauma(s) in political power struggle. In this regard, Jeffrey Alexander's concept of cultural trauma is close to Volkan's concept of Chosen trauma (Alexander et al, 2004).

A large group has both conscious and unconscious mechanisms of mourning. Mourning can take place in different ways. For example, through unconscious change of social processes (As an example of this, Volkan brings the tragedy in the village of Aberfan in Wales, where, where due to the disaster 116 children and 28 adults died in the last Century. In the following 5 years, the birth rate of the village community significantly increased), or through creation/building of real or symbolic statues related to loss, or through reflection on the past, its re-evaluation, attempt to understand it, giving meaning to it, etc. In case if the group implemented and completed the normal process of mourning, its energy is releasing from the attachment with the past trauma and could be invested in the new constructive public processes (Volkan, 2006b).

If the normal process of mourning has not been implemented due to various reasons, mourning becomes complicated and group's narcissistic regress takes place (Volkan, 2009b).

Volkan differentiates the so-called problematic narcissism and normal narcissism (the latter ensures the large group's positive self-esteem and inter-generational succession). In case of exaggerated narcissism, large group is losing contact with reality. Volkan distinguishes three dimensions of a large group's problematic narcissism - exaggerated, masochistic and malignant narcissism. In case of exaggerated narcissism, a group develops an illusion of being special and perceives everything related to itself, as special and better, regardless of a real picture. Masochistic narcissism is expressed in a group's pride for the suffering it endured; malignant narcissism involves the impulse for destruction of other group that is responsible for the traumatic past of the group (Volkan, 2009b).

Volkan describes the following characteristics of group's narcissistic regress (Volkan, 2009b):

- Rallying around the leader at the cost of compromising certain aspects of own individuality;
- Manipulation by the leader by pressing on societal trauma or constructing it;
- Mass introjections – the society “eats” (accepts without criticism) the propaganda coming from the political leader/elite;
- Mass projections – the group projects its unwanted, suppressed “bad” parts on the “other”;
- Based on all this – the segregation on “we” and “they”;
- Psychologizing the boundaries of various sub-groups within a large group, causing the minor differences to become major issues that cannot be tolerated,
- Etc.

Volkan also describes the indicators of progress in the large group (Volkan, 2007):

- interrelation between all members of the society, where all subjects are able to compromise without violating their own integrity;
- respect for and protection of individuality;
- just and functional public institutions, especially a just judicial system;
- stable families; termination of devaluation of women, children and elderly people;
- decent conditions regarding the human rights defense not only in the society but also in closed institutions (psychiatric clinics, penitentiary institutions);
- increased focus on freedom of speech;
- establishment of professional unions and provision of work ethic and quality control across all fields of professions, civic responsibility and activism,
- Etc.

Therefore, according to Volkan, societal wellbeing and societal progress significantly depends on at which extend society managed to cope and deal with the past traumas.

### *Societal trauma and group coherence according to Earl Hopper and Wilfred Bion*

In this sub chapter, I will cover the issue of impact of societal trauma on the coherence of a large group. For this purpose, I will describe the ideas of Earl Hopper (Hopper, 2006). In his works, Hopper draws on Wilfred Bion's Theory of basic assumptions (Bion, 1961). Bion himself draws on Melanie Klein's meta-psychology (Klein, 1984). Therefore, I will briefly formulate Melanie Klein's ideas about individual development, afterwards - Bion's theory of basic assumptions, which was elaborated, based on small groups, and finally, Earl Hopper's ideas about coherence and psychodynamics of traumatized social systems, which he elaborated based on the works of these two authors.

### *Individual development according to Melanie Klein*

According to Melanie Klein, one of the key theorists of object-relationships, during formation of object-relationship an infant goes through the stage of so-called part object, when the infant's object is not object as a whole, but object characterized by certain features. I.e., if there is milk in the breast, that feeds the infant, the infant perceives it as a "good" object. If there is no milk in the breast, then it sees the breast as a different, "bad" object. Melanie Klein called this developmental stage a *Paranoid-schizoid* position. This is the stage where a person separates a "good" object from a "bad" object. This stage is characterized by such primitive defense mechanism as projective identification, a person projects own unacceptable, "bad" part onto an object and simultaneously identifies with that object, and is in a certain state of symbiosis with it. The next stage of development comes when an infant develops the sense that whether the object satisfies his/her needs or not, the object is the same and

it is good and bad at the same time. Perception of the object's sameness helps to develop the sense of the self-sameness. Klein calls this stage a *depressive* position.

Object integration contributes to ego integration, therefore infant becomes more mature at this stage; also more mature defense mechanisms are in action – oppression, rationalization, etc. The two above described stages are not in chronological relation with each other, and they are not characteristic to people only during infancy. They can occur over the course of a person's entire lifetime, as Paranoid-schizoid or depressive *position*, which determines the specificity of a person's character, as well as possible psychopathology.

According to Klein, the interaction of two basic instincts – love and death – and their dynamics guide a person's mental life. In terms of development, one of the person's main tasks is to learn how to control these instincts. When an infant projects his/her own “bad” part onto mother (during Paranoid-schizoid phase), infant avoids the death instinct, exteriorizes it, because he/she is not ready to manage/control it.

In Depressive position person is aware of his/her “bad” part, and is able to feel guilt because of this part. When an infant is having mother's milk, (s) he introjects a “good” object, which constitutes the core and the foundation of Ego. At the same time, the death instinct affects the infant, who develops envy and greed towards the “good” object, and due to this immanent envy the infant refers to oral and anal sadism (bites the breast, stains it with excrements, etc.).

Contrary to Freud, Klein thought that oral, anal and phallic stages of development are not chronologically linked and are represented throughout life simultaneously from a person's birth. After the “the good object” is defiled through oral and anal sadism because of envy, and is turned into “a bad object”, the mother's breast still returns to the infant, in the form of the initial “good object”. In this moment, the love instinct and the related resource of gratitude enable the infant to



restore the connection with the “good object”, to continue its introjection and consequently construction and integration of ego (Klein, 1984).

*Wilfred Bion's theory of basic assumptions*

According to Bion, the dynamics of a small group (10-15 people) implies two mental processes – first, more sophisticated and complex, and the second – more simple and primitive. He calls the first modus “Work group”, and second – “Basic assumptions group” (Bion, 1961).

The work group is an open, structured system of individuals who have the awareness of a common goal and the skill to cooperate with the subjects both within and outside the system, in order to achieve this goal.

The basic assumption group may be a parallel unconscious stream of a work group's dynamics. Due to the impact of various factors, it periodically actualizes, lowers reality principle, and puts group in a psychotic state. By psychotic state, Bion means the condition, which Isabel Menzies Lyth calls “loosing of effective contact with reality” (Menzies-Lyth, 1981, p.663).

According to Bion, when people the group regresses, it comes to the state similar to infancy; therefore, understanding group's psychodynamics is possible based on Klein's ideas about infant development. Bion argues that the group regress takes three different forms. Each form is based on conscious or unconscious basic assumptions of group members about what will save their identity. Bion distinguishes three types of basic assumptions and corresponding group dynamics:

1) *Dependency Basic Assumption*: Group members no longer take the responsibility about the group process and the results, they delegate whole responsibility to the leader; they perceive themselves as weak, resources less and immature, whereas perceive leader as omnipotent and expect to receive all the resources from him/her. This corresponds to Klein's Paranoid-schizoid position and primitive idealization of leader. In parallel, the group members develop envy towards

the leader, stemming from death instinct, and the greed related to envy. The group members want to receive too much from the leader and they are in constant state of greed and dissatisfaction. The leader fails to satisfy group's extremely high expectations. At initial stage, group members deny this reality, but gradually they are becoming more and more disappointed and developing desire to cast the leader away and/or destroy him.

2) *Fight & Flight (F & F) Basic Assumption*: Part of the group, disappointed by the leader, chooses a new one, the group is split in two; these two parts do not tolerate each other, become enemies and want to destroy each other. Fight & Flight can take place if there is an external enemy and in this case, it unites around the leader to destroy the common enemy. This does not exclude internal splitting. The group expects the leader to hold victory over the real or perceived enemy and to take revenge; Projection and projective identification defense mechanisms prevail. F & F condition again corresponds to Kleinian Paranoid-schizoid position. The general atmosphere within the group is characterized by envy, aggression, intolerance and conflict.

3) *Pairing Basic Assumption*: The group protects its identity by pairing; group members bet on a concrete couple from the group; they try to encourage and support the couple's flirting and pairing. This way the group also tries to avoid conflicts characteristic to dependency and F & F basic assumptions. According to Bion, pairing basic assumption is a maniacal defense of the group from disappointment caused by depressive position (from awareness that nothing is ideal because the object is good and bad at the same time).

According to Bion, the above-described basic assumptions kaleidoscopically change each other in the process of group's psychodynamics. The Work group may use basic assumptions to catalyze group dynamics and achieve a set goal. However, a

worse scenario is also possible, when the basic assumptions loses effective contact with reality and regresses.

According to Bion, certain social institutions within the society symbolize each of the three basic assumptions: for example, church symbolizes dependency basic assumption, army – F & F basic assumption, and aristocracy – pairing basic assumption.

Otto Kernberg developed Bion's ideas and along with other issues, described the types of symbolic leadership that are characteristic to each of the three basic assumptions: during dependency basic assumption the group prefers infantile, narcissistic, possibly psychopathic leaders, during F & F basic assumptions – paranoid leaders, and during pairing basic assumptions – hysterical leaders (Kernberg, 1998).

Bion's theory had a huge impact on studying group psychodynamics, and had many interpreters. A whole range of psychoanalysts tried to expand his ideas – for example they tried to show that dependency basic assumption corresponds to oral stage, F & F – to anal stage, pairing – to phallic stage. In addition, various authors tried to add new (fourth, fifth) basic assumptions in order to develop their own theories (Turquet, 1975; Menzies-Lyth, 1981; Kernberg, 1998, etc.). From the psychotraumatological perspective, Earl Hopper's interpretation and further development of Bion's ideas that I will be describing in the next chapter, is the most interesting.

*Earl Hopper's ideas on the traumatic experiences in unconscious life of social groups and Basic Assumption of Incohesion*

Hopper criticizes Bion that the latter does not pay sufficient attention to the stressors coming from the social environment and their traumatizing impact on groups. This is in many ways similar to Judith Hermann's reproof of Freud, as she mentioned Freud was so concentrated on internal conflicts that he left the real facts

of violence against women beyond his attention (Herman, 1998). Likewise, Hopper claims that in psychodynamics of a large group or group-like social system, emergence of aggression is determined not by immanent malignant envy, which according to Bion, stems from death instinct, but real threats existing in the environment, that put the survival of the group under question, cause fear of identity loss and annihilation (Hopper, 2003).

By the large group, Hopper means a social system encompassing sixteen or more members and does not indicate an upper threshold.

Hopper adds a fourth basic assumption to Bion's three basic assumptions; according to this theory, Incohesion is a group's primitive reaction to traumatogenic /traumatizing situation, which causes fear of identity loss and annihilation.

Hopper gives the following definition: „The fear of annihilation is a response to the experience of profound helplessness arising from loss, abandonment and damage within the context of the traumatogenic process which spans generations and involves the relationships between victims, perpetrators and bystanders, and patterns of responses to the traumatized” (Hopper, 2003, p.55).

Hopper suggests the classification of traumatizing stressors that can cause fear of annihilation:

- (1) *everyday tension*: stressors causing tension (as an example Hopper brings a Chinese torture method – water drops aimed to drop on exactly the same place of the head) (Hopper, 2003, p.54);
- (2) *Cumulative stressors*: unpleasant events and their cumulative impact;
- (3) *Catastrophic stressors*: stressors that attack individual's self-defense system and hinder safety.

According to Hopper, the extend of interpersonal stressor's impact depends on a number of factors. Namely, stressor's strength, length and regularity of exposure, maturity of Ego of the subject exposed to the stressor, subject's unconscious fantasies

in the moment of exposure, intensity of shame related to the traumatic experience, availability of support from the side of the surrounding community, and stands taken by the involved stakeholders. The positions of the aggressor and bystander are important - how willing is the aggressor to acknowledge damage inflicted to the victim and how willing is the bystander to validate traumatic experience of victim: confirm that what has happened to the victim happened in reality (Balint, 1969; Garland & Hopper, 1980; Hopper, 2003).

According to Hopper, when the above listed factors are not set out in an appropriate way, group fails to mourn out traumatic experience, dissociates from it and traumatic experience encapsulates in unconscious life of the group and triggers basic assumptions based psychodynamics. As a result, the traumatic experience becomes inaccessible (unavailable) for mourning.

Both Hopper and Bion acknowledged the importance of authentic mourning for trauma processing, and drew on Melanie Klein, who highlighted the role of mourning in overcoming the trauma, in 1940 (Klein, 1975a). Hopper himself stresses on the necessity to mourn the loss of any real or symbolic resources: „All loss must be mourned...The loss of self-esteem, of certainty, of group charisma, of physical power, of the rights and privileges associated with a particular phase of life...must all be acknowledged” (Hopper, 2003. p.62).

Authentic mourning could be replaced by non-authentic mourning, which limits the possibility to mourn the loss. Hopper described three types of non-authentic mourning, which in fact are self-defense strategies from anxiety caused by real mourning (Hopper, 2003, p. 61). See each type in the table below:

**Table 2: Types of non-authentic mourning and their characteristics (Hopper, 2003, p.61):**

Type of non-authentic mourning	Emotion	Rhetoric	Behavior
Sentimental & masochistic	Sorrow	Pitying oneself, victimization, sentimental and optimistic clichés	Crying, weeping, moaning
Revanchist and sadistic	Anger, bitterness	Intolerance and strive for revenge	Threat, aggression, planning and implementing revenge
Triumphant	hypo maniacal	„We won“	Celebration

Hopper claims that un-mourned (or non-authentically mourned) trauma causes the group to regress and live based on the basic assumptions, which is transferred across generations and has the tendency of repetition at all levels of the social system. “Within traumatized societies, people tend to repeat traumatic experience within their families, schools, military, political and religious institutions and organizations, and within their groups generally.” (Hopper, 2003, p.63).

According to Hopper, in parallel with the three basic assumptions described by Bion (out of which two correspond to pre-oedipal stage and one – to phallic stage), there is an even more primitive stage of group regress, which he calls *Incohesiveness basic assumption*. This form of regress develops because of frustration, caused by dependency basic assumption, and represents the group’s archaic response to stressful situation. Hopper differentiates two extremes in this archaic reaction: *Aggregation* - “crustacean” type of reaction, analogy to “crawling back to the protective shell”, which is manifested via fragmentation of the group (1), and *Massification* – “ameboid” type of reaction, which is manifested via group’s transformation into diffusive mass (2). According to Hopper, the fourth basic assumption is manifested via oscillation of

group between these two extremes. The oscillation is caused by specific anxieties related to being in any of these extremes – fear of losing oneself in massification extreme and fear of being alone on aggregation extreme.

In case of aggregation the group is fragmented, in the best case, these fragments are estranged from each other, and in the worst case they are in open conflict; there are no shared norms among the fragments, there is a rigid hierarchy. In contrast with F & F basic assumption, aggregation is not binary – in this case, the fragments are much more in number, than just two contradictory sides, and it is more extensive. As for massification, there is a pseudo-solidarity atmosphere, the norms are rigid, and group does not tolerate group member’s deviation from these norms. There is no apparent hierarchy in this group, each group member is viewed as having equal position – towards the leader; however, those who are closer to the leader are visibly (or invisibly) considered as having moral advantage compared to other more distanced group members. Unlike the dependency basic assumption, in massification the group process is more extensive.

In the book „Traumatic Experience in the Unconscious Life of Groups”, Hopper gives a comparative description of the Work group and Basic Assumptions (regressed) group, according to usual patterns and norms of communication and interaction (see Table 3):

**Table 3: Different groups’ patterns and norms of interaction and communication (Hopper, 2003, pp.33-34 and 70-75)**

<b>Modus of group</b>	<b>Interaction</b>	<b>Norms</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<b>Dependency</b>	“Very little interaction between group members and at the same time a fluctuating participation.” (Hopper, 2003, p.33)	“Expressing the values that encourage dependency, risk avoidance, conservatism in the name of everyone and not individuals, submission to authority.” (Hopper, 2003, p.34)	“Discussing that the group is frozen in one place but is confident that soon the leader will help them to move forward in the lengthy periods of merged silence.” (Hopper, 2003, p.34)

<b>Flight &amp; Flight</b>	“Unresolved conflict between the two members in the name of two factions, stemming from nothing.” (Hopper, 2003, p.34)	“Expressing the values that give priority to debates and loyalty to principles.” (Hopper, 2003, p.33)	“Discussing the possibility of formation of two different groups and the “huge” difference between these groups.” (Hopper, 2003, p.33)
<b>Paring</b>	“Encouragement of flirting between a man and a woman by other members of the group.” (Hopper, 2003, p.33)	“Expressing the values that advances an individual’s sacrifice for the interests of the group.” (Hopper, 2003, p.33)	“Enthusiastic, hopeful and possibly non-realistic discussion on future projects and plans.” (Hopper, 2003, p.33)
<b>Aggregation</b>	Disintegration, absence of dialogue, isolation, formation of marginalized groups and enclaves.	Deficit of solidarity, lack of knowledge/ understanding of norms, in extreme situations: total disorder, outrage, lawlessness.	Estrangement, deficit of empathy and sympathy, cold intellectualization, aggression, attack, irony, sarcasm.
<b>Massification</b>	Uncritical, mechanic submission to rules, “anonymization” – limitation of members’ individuality, dehumanization, isolation and suppression of those who try to retain individuality.	Pseudo – solidarity, pseudo-morality, fanaticism, fundamentalism, creating and worshipping idols. „Cultural homogeneity is regarded as a collective achievement.” (Hopper, 2003, p. 72).	Magical thinking and ritualization, being favorable to “theirs”, and being intolerant to “others”. Excess articulation of pseudo-morality, contagiousness of affect, gossip and spreading rumors, deficit of humor, articulating banalities.
<b>Work group</b>	Integration, taking responsibility for own feelings and interpretations.	Authentic solidarity, tolerance and respect of differences. Respect for individuality as well as values of the group.	Non-manipulative communication based on mutual respect and care for dignity, general benevolence humor and self-humor.

According to Hopper, aggression plays a special role in psychodynamics of incohesive (massified or aggregated) group. Specifically, he views massification and aggregation as manifestation of aggression that emerged as a response to traumatic experience. Aggression is an inseparable part of aggregation. According to Hopper, massification is a group process emerged to cope with aggression. In massified group the aggression instrumentalizes to ensure the group member’s submission to the



norms, that if violated, evoke the fear of identity loss in the group. Hopper describes a massified group's four forms of aggression that ensure submission to the norms:

(1) *Presenting the core of the group as having a moral priority*, compared to the distanced members of the group, and to the subjects outside the group, in the social environment. Hopper explains the latter by Erik Erikson's concept of pseudo-species (Erikson, 1968), according to which human groups have a tendency to view other groups as inferior to theirs (attitude that is similar to the attitudes among various species in the animal world);

(2) The so-called *anonymization process* – “removing” the group member's right to have own identity independently from the group, basically homogenization of the group, its transformation into a mass;

(3) *Suppressing and ignoring the group members who try to maintain their identity*, presenting them as immoral, etc. In this case, the “willful (disobedient)” group member is in the role of scapegoat – “the orthodox” group members project all of their unacceptable feelings and thoughts on the “willful” member and he/she becomes the reservoir of unacceptable part of their selves;

(4) Banishing such group members, their symbolic killing (“(s) he is dead to me/us”), group “cleansing”. In this case „General processes of social control become a form of punishment” (Hopper, 2003, p. 75).

In case of especially malignant development, one extreme step may be added to the described above:

(5) Murder, which is more common on the societal level (large group), than on the small group level. Two different scenarios are possible in this case: a) murder of a leader, who is the reservoir of group members' idealized self; b) murder of a “scapegoat”, who is the reservoir of the group members' unacceptable, shaded part. Murder pushes the massified group towards aggregation; after achieving aggregation, the associated anxieties emerge again, which drives the group again towards

massification. According to Hopper, this motion is not a dialectical process oriented towards development, but rather stagnation of a social system.

If the trauma is authentically mourned, the social system breaks through the vicious cycle of basic assumption psychodynamics and transfers to the state of the Work group. When the social system is in the state of the Work group, the modus of basic assumptions still develops, but these basic assumptions are no longer malignant and they support the Work group's constructive dynamics.

Therefore, authentic mourning gives the group members „an increased sense of personal autonomy... the development of a hopeful attitude, the capacity for trust and optimism, and a new or renewed commitment to law and order... These qualities of personal and collective life lead to more satisfactory social adjustment – by which I do not mean submission and acquiescence – to the prevailing social, cultural and political conditions, allowing for attempts to change those conditions that are felt to be unacceptable, or in other words, to good citizenship (Hopper, 2003, pp.62-63).

#### ***2.4. Review of research on transgenerational transmission of trauma***

In terms of methodology, research on transgenerational transmission of trauma faces multiple challenges, because many factors influence this phenomenon. Namely, were both parents exposed to the trauma or just one of them, did they develop PTSD or not, when was the child born – before or after parent's traumatization, the child's sex, age and birth order, what is family's social capital before and after exposure, at which extend society acknowledges their trauma, etc. The variety of such variables creates methodological difficulties, and limits the possibility to generalize the research results. I.e. we cannot generalize the research results obtained through Holocaust studies, to the families of Vietnam War survivors, etc.

### 2.4.1. Holocaust studies

Research on transgenerational transmission of trauma starts from studies of Holocaust survivor families. First such study was published in special literature in 1967 (Rakoff et al, 1967), and since then this field became an object of intensive scientific attention. Currently not only second generation, but also the third generation is being studied (Scharf, 2007).

At the initial stage, in order to define the problem of transgenerational transmission of trauma, clinical studies were implied, analyses of clinical cases were frequent. Clinical cases contain more difficult mental health problems. Therefore, the professional community had the tendency to view the Holocaust problems as a catastrophe and only in the light of psychiatry. A quotation by Bergmann and Jucovy is very illustrative in this regard: „We realize that such a pessimistic view will evoke criticism, but in so far as our own experience goes, it is not possible for a child to grow up without becoming scarred, in a world where the Holocaust is the dominant psychic reality. With few exceptions, the mental health of children of survivors is in jeopardy, and our own community owes them a second chance of recovery through psychological treatment” (Bergmann & Jucovy, 1982, p. 312).

In accordance with such attitude, through a number of studies the authors were able to confirm the numerous problems of the second generation of Holocaust survivals, such as difficulties of separation from parents, difficulties to achieve autonomy, maladaptive cognitions, depression, low self-esteem, anxiety etc. (Aleksandrowicz, 1973; Danieli, 1981; Epstein, 1979; Freyberg, 1980, Katz & Franklin, 1980, etc.). In 1981, in his article „Children of Survivors of the Nazi Camps: Critical Review of the Literature”, an American psychiatrist Norman Solkoff strictly criticized these studies because of their methodological limitations – for incorrect analysis and interpretation of concrete cases, and for overgeneralizations. He criticized experimental studies as well for small number of study participants, selectiveness of

sample, absence of control groups and other methodological blunders. He blamed his colleagues for groundless stigmatization of the entire generation (Solkoff, 1981).

Additionally, there was a criticism about discussing the Holocaust second generation as a homogenous group: “We have stressed that children of survivors should not be seen as a homogenous group and have anticipated that not all themes would be common to all subjects” (Rowland-Klein & Dunlope, 1997, p.368).

In 1980-90-ies, the large body of research was implemented, including clinical and nonclinical studies, as well as controlled and sophisticated trials. In his article “Transmission of Holocaust Trauma: An Integrative View”, Nathan Kellerman summarized the large massive of these studies and distinguished problematic areas, where the impact of parents Holocaust trauma is observable among the second generation (Kellerman, 2001, p.259):

„Self. Impaired self-esteem with persistent identity problems, over-identification with parents’ “victim/survivor” status, need to be super-achievers to compensate for parents’ losses, carrying the burden of being “replacements” for lost relatives;

*Cognition.* Catastrophic expectancy, fear of another Holocaust, preoccupation with death, stress upon exposure to stimuli, which symbolizes the Holocaust, vicarious sharing of traumatic Holocaust experiences which, dominates the inner world;

*Affectivity.* Annihilation anxiety, nightmares of persecution, frequent dysphoric moods connected to a feeling of loss and mourning. Unresolved conflicts around anger complicated by guilt and increased vulnerability to stressful events;

*Interpersonal functioning.* Exaggerated family attachments and dependency or exaggerated independence and difficulties in entering into intimate relationships and in handling interpersonal conflicts”.

Currently, a whole range of studies on transgenerational transmission of trauma confirm impact of parents' trauma on their children (Miri Scharf, 2007; Iliceto et al, 2011; Yaroslawitz et al, 2015; Yehuda, 2016, etc.). For example, Rachel Yehuda and colleagues found the lower levels of cortisol in the second generation of Holocaust survivals and consequently, their vulnerability to PTSD and other mental health problems. Yehuda's latest epigenetic studies confirmed the genetic changes on DNA level, resulting from trauma (Yehuda et al, 1998; Yehuda et al, 2001; Yehuda et al, 2016).

Miri Scharf discovered the impact of Holocaust trauma on psychological condition of young men in the second and third generations. She studied the impact of Holocaust trauma on psychosocial functioning of young men called up to the army. The research revealed that the young people, both parents of whom had been exposed to trauma, had lower self-esteem and ambivalent type of attachment; they perceived their parents as less encouraging of their independency, compared to their peers, whose parents were not the Holocaust survivors, or compared to the peers, whose only one parent had been the Holocaust survivor. Apart from this, the peers perceived the young people, both parents of whom had been exposed to Holocaust, as less adapted to the stress of army. This research showed that the upbringing style is the mediator variable between the family's Holocaust experience and type of attachment as well as self-esteem (Miri Scharf, 2007).

Contradictory to these studies, there are studies that deny the transgenerational transmission of trauma. Lisa Baron and colleagues compared interpersonal adaptation skills, narcissism level and coping strategies of Holocaust survivor parents' children and children of Jewish families who immigrated before Holocaust. The research did not confirm any significant difference between experimental and control groups (Baron et al, 1993). According to a number of meta-analytical studies conducted in 2000-s, transgenerational transmission of

psychopathological symptoms of trauma was confirmed neither in the second nor in the third generations (Van IJzendoorn et al, 2003; Sagi-Schwartz et al, 2008).

As Luciana Braga and her co-authors note: “There is no consensus between the clinical observations and empiric research on the existence of long-term psychological effects on Holocaust survivors and their offspring. Whereas case reports are indicative of transgenerational transmission of trauma, systematic studies have found no psychopathologic manifestations in the children of Holocaust survivors, except when they were exposed to life-threatening situations” (Braga et al, 2012, p.2).

A range of experimental studies confirmed certain differences, however not in psychopathology, but in characterological peculiarities and in attitudes towards the social environment (Rieck, 1994; Magids, 1998, Liceto et al, 2011). For example, Paolo Iliceto and colleagues compared the third generation of Holocaust survivors to the control group, which did not have the Holocaust related past. The comparison was being made according to psychological variables that are related to the results of trauma: hopelessness, temperament, personality, attitudes, and interpersonal expectations. The research revealed that the groups did not differ in self-esteem, affective temperament and hopelessness; however, there was a significant difference in irritability, anger and attitudes towards others. Specifically, the third generation had higher index of irritability and anger, as a character trait; the representatives of third generation perceived other people as hostile, negligent, competitive, insecure, submissive and untrustworthy (Iliceto et al, 2011).

Since the 90-ies, the studies on resilience of Holocaust survivors and on transgenerational transmission of trauma started. (I.e., Carmil & Breznitz, 1991; Major, 1996; Sigal, 1998; Valent, 1998; Greene, 2002; Shrira, 2011; Braga et al, 2012, etc.). Carmil and Breznits showed that Holocaust survivors who live in Europe are more optimistic about the future than the Jews who live in Israel and did not have a Holocaust experience (Carmil & Breznitz, 1991). Ellinor Major studied the second

generation of Holocaust survivor Norwegian Jews and revealed that this group is better adapted to the local culture and society than those who did not experience Holocaust (Major, 1996).

John Sigal studied the second and third generations of Holocaust survivors and the community research revealed that their psychosocial functioning was more effective than of the control group. (Sigal, 1998). Amit Shrira and colleagues processed the data from Israeli national survey of middle aged people and they found that the second generation of Holocaust, aged 50 years and older, rated the quality of their welfare higher, were more optimistic and satisfied with life, compared to other population in the same age group. At the same time, they had more physical health related problems, which may indicate somatization of problems (Shrira et al, 2011). Gadi Zerach and Zahava Solomon compared PTSD and anxiety levels in Israeli population representatives, whose fathers were the veterans of 2008 Yom Kippur war. The third generation of Holocaust survivors was in the experimental group, and the control group consisted of people who did not have a Holocaust related past. As the study revealed the representatives of the third generation of Holocaust had lower PTSD and lower anxiety levels, regardless of whether their fathers had been in captivity or not. The authors explain this as the effect of resilience, related to the Holocaust past (Zerach & Solomon, 2015).

Braga and colleagues studied the Holocaust survivors living in Brazil and based on research they conclude that like trauma, resilience is also transferred from generation to generation. As the results showed, the supporting factor of resilience is the open style of communication within the family, also, using humor towards traumatic contents and the practice of presenting them symbolically (i.e. in piece of art) (Braga et al, 2012). Currently the research on mechanisms of resilience is one of the dominant discourses in psycho-traumatology (Maerker & Hecker, 2016).

#### **2.4.2. Research on families of Vietnam War veterans**

Like Holocaust trauma, the transmission of Vietnam War trauma is one of the important research directions of transgenerational transmission of trauma, although it is not as intensively studied as the Holocaust trauma.

In 2008, Rachel Dekel and Dadass Goldblatt conducted the systemic analysis of studies on this issue. The research showed, that like Holocaust, the research results are ambiguous (Dekel & Gldblatt, 2008). For example, a whole range of studies shows that Vietnam veterans' children had higher levels of depression, anxiety and behavior problems compared to the control group (Jordan et al, 1992; Jacobsen et al, 1993; Ahmadzadeh & Malekian, 2004, etc.). It is noteworthy that a part of these studies was the analysis of clinical cases (i.e. Jacobsen et al, 1993). Other studies do not confirm such relation (Souzzia & Motta, 2004; Davidson & Mellor, 2001). In addition, the relation between father's participation in war and the child's self-esteem was not confirmed (Dekel & Goldblatt, 2008).

The research results revealed that in Vietnam War families there was a more dysfunctional atmosphere, than in the control group. This was expressed in father's overly demanding, controlling and over-caring upbringing style (Harkness, 1993). There was a more problematic atmosphere in families where fathers had PTSD that was manifested either through hypervigilance symptoms (and the deriving domestic violence) or through avoidance symptoms (and the deriving estrangement from the child) (Harkness, 1993; Ruscio et al, 2002).

The Eco-social model of resilience (Ungar, 2011) and the Social-interpersonal model (Maerker & Hecker, 2016) of trauma enables us to understand the controversial research results of the Vietnam War trauma studies. The dysfunctional atmosphere in veterans' families, described in research, does not directly determine the psychopathological symptoms in children, because a number of social- cultural factors and their interaction defines the resilience of children.



### **2.4.3. Research on trauma caused by repressive political regimes**

Trauma caused by political regimes is not sufficiently studied on individual, family or societal levels. During literature search, only a few studies could be identified on this issue. One study is about trauma caused by repressions of Pinochet's junta in 1973-1983, in Chile, and its transmission to the children's generation, the second research is about 1974-1983 repressions by the armed dictatorship in Argentina, and the impact of the resulting trauma on the life of Argentine families and society. Only one research could be identified about the trauma caused by Stalin's terror and its transgenerational transmission, and two studies on transgenerational transmission of trauma of Holodomor in Ukraine.

The impact of Soviet repressions and transgenerational transmission in Lithuania is more intensely studied because a research team interested in these issues works at the University of Vilnius; the team is also the core group of Lithuanian Society of Psycho-trauma. The last four publications of Lithuanian colleagues describe the results of these studies. Further, I will discuss the main results of these studies. It is noteworthy that the Latin-American research methodology is mainly based on analysis of clinical cases and psychodynamic analysis of societal processes; the Russian research implies mixed methodology and is based on both quantitative and qualitative data. Out of the Ukrainian studies, one is qualitative, and the second is empirical. Lithuanian studies are empirical and are based on quantitative methodology.

#### **2.4.3.1. Trauma of political regime in Chile and its transgenerational transmission**

David Becker and Margaria Diaz studied the impact of repressions by Pinochet's regime in 1973-90-ies in Chile, on the children of repressed people, based on several clinical cases and analysis of societal processes. Firstly, the authors analyze the trauma caused by the repressive political regime and give it the qualification of "extreme trauma": "extreme traumatization implies for us that the victims have had traumatizing experiences within the context of state terrorism that surpass the

capacities of the psychic structure and therefore cannot be integrated” (Becker & Diaz, 1998, p.438).

In order to describe the stressors in the context of “state terrorism”, the authors use Keilson’s term “sequential traumatization” (Keilson, 92), which means that „a process of cumulative traumatization can turn into chronic trauma whenever the context of the traumatic situation refers to political persecution and repression” (Becker & Diaz, 1998, p.438). In case of Chile, the authors differentiate three “sequences” of traumatization: seizure of power by junta, coup, and immediate antidemocratic change of political reality (1), repressions per se (2), denial/non-acknowledgement of repressions in social political reality after junta, and as a result, marginalization of the repressed, and their families (3). According to authors, the third part of the sequence is the most devastating and obstructs the processing of repression trauma on individual and family levels. When within the social political context, there is no acknowledgement of trauma; if the children of repressed families break the silence about their family trauma, they are under the threat of marginalization. Consequently, “the children of the victims are forced to deny their past in order to appear normal. The historical truth can only appear as individual craziness” (Becker & Diaz, 1998, p.440).

Based on analysis of clinical cases, the authors describe mental health problems of children’s generation in traumatized families, within such social context. Their mental health problems are very similar to the symptoms described in clinical cases of Holocaust studies: difficulties of separation and individualization, and consequently failure to achieve autonomy; depression, anxiety, eating disorders, vulnerability toward development of mental health problems, especially during adolescence (Becker & Diaz, 1998).

Based on their clinical practice (treating the children of repression victims) the authors make a confession that in the context of denial of trauma on social-political

level, clinical approach is not sufficient enough and many cases of treatment are inconclusive: „There can be no doubt that, in many cases, we cannot help” (Becker & Diaz, 1998, p.444).

#### **2.4.3.2. Trauma of political regime in Argentina**

Lucia Edelman, Diana Kordon and Dario Lagos studied the trauma of repressed families and missing persons during 1976-1983 military dictatorship in Argentina. Their methodology is based on clinical cases and psychodynamic analysis of the larger social context (Edelman et al, 1998). During repressions, junta had its own style – people were abducted in masses, everyone including adults, young people, and children. Selling of children or their adoption by childless families of the regime was a common practice. Whereas in case of Chile the parents’ generation was traumatized, in Argentina often the children’s generation was the victims. The social context was characterized by silence (1), the facts were being denied on social-political level (2), there was an ongoing media propaganda (3), which portrayed the repressions as necessary and natural. These three characteristics continued even after the regime changed.

The authors qualify people’s abduction as torture (torture of the abducted, as well as their family members). This qualification is important in order to understand the specifics of transgenerational transmission of trauma. Whereas there is no consensus about transgenerational transmission of Holocaust or a war trauma within the professional community, research on torture victims’ family members found credible evidence that trauma of torture transmits to the second generation in the form of psychopathological problems (in children – depression, PTSD, attention deficit, behavior problems) (Daud et al, 2005). However, in case of Argentina, based on the authors’ analysis it is difficult to discuss who represents what generation in relation to trauma, because all generations were subjected to repressions.

Edelman and colleagues described not only the psychological problems of repression survivors, but also the resilience strategies as well; they separated several psychological problems: difficulties to achieve separation individualization and autonomy, symbiosis with parents, ambivalent style of attachment – as the coping strategy in unfavorable (often over-caring) environment of upbringing. A number of problems were related to the change of family's structure due to repressions. For example, often, young grandmother and grandmother took the role of missing parents. In those families, where the grandparents completely replaced the missing parents (they were not mentioning them, the children called them mother and father) the children had more difficulties to form their identity due to the role diffusion. As for coping strategies, the authors found out that survivors and their children were participating in the various unions and associations uniting people with the similar problems and concluded that this would help them to satisfy their identity needs (Edelman et al, 1998).

#### **2.4.3.3. Research on transgenerational transmission of Stalin's Grand Terror related trauma**

Katharine Baker and Julia Gippenreiter conducted a research in 1993-94 in Moscow, Russia, among the grandchildren's generation of Stalin's' great terror victims. The research was based on Bowen's family system theory and studied the impact of cutoff of family ties on general functioning of second and third generations. The second and third generations' physical and mental health, social achievements, civic activism and other relevant variables were considered as indicators of general functioning. The research was based on ex post facto design, and used in-depth interviewing method; through convenience sampling method 50 grandchildren of the repressed were selected, who were associated with NGO "Memorial" – the human rights organization defending the rights of Stalin's victims.

The research concluded that the higher the cutoff between generations, the lower was the quality of repressed persons' grandchildren's basic functioning (general health, marriage and divorce rate, psychological and physical symptoms etc.). The research did not confirm correlation between cutoff and repression experience, therefore the researchers conclude that cutoff happened not because of repressions, but it was a pre-trauma characteristic of the studied family, and it supported the family to cope with repression situation.

The research results also revealed that study participants' social functioning (financial stability, life standards) was in positive correlation with searching for information about repressed relatives, with positive assessment of repression results (in terms of personal growth and development of family's high moral values) and with active protest against unjust social-political violence. According to the authors' interpretation: „Higher functioning families apparently survived the tragedy of the Purge through finding a positive framework for the experience and transmitting this positive view to their grandchildren. Family emotional resources such as courage, firmness in critical situations, the ability to protest actively against social coercion, and a commitment to high moral values and ideals were passed on to the grandchild generation” (Baker & Gippenreiter, 1998). The authors mention the term resilience, but in fact, they talk about transgenerational transmission of resilience.

#### **2.4.3.4. Transgenerational transmission of Ukraine's Holodomor trauma**

Canadian researchers, Brent Benzo and Stefania Magi studied transgenerational transmission of societal trauma, which was related to mass starvation in Soviet Ukraine in 1932-33, during violent collectivization period (Benzo & Magi, 2015a).

The famine took place in the villages of central and Eastern Ukraine, where the population's grains were confiscated, grain storage rooms had armed protection and the population's freedom of transportation was limited so that they would not

survive by migrating (Conquest, 1986; Marples, 2012). The exact number of victims is unknown, because the regime destroyed the statistics of post Holodomor census, and executed the leaders of the census implementation groups (Subtelny, 2009). According to experts' evaluation, the number of the deceased during Holodomor is 4.5 million (Rudnytskyi et al, 2015).

In 2010, Canadian researchers studied 15 Ukrainian families through qualitative method (in-depth interviewing); the families were represented by three generations, the representative of the first generation of famine survivors, child and grandchild. In all, 45 half-structured interviews were conducted. The research results showed that the life modus ("the survival modus" as the participants called it) developed by the first (survivor) generation during traumatization process, was transmitted to the second and third generations. Based on studying the survival modus, the researchers separated two factors that were transmitted to further generations:

- (1) specific emotional constellation related to survival that includes: "inner states of horror, fear to take action, stress and anxiety, and decreased self-worth" (Benzo & Magi, 2015a, p. 92);
- (2) Coping strategies related to survival that include: "stockpiling of food, extreme reverence for food, overemphasis on food and overeating, inability to discard unwanted and unneeded items, indifference toward others, increased social hostility" (Benzo & Magi, 2015a, p.93).

In the same research, Brent Benzo and Stefania Magi studied the impact of starvation trauma on gender roles and expectations in Ukrainian society. The authors revealed four interconnected factors that affect gender roles and the related expectations in today's Ukraine that originates from Holodomor trauma. These factors are large number of male deaths during Holodomor, which in turn pre-defined the three following factors: decrease of men's role in the society, women taking over the

burden of life management and lack of male role models in the society. According to the authors' interpretation this shows that, Holodomor trauma affected not only individual and family levels, but also the societal level (Benzo & Magi, 2015b).

#### **2.4.3.5. Transgenerational transmission of Soviet annexation and repression in Lithuania**

Lithuania was subjected to Soviet annexation in 1944, together with two Baltic countries and was forced to live under Soviet Union for 50 years. The repressions were especially intense during 1943-53 (until Stalin's death). Thousands were subjected to repressions (the entire population of Lithuania is 3 million), part of the population was executed, and the larger part was forced to exile in Siberia. As for the scale of repression, Evaldas Kazlauskas and Paulina Zelviene conducted the research on Lithuania's representative sample in 2015 and the research showed that more than 55% of respondents had the experience of political violence in their family history (Kazlauskas & Zelviene, 2015). Part of the exiled people survived, but after returning, they had limited basic human rights (freedom of movement) (Kuodytė, 2005). After collapse of the Soviet Union and after gaining independency the Lithuanian government immediately adopted the legislation, which acknowledged the Soviet repression, and the damage inflicted to the repression victims and their families.

The national database of the repressed persons was established and the process of rehabilitation and compensation began. All repressed people were rehabilitated. In parallel KGB archives were opened, lustration committee was established and lustration commenced, participants of repression were revealed and punished, parliament adopted the law on search of parliament members affiliated with KGB, etc. (Ravaitite, 2015).

As research shows, the repression trauma left its huge mark on mental health of the first generation survivors. In 2005 Danuta Gailiene and Evaldas Kzalaukas conducted research covering 1400 Lithuanian survivors of political violence; they

showed that during research process 50% of respondents experienced flashbacks, and 33 % - nightmares (Gailiene & Kazlauskas, 2005).

The research on transgenerational transmission of trauma did not reveal any significant impact of the first generation's trauma on the second generation's mental health (Vaskeliene, 2012). On the contrary, according to research by Evaldas Kazlauskas and Paulina Zelviene, which involved 626 second-generation survivors and the control group, those respondents who had political violence in their family history, had higher indices in terms of psychological well-being. In other words, political violence in the family history turned out to be the factor for higher resilience.

The authors of the study offer several interpretations of this discovery: it is possible that families who had experienced violence, adapted easier to the rapid changes of the 90-ies, whereas the families that were more used to the Soviet regime, experience more discomfort under the new circumstances. The second explanation is that being a victim of political violence was associated with contribution to the fight for the country's independence, and so it was acknowledged by the society and positively reinforced. The third explanation by the authors is that the repressed persons belonged to the more educated (higher education etc.) social stratum and it is possible that higher level of education contributed to resilience (Kazlauskas & Zelviene, 2015).

The newest research conducted by the Lithuanian colleagues contradict the optimistic conclusion of the previous studies (Kazlauskas et al, 2017). The researchers studied exposure to traumatic stressors, PTSD symptoms, and the sense of coherence among the first and second generations of the families repressed during the Communist regime in Lithuania. The study showed that the prevalence of possible PTSD in children's generation was several times higher (29%) than in general population of Lithuania (8%). Also the research revealed significant correlation



between the sense of coherence among the first and second generations, and the negative correlation between sense of coherence and PTSD symptoms. On the one hand, the study confirms the second generation's increased vulnerability towards development of mental health problems; on the other hand, the results emphasize coherence, as one of the mechanisms of transgenerational transmission of resilience.

## ***2.5. Historians' research on Soviet repressions in Georgia***

### **2.5.1. General review on tendencies of repression**

Repressions continuously took place in Georgia since the moment of its forced "Sovietization" in 1921 until the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, in various periods they had different specificity, intensity and brutality. In 1920-ies, as the Russian Bolshevik army entered Georgia, the "Red Terror" started, during which the regime was eradicating its opponents and specific social classes – aristocracy, bourgeoisie, and clergymen. In 1924, the rebellion against annexation was put down followed by repressions and executions of its participants. After re-gaining independence in 90-ies, research was conducted and books were published about these repressions (ენდელაძე, 2004; ჯიქია, 2011), however, in the opinion of the young generation of the Georgian historians the issue still needs to be thoroughly studied (ხვადაგიანი, 2017).

During Stalin's rule, especially in the 1930-ies, the repressions reached the scale of "The Grand Terror". During Grand Terror, it was no longer predictable who would become the next victim. The population could no longer dare to fight the regime, and even the loyalty or being a representative of the regime (a member of the Communist party, employee of so called People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, or even participation in the repressions of others) was no longer the guarantee that a person would survive (ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015/I).

Repressions continued even during The Great Patriotic War (The Second World War) and were largely directed against those who were suspected of collaborationism with the enemy – i.e. the mass resettlement of the so-called “Turkish Meskhetians” in 1944 (ოუზუნე და სხვ., 2015/III). Repressions went on after the war as well, especially towards the soldiers who had been in captivity and returned to Georgia. Repressions continued during Nikita Khrushov’s “Thaw” – against the members of Stalin’s and Beria’s teams, as well as those who were not loyal to the government’s new course of action; for example, in March of 1956, in Tbilisi, armed dispersal of peaceful protest against Khrushchov’s anti-Stalin’s policies resulted in death of 20 people (Хвадагиани, 2016).

During Brezhnev’s “stagnation”, the so-called decedents - people who acted against the regime – were at less extend executed or imprisoned and exiled (however this was still a common practice) and a new practice was introduced – forced placement into psychiatric institutions and “treatment” of dissidents who were considered as “not normal” (van Voren, 2009). While in exile, famous dissidents Vladimir Bukowski and Semion Gluzman even wrote and disseminated the famous guidebook for dissidents on how to survive in the Soviet psychiatric institutions (Буковский и Глузман, 1975). This was a common practice in Georgia as well. One of the widely known cases is the case of Nazi Shamanauri, a dissident journalist. She was very active during 70-80-ies in the Soviet Georgia and fought against the corruption. In response, she was put in a psychiatric hospital, and died there from traumas received due to severe beating (ზავრადაშვილი, 2016).

One of the last large-scale repressions that Georgia experienced during Soviet regime, was on 9th of April in 1989; a peaceful demonstration demanding the independence of the country was dispersed by the Soviet army which used the military paddles and a chemical weapon – gas Iprit, prohibited by the International legislation. As a result, 21 people died and more were poisoned (გოცორიძე, 1990).

### 2.5.2. Conspiracy of Silence

Repressions were the inseparable part of Soviet existence, however since their beginning, a solid tradition of “Conspiracy of Silence” was established in Georgia (just like in the most former socialist countries), which continues even today. This especially concerns the repressions during Stalin’s governance. The dispersal of insurgency in 1924 and April 9 tragedy are related to the fight for independence, therefore they are less suppressed from society’s consciousness. As for the repressions during Stalin’s period, they are in the shadow; as Mark Junge, Oliver Reisner and Bernd Bonvech mention, this “is a uneasy issue” (ოუნბეე და სხვ., 2015/I, p.10).

The generations born in the Soviet period are well aware of Stalin’s repressions; however, young generation has no knowledge about the issue whatsoever. In this regard a case described in Irakli Khvadagiani’s article is noteworthy: in the 2000-s at the national exam of Georgian language the students were given a story for discussion, the story was written by a Georgian writer Revaz Inanishvili, a member of the repressed family. The story is about a father who returned from exile in the 1930-ies, he was very sick and his children took care of him and helped to recover. After some time, the father went out to send a letter and before reaching the mailbox, he fell down and died instantly in the street. In the letter he was found with, he was denouncing his own children, blaming them in having anti-Soviet attitudes and listening to foreign anti-Soviet radio stations. The majority of the students liked the father’s behavior; they perceived it as an example of good citizenship. The historian Khvadagiani concludes that the students’ attitude about the practice of denouncement stems from the fact that they do not know the most recent history of their country and have no knowledge about the issue of the Soviet repressions (Хвадагиани, 2013).

According to historians Davit Jishkariani and Irakli Khvadagiani (ჯიშკარიანი, 2014; ხვადაგიანი, 2017), tabooing the topic of repressions and being passive about studying this issue in Georgia has several reasons. During Soviet times objective

studying of these issue was clearly not possible; after re-gaining independence many archives belonging to Georgian branch of KGB were burnt and a lot of materials were taken out of the country (to Moscow), with this the large amount of information was practically lost forever and could not be used for scientific or legal studying. Today the legislation in force significantly hinders the scientific studying of repressions period: - The Georgian law on “National archive and archival fund” forbids “the third parties” to look through the relevant documents during 75 years since the document was created... (ხვადაგოანი, 2017).

Due to a number of reasons, lustration did not take place in Georgia. Consequently, the employees of the Soviet security services, representatives of the KGB, and the associated “Soviet intelligentsia” (the latter were construing their favorable narrative for their own security about the Soviet period, even before the Soviet Union collapsed) still maintained influence on public discourse after the independence.

As an illustration, Oliver Reisner brings an example of Kandid Charvkiani, one of the key participants of the bloodiest operation by People’s Commissariat of Georgian Internal Affairs, the first secretary of Communist (Bolshevik) party’s central committee in Georgia in the 1930-ies. His memoirs were published in 1985, where Charvkiani described in detail his contribution and achievement in welfare of Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic. In 2013, his ancestor, the former Georgian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Gela Charvkiani issued a book based on the interview with his father and in the introduction, he described him as a “true humanist”. The repressions of the 1930-ies is not mentioned in any of these publications (რეისნერი, 2015; იუნგე და სხვ., 2015ა; ჩარკვიანი, კ., 1985; ჩარკვიანი, გ., 2013).

As a result, the history of Soviet repressions is not studied enough in the country. The scientific studies and relevant publications in the field of history are

scarce. Since the beginning of the 1990-ies, few books were published, including memoirs and relevant information. Since the 2000-s with the support of Heinrich Boell Foundation and DVD International, an NGO *SovLab* was established in Georgia. Together with another NGO, *Institute for Development of Freedom of Information*, it conducts the studies about the Soviet past; in cooperation with other foreign partners, the organization also implements projects aimed at reflection and memorization of the Soviet past. In the 2000-s two collections of the repressed families' narratives were published (ზოლოცაშვილი და სხვ., 2010; მარგველაშვილი და სხვ. 2012). In addition, a Georgian doctor, Avtandil Kurkhuli wrote and published a book about doctors who were repressed in Georgia in 1921-53 (ქურხული, 2004).

### **2.5.3. Algorithm of the Grand Terror in Georgia**

Scientific exploration of the history of Grand Terror in Georgia has been started in the years 2009-2014, within the frame of the Georgian-German research project “Stalin’s mass repressions in Georgia. 1937-38. Caucasian periphery perspectives”. As a result of the research conducted by the participants of the project, a two-volume book was published. In describing the algorithm of repressions below, I rely on this book (ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015ა; ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015ბ).

The research authors describe the “core” of the Grand Terror as the unity of three punitive operations conducted in the Soviet Union: the so-called “Kulak (rich peasant) operation”, “National operation” and “Militia operation”. For each operation, throughout entire Soviet Union, on district, regional and republican levels quasi-judicial punitive bodies were established – the so-called “Troikas” (three persons) – groups consisting of three high ranking officials in three categories (for implementation of Kulak, National and Militia’s punitive operations).

The Kulak troika, usually consisted of the chief of relevant department from the Peoples Commissariat of Georgian Internal Affairs, the first secretary of district,

regional and republican committee of the Soviet Union's Communist (Bolshevik) party, and local prosecutor or head of militia. These Troikas were established in July of 1937 based on operative decree N 000447 of Peoples Commissariat of Georgian Internal Affairs of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR); the Troika examined the cases of "former Kulaks", criminal offenders and other "anti-Soviet elements" (ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015ბ, გვ.31). By "anti-Soviet elements" they meant "the former political opponents of Bolsheviks, i.e. Mensheviks, socialist-revolutionaries, anarchists, etc., also priests, white army officers and soldiers, servants of royal administration" (ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015ბ, გვ.31). According to the authors, this was the largest scale repressive operation conducted in Georgia as well as throughout entire Soviet Union. In Georgia the Troika also dealt with the cases of people enlisted in the so-called "Stalin's list". These cases referred mainly to the party elite, their repression plan was being approved on the level of Stalin and Soviet Union's People's Commissar Molotov, and before being transferred to Georgian Troika, were discussed by the military board of the USSR's Supreme Court.

According to the limited number of documents, available and thus - studied by the authors of the research, the Kulak troikas tried 21,107 persons. The majority of the convicts were men (97%), within the age range from 14 to 96; 51% of them received death sentence; 559 women, aged from 17 to 75 comprised the 3% of all convicts; out of those, 156 women were sentenced to death (30%). According to social position, the large part of convicts (70%) were servants, afterwards peasants (27%), and the smallest part (5%) were workmen. 61% of servants were sentenced to death, 38% of them were Communist (Bolshevik) Party members. According to research authors' conclusion, the goal of the Kulak operation was to discipline the socially active population (young employed people) of the country (ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015გ; ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015დ; ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015ე).

At the initial stage, the so-called “National Dvoika (two persons)” dealt with cases of foreign persons and national minorities residing in Georgia (the republic prosecutor and the chief of Peoples Commissariat of Georgian Internal Affairs). The National Dvoika would send the lists of potential repressed persons and small formal descriptions of their cases together with the verdict, to the Union (central) Dvoika, which comprised of USSR People’s commissar of Internal Affairs and USSR prosecutor, who had to approve the verdict. Later, the Dvoika was transformed into Troika.

*The National Troika* was authorized to execute the sentence without approval from the “center”. According to research authors, the National Troika convicted 494 persons, out of these 25 were women (5%), in the age range of 17-71, and 470 men, in the age range of 20-84, out of these, 115 were sentenced to death; 112 men (24% of men) and 3 women (12% of women). In terms of social status 42% of the convicts were servants, 42% - peasants and 14% - workers (ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015გ; ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015დ; ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015ე).

The so-called Militia Troika started functioning in Georgia since May 1934, for all the 3 South Caucasian republics, and since 1938 – only for Georgia. The members of this Troika were the chief of local militia department, who prepared the cases for investigation, district or regional prosecutor and the chief of Peoples Commissariat of Georgian Internal Affairs. This Troika dealt with the cases of “criminal offenders, declassified elements and gross violators of passport rules”, in other words “socially hostile elements” (ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015ბ, გვ.36). In this case, the main targets of punitive operations were not criminal offenders but the so-called “declassified elements” – marginalized persons/groups: homeless people, prostitutes, juveniles, who were left without parents (due to repressions or other reasons), etc. They comprised 5% of 1,382 repressed persons. The most severe punishment for “declassified elements” was imprisonment for 5 years. Twenty three percent of the repressed were

young people aged from 14 to 19. 11.2 % of convicts were girls and women (ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015გ; ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015დ; ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015ე).

Each troika received instruction from the “center” about the so-called upper “limits” of repressions – about how many persons should be subjected to repressions. As a rule, the republics exceeded the limits and they agreed the increase of limit with the center. According to research, the center did not oppose the increase of limit and approved the new numbers. As the study reveals, the repressions conducted by the Kulak Troika in Georgia increased by 4.2 times, compared to the initial “limit”, this was a little higher than the average union-wide index – 3.5. The limit of those sentenced to death in Georgia increased by 5.3 times compared to the limit set by the center, which is a little less than the average union index – 5.7 (ოუნგე და სხვ., 2015გ).

All the three Troikas did discussion of cases of suspects and their sentencing almost identically: a meeting was held, which was attended by all members of Troikas, the secretary, the so-called speakers, who presented the cases of suspects. At the meeting, the hearings of the cases took place and the sentences were carried out. One hundred twenty two reports of Kulak Troika meetings include the information on cases of more than 21,000 suspects. This means that the fate of 21,000 people was decided only at 122 meetings. The research authors conclude that the case discussions were hasty and formal, and did not follow any minimal legal norms (ოუნგე და სხვ. 2015ზ). The large part of documentation and evidence is lost, however the research team still managed to estimate the number of repressed people and categories of punishment for each punitive operation by Peoples Commissariat of Georgian Internal Affairs.



Table 4: Number of convicts in Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia, during the great terror (ოუბგე და სბგ., 2015გ)

Non judiciary punitive instance	Total	I category (execution)	II category (imprisonment)	%
Kulak troika	21,107	10,563	9,555 (exile or camp) + 989 (mild sentence)	83
National double	1,624	248	1,376 (camp)	6.4
National troika	495	119	296 (camp) + 80 (mild sentence)	1.9
Militia troika	2,204	0	2,036 (camp) + 168 (mild sentence)	8.7
Other	25,430	10,930	13,263 (camp) + 1,237 (mild sentence) =14,500	100

The research authors tried to understand what these numbers meant in percentage for Georgian population at that time. Since the largest part of the repressed persons (76.8%) was in the age range of 20-69, the authors calculated the percentage of the repressed persons in relation to the census of people aged 20-69 at that time in Georgia and the result was 3%, which the authors call “a horrific index” (ოუბგე და სბგ., 2015გ, p.53).

Based on the interviews with the repressed people and collected narratives, the following algorithm of repressions was revealed: it was not necessary for a suspect to have done any anti soviet activity or committed any real crime or expressed any disloyalty towards the regime before the arrest. For example, the arrest of one of the peasants in the village of Khashmi was preceded simply by the fact that his wife sent a written request to the local government asking them to pay her husband the salary that he worked for – to reimburse the 800 working days (ოუბგე და სბგ., 2015გ).

The arrests most often took place at night time, by the representatives of Peoples Commissariat of Georgian Internal Affairs, in Tbilisi – by car, and if at night the car would stop in front of the entrance, this meant that someone from the neighborhood would be arrested. During arrest, the thorough searching of the apartment took place,

in some cases confiscation of belongings or their destruction (i.e. burning) in some cases, confiscation of the apartment building and entire property.

The representatives of Peoples Commissariat of Georgian Internal Affairs (PCGIA) took the families' photos with them, in order to select the further victim from the suspect's surrounding. They would confiscate the food supplies for winter from the suspect's family, i.e. grains. All this was being done in silence, with minimal resistance. There were cases where both husband and wife would be arrested; in such case, children were sent to orphanages or relatives took care of them. The children of the imprisoned people had to bear a stigma of "the child of the people's enemy". Often they were unable to choose the professions they wanted or work where they wanted (ჩოლოყაშვილი, 2010; მარგველაშვილი, 2012; იუნგე და სხვ, 2015/1).

#### **2.5.4. Rehabilitation of victims of Grand Terror in Georgia**

In his article "victims of political repressions in Georgia: the society's attitude and the process of rehabilitation", the historian Irakli Khvadagiani summarizes his research on rehabilitation process of repression victims. The given subchapter is based on that analytical publication (Хвадагиани, 2016).

Regardless of the fact that important archival materials were lost and the researchers have no access to the materials that are protected by the Georgian law on "National archive and archival fund" through case analysis, the author still manages to differentiate certain regularities:

**30-40-ies.** In these years, the defendants formally had the right to appeal to the prosecutor's office to protest the deficiencies in case investigations by Peoples Commissariat of Georgian Internal Affairs and accordingly to change their conviction. In reality, very few people used this right – only 1,000 persons from 1932 until 1951 – and in the majority of these cases, the prosecutor's office did not find any violations. As for those who were lucky and the prosecutor's office confirmed violations, the best

results they got was termination of the case, their return to their workplace and reinstatement to the Communist (Bolshevik) party; there was no conversation about compensations. There were single cases when the acquitted person received the property back, but based on analysis of oral stories, Khvadagiani explains that this might happen because certain families were close to the representatives of the government and received patronage from them, and thinks that this is rather an exception, than tendency (Хвадагиани, 2016).

**Post-Stalin period.** In this period, Khrushov explained the Grand Terror by Stalin's cult of personality and criminal acts of Beria's group; this was followed by the union-wide amnesty. It was during amnesty that the majority of the families of the repressed people learnt that their family member was executed during detention, in Tbilisi, and not later, in the exile, as it was indicated in the official notes issued by the government (Хвадагиани, 2016, p. 176).

In 1955, in Tbilisi the half-open court proceeding took place against the members of Beria's group. For the first time, the government talked about the scale and cruelty of repressions. According to Khvadagiani, although at this court hearing the "mass-scale crime was presented as the issue of responsibility of specific individuals (Beria and his group members) and not the entire system, this proceeding was still a clear sign and indication for repressed victims that fight for rehabilitation was possible." (Хвадагиани, 2016, p.160). However, the hope for restoration of rights faded away shortly – after the bloody dispersal of 1956 March demonstration.

Within the frames of union-wide amnesty, in 1954-57, rehabilitation was modest. Khvadagiani assesses the rehabilitation practice in that period and differentiates three aspects:

1) rehabilitation did not encompass all repressed people: since Khrushov's politics held specific people responsible – Stalin, Beria and their group members – for repressions, and not the state, those who had been accused of crimes in the early 20-

30-ies, were less subjected to amnesty; although these people were the majority of the repressed;

2) Some cases, especially those from the early 20-ies and 30-ies were superficially reviewed;

3) It was almost impossible to get material compensation for a number of reasons: the official documentation on confiscation of property was lost, the new owners viewed the expropriated property as legally received, and they did not agree to return it back to the previous owners. In case of financial compensations, the amount of money was symbolic, as inflation was not taken into account.

Thus, the attempts of rehabilitation during Soviet period were scarce and mostly ended without any results and in best-case scenario were symbolic. According to Khvadagiani, during Soviet Union, the biggest amnesty of the repressed persons took place in 1989, based on the decree of presidium of the Supreme Soviet of USSR. In a result, the collapsing state acknowledged rehabilitation of 18,000 people.

**Rehabilitation after re-gaining independence.** In analyzing the post-Soviet period, Khvadagiani separates two topics: acknowledgement of repressions on societal level and societal attitudes toward them (1), the government's response on the level of legislation and law enforcement (2).

*Legislative processes of rehabilitation in independent Georgia:*

In 1997, the parliament of Georgia adopted the law "On acknowledgement of Georgian citizens as victims of political repression and on social protection of repressed persons", which "clearly defined the criteria for acknowledging the victims of political repressions, the authorized body determining the status – territorial bodies of the court and the package of social benefits accompanying the status" (Хвадагиани, 2016);

In case if the repressed person was deceased (and this was the majority of cases), that person's first heir was entitled to obtain the status and relevant social benefits on

behalf of the deceased. According to Khvadagiani, based on adoption of this law, the majority of repressed people obtained the status of the repressed.

For a long time, the law did not define the principles of repatriation of victims, resettled according to nationality, nor did it have the mechanisms for reimbursement of material loss.

The law on repatriation was adopted in 2007, however due to a number of deficiencies in enforcement mechanism, the small part of the deported people used this possibility of rehabilitation offered by the law – 5,841 persons (according to estimates, out of 80,000);

The government defined the rule of financial compensation only in 2011 - in response to the European court's demand, as an amendment to the 1997 law. In 2011-2012, this caused certain activity in the families of the repressed in order to get financial reimbursement.

However, the issue of material reimbursement, like in Soviet times, encountered practically insurmountable challenges: improper information provided to the citizens, bureaucratic difficulties to obtain archival documentation, superficial review of cases, complicated procedures of legal request for financial reimbursement etc.

If the family of the repressed person would still manage to overcome all the obstacles, in case of exile of the person the family received Gel 400, and in case of execution – Gel 800. Clearly, this money could not compensate for the time, energy and costs the family spent to receive financial reimbursement, so activities of the repressed families focused at receiving of financial compensation soon faded out.

In 2013, in order to rectify the procedures of material compensation and to refine the law adopted in 1997, the Georgian Young Lawyers' Association took the package of legislative changes to the parliament for consideration; however, the parliament did not accept it.

One of the last legislative initiatives that was adopted by the parliament and partly referred to copying with the results of the Soviet repressions, was the law “Chertier of freedom” adopted in 2011. The law envisaged “limiting the possibilities for secret employees of former Soviet security departments and ex-officials of the Communist party to be appointed on decision making positions”, as well as extermination of fascist (Soviet) ideological propaganda and symbols (Хвадагиани, 2016, p.189). According to the author, since adoption of the law, there have been no steps taken to enforce it on governmental level.

*Acknowledgement of repression by the society and attitudes toward them*

In the late 80-ies, the topic of repressions was in the center of the society’s attention, as one of the motivators of fight for independence.

Shortly after re-gaining independence, a couple of organizations of relatives of the repressed persons and civil activists were established, which tried to gather information and support rehabilitation. However, in the context of economic, political and social crisis their activities ceased.

Since the beginning of the 90-ies, several possible burial grounds of the executed persons were identified, but until now, they have not been opened and studied.

There was some public discussion about building the memorials of the repressed; however, apart from few exceptions (i.e. memorial of repressed artists on Mtatsminda), nothing was done.

Apart from statues, no pieces of art have been created (movies, literary stories) – memorization of victims has not been implemented in cultural field.

Apart from one exception – Avtandil Kurkhuli’s book “So that we remember” which is dedicated to the medical doctors repressed in 1921-53 - no memorial books have been published.

Neither academic community pays enough attention to this topic. Out of all the universities in Georgia, only Ilia State University has the Master's program in Soviet research.

There is huge barriers for the scientists preventing them to work properly with the historical materials from National archive, due to the legislative barriers described above. Out of the existing archives, only the archive of Ministry of Internal Affairs publishes periodicals where it publishes some of the archival documents.

Since 2003, during governance of the United National Movement, there was a new wave of attempt of memorization. Specifically, a Museum of Soviet Occupation was created, where a specific narrative of the repression history is presented, mainly with the focus on Russian occupation; some of the streets were given the names of repressed public figures. All this was done without discussing the issue at public, therefore it remained beyond the public's attention, interest and created no feeling of ownership.

Since 2010, with the support of Heinrich Boell Foundation, a local NGO SovLab (Soviet Laboratory) was established; together with NGO *Institute for development of freedom of information*, SovLab implemented a number of research and practical projects aimed at the so-called "de-Stalinization", these projects were accompanied by relevant publications and two documentaries. Among them are: "Topography of red terror – Soviet Tbilisi", "Understanding the Soviet past – a collection of discussions", "Lost history – memory about repressed women," etc. However, again, the society views this as a single NGO's project and its achievements have not become the subject of public discussion.

With the support of Heinrich Boell Foundation and Carnegie Endowment, a public opinion survey was conducted which revealed the attitudes of the society towards Stalin. Twenty nine percent of Georgian national representative sample answered positively to the following question: "In your opinion, during Stalin's

governance, is the sacrifice of people (repressions) justified by the achieved results of the country in short period of time?” (დე ვალო, 2013).

Khvadagiani also notes that the Georgian society’s dominant attitude towards compensation of damage of the repressed is “why should we reimburse from our budget someone else’s (the Soviet regime) crime?” The author argues that this indicates, how confused and inconsistent is knowledge of Georgian citizens on the legal and moral heritage of the Soviet period (Хвадагиани, 2016, p.191).

Finally, the author concludes that there is low interest towards the repressed persons not only on the part of the society, but also on the part of their relatives as well. According to Khvadagiani, “The archives are formally open (part of the cases of repression victims is in the archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and is accessible for researchers as well as the descendants of the repressed). However, the large part of the descendants, as well as the majority of those interested in these issues, never tried to study these documents in-depth and were satisfied by just receiving the archival documents for obtaining the status of the repressed. Moreover, in our practice there have been cases when the descendants of the repressed learnt that their ancestors were executed in Tbilisi and not in exile, only in 2011” (Хвадагиани, 2016, p.180).



### 3. Methodology

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#### 3.1. *Study Design, Assumptions, Methods and Relevance*

Since the aim of the research is to *understand* impact of the totalitarian repressions on individual, family and societal level, the research uses the qualitative approach and includes two main components: 1) in-depth interviews with the second and third generation representatives of the repressed families and 2) case analysis – particular cases from Georgia’s modern socio-political life where studies based on Volkan’s Psychopolitical Analysis paradigm (Volkan, 1997, 2002, 2006a, 2006b, 2009, 2012, etc.), Bion’s and Hopper’s Theory of Basic Assumptions (Bion, 1961; Hopper, 2003), implying Critical Discourse Analysis method (Fairclough, 2003; Potter & Wetherell, 1995; Van Dijk, 1995).

Both the first and the second components of the qualitative research are based on the post-positivist paradigm, and therefore imply the following paradigmatic assumptions (Davidsen, 2013; Groenewald, 2004; Merriam, 1997; Smith et al, 2001):

- The phenomenological approach, which uses both the description and the interpretation of the phenomenon (Davidsen, 2013);
- The focus of the research seeks to understand the individual and social phenomenon of the subject matter instead of counting on the statistics and/or variables;
- To acknowledge the uniqueness of the human being and the meaning which she/he puts into her/his experience;
- To acknowledge that the role of language and discourse is central to understand the phenomenon;
- To acknowledge that the reality is subjective and diverse;
- To acknowledge that the reality is constructed by the subject (in our case the research subjects) and the social environment he/she is surrounded by (Merriam, 1997);

- To acknowledge that the research, as long as the life itself, is an interactive, dynamic process (in our case involving the researcher, the research subjects, their social world and the phenomenon in question).

The basic assumption of the first component of the study was that despite the tradition of ‘conspiracy of silence’ on the totalitarian repressions within Georgian society, people (interviewees, study subjects) would open up for the research and would be eloquent in narration. To eliminate the risk related to this assumption, we conducted three pilot interviews - two with the second generation of the repressed family members, and the third interview with the third generation of the repressed family member. The respondents proved their willingness to participate in the research. For the three of them this was the first time they were interviewed about their families’ experience. The second generation family members used the same words for why did not they talk about it before: ‘*We do not talk about it at all*’. To the question who did they mean in ‘*us*’ they said they meant their generation. They had a feeling that they talked about the repression on the behalf of the whole generation. The third-generation representative said that the interview gave her/him the possibility to reflect and ‘take another look’ at the family experience. The pilot interviews revealed the subjects’ eagerness to share the repression experience and the strong will to reflect on its influence on them.

As a conclusion we would like to reiterate that in-depth interviews and case analysis methods are relevant for the research aims; they give the possibility to formulate evidence-based answers to the questions posed.

## ***3.2. The Research Procedure***

### **3.2.1. The First Component. In-depth interviews with the second and third generations of the repressed families**

#### *Ethical Procedures*

After formulating the research idea and design, the project was introduced to the Ethics Commission of the Georgian Society of Psycho-Trauma; considering its recommendations, the research received the final confirmation. The ethical procedures of the research included informed consent, the termination of the research at any stage (if necessary), the obligation to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the data, and the safe storage of the information obtained from the research subjects.

#### *The Sampling Procedure*

28 in-depth interviews were conducted in total (these include the three pilot interviews): 13 interviews with the second generation of the repressed family members and 15 interviews with the third generation. We defined the second generation as the children of the repressed people (who have witnessed the repression and therefore are traumatized themselves); we defined the third generation as the grandchildren of the repressed people. They have not seen the repression themselves but were raised in repressed families.

Among 28 research subjects some belonged to the same families:

1) a mother and a father (both of the second generation of the repressed family) and their two daughters,

2) a father (the second generation) and his three children (one daughter and two sons, the third generation);

3) a mother (the second generation) and her two children (a daughter and a son, the third generation);

- 4) a father (the second generation) and a daughter (the third generation),
- 5) a father (the second generation) and his son (the third generation) 6) a brother and a sister (the third generation).

So, the 17 subjects were united in 6 different families and the rest 11 subjects represented other families (see the appendix no.1; the numbers in the brackets represent the conditional names of the subjects). This type of selection gave us the possibility to study the totalitarian repression influence both on individual and family level.

The recruitment of the research subjects was based on the non-randomized sampling method. The following inclusion criteria were implied:

- respondent's father and/or mother (in case of the second generation) or, respondents grandfather and/or grandmother (in case of the third generation) was/were imposed to imprisonment and/or forced resettlement and/or execution during Stalin's 'Great Purge' period (1);
- easy accessibility - all the respondents interviewed lived in Tbilisi during the research period (though we also tried to get those subjects whose families lived not only in Tbilisi but also in the regions of Georgia during the repressions period (2);
- willingness to take part in the research (3).

Exclusion criterion was cognitive impairment.

The recruitment strategy was as follows: as soon as we set up the research design, we distributed the information among our colleagues, friends and acquaintances, that we were looking for repressed family members; they recommended people to us and in case of their consent, gave us their contacts; we called and agreed on the first meeting, told them the details about the research and began all the procedures to get their informed consent. When interviewing the second generation, we asked them whether their family members (the third generation) would be willing to talk to us.

Not a single person refused to be interviewed; on the contrary, there were far more people willing to talk than we could afford to put into our research (especially the second generation expressed their strong will to share their experiences); we did reach the data saturation during the tenth interview with the second generation and during the 11th interview with the third generation, thus we finished the data collection in December 2014.

### *The Data Collection*

The in-depth interviews were conducted between Spring of 2011 and end of 2014. The interviews were conducted tet-a-tet with research subjects (see the interview guide in the appendix). The interviews were audio-recorded. Of 28 interviews, 10 were conducted by Ana Meunargia, then a Mental Health MA program final semester student (who was doing Master's dissertation under my supervision). I conducted the other 18 interviews. From one to three meetings were implemented with each respondent for conduction of in-depth interviews, and at least one joint (family) sessions were conducted with the representatives of the six families involved. The interviews and joint sessions were conducted in the respondents' houses, in comfortable and safe environment. We looked at their family photos as well. It was important for us to build trust with the respondents, so that they could freely reflect on their past, express their thoughts and feelings. We followed the tempo of the subjects and every round of the interview ended on a positive note. We also took into consideration the old age and related to that health condition of the second-generation respondents and tried not to tire them during the interviewing. None of the individual or family interviews lasted more than two hours at one sitting.

### *The Research Instrument*

The In-depth Interview Guide was elaborated for the study and, improved during the round of the pilot interviews (see in appendix 3 and 4), which includes the following components: demographical data (current age, the age at the moment of the repression, education, profession, marital status, etc.), information about the repressed families (upbringing strategies, family rules, traditions, rituals, atmosphere before and after repression, etc.), information about the repression (family narratives, cause apprehension, emotional, cognitive and behavioural responses, as well as physical and mental health conditions developed in response to repression), information about the respondents' social relationships before and after the repression (at friendship and kinship level, in schools and universities, and at work), information about the resilience strategies, including meaning making of the traumatic experience related to the repression. Here we examined two factors: 1) respondents explanation of repressions - in other words, the respondents' implicit and explicit theories about repression); 2) respondents ability to see any positive outcome from the experience of repression (in terms of personal growth or rethinking the values). Finally, we were studying respondents' satisfaction with the process of rehabilitation conducted by the State and country society in response to the Stalin's period's repressions.

### *The Data Analysis*

The research analysis is based on the Grounded Theory approach (Glaser & Stauss, 1967; Charmaz, 1995). The in-depth interview guide was elaborated before the pilot interviews, while coding categories were identified in parallel to the pilot interviews. Each interview was analyzed immediately after its completion and results of the analyses were used to improve/clarify both interview guide and coding categories (for the interview guide see Appendix no.3 and Appendix no.4). The process of analyses was accompanying the interviewing process in the whole course of the research. The

interview data were transcribed verbatim. To maintain confidentiality, subjects were given unique numbers instead of names.

We coded the interview data via three-stage procedure: starting with open-coding the interview texts, followed with line-to-line coding to decrease subjectivity as much as possible. After reviewing all the transcripts once more, main codes and sub-codes were identified, connected with the contextual factors and considered altogether to track possible inter-linkages. For the data proceeding we used NVIVO software for qualitative analyses, version 11.

Ana Meunargia, an MA student, and I coded the 10 interviews conducted by her separately and then compared them in order to make achieve consensus on coding. The rest of the 18 interviews conducted by me were reviewed by the London-based psychologist of Georgian origin Ellen Klemara and Nana Aghapishvili, a clinical psychologist based in Georgia. Both read all the transcripts and reviewed the codes separately to insure the objectivity of the analysis. Afterwards, we discussed the codes on which we had different views and final decisions were made based on consensus.

### **3.2.2. The Second Component. Psychopolitical Analyses of Georgia, as post totalitarian country**

#### *Research procedure and data collection*

In the second component of the study, the analyses is based on the 7 small scale (case analyses) research projects, conducted within the frame of the course ‘Societal Trauma: Phenomenology and Overcoming’ which I lead at Ilia State University, Mental Health MA program. Each case study was implemented by the small groups of the students (3-4 persons), under my supervision, within the period from 2013 to 2017. The list of the cases studied is given below:

- A system of stressors during the totalitarian period, related societal trauma and strategies of mourning in Georgia;

- Pre-election struggle and elections in Georgia (were studied presidential elections of 1991, 1995, 2004, 2008 and 2013, and parliamentary elections of 2003 and 2012);
- Baptising of each thir and forth child of the orthodox Christian families by the Patriarch of Georgia (sterted in 2007);
- Case of marriage of the Georgian ex-royal family representatives catalyzed by the Patriarch of Georgia (2009);
- Parliamentary hearing and adoption of the anti-discrimination law in Georgia (2013);
- Violent attack of the LGBT peaceful demonstration by the Orthodox Christian congregation on May 17, 2013;
- Mass piligrimage to the grave of the Holly Fool Father Gabriel (2014);

In the course of each case study the research teams were collecting information around each case (media publications, TV and radio coverages, audio-visual materials, Patriarch's epistles, and other relevant information). Based on that, Critical Discourse Analyses was conducted (Fairclough, 2003; Potter & Wetherell, 1995; Van Dijk, 1995). The results of the discourse analyses were considered via prism of Vamik Volkan's Theory on Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma and Wilfred Bion's and Earl Hoppers' Theory on Basic Assumptions of the Traumatized Groups.

### *Data Analyses*

The data analyses implied three-steps process: the research teams were conducting discourse analyses of the materials collected around each case, based on the Critical Discourse Analyses method (Fairclough, 2003; Potter & Wetherell, 1995; Van Dijk, 1995). The revealed discourses were presented by each research team and discussed within the classroom, and when the consensus on the key discourses achieved, they were considered in the light of the Vamik Volkan's works on Intergenerational



Transmission of Trauma, and Earl Hoppers Theory on Basic Assumptions of the Traumatized Groups (based on the Bion's theory of Basic Assumptions and Melanie Klein's works on Object Relationships) (Volkan, 1997, Volkan, 2002, Volkan, 2004, Volkan, 2006a, Volkan, 2006b; Bion, 1961; Hopper, 2003). In our analyses, we were paying particular attention to the accessibility of power, power distribution and powerstruggle between key stakeholders engaged in each case.

## 4. Study Findings

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### *4.1. Introduction*

The following chapter delivers the research findings by shedding light on the impact of the totalitarian (Soviet) repression related traumas on the individual, family and societal levels. The influence of the repression on the individual and family levels is shown via presenting results of the in-depth interviews with the representatives of the second and third generation of the repressed, while the influence on a societal level is shown via case analyses. As for the in-depth interviews results, they are structured by generations and the main codes and sub-codes identified.

### *4.2. Description of the Sample*

Thirteen respondents were from the second generation of the repressed families, and 15 - from the third generation. From 13 people of the second generation there were 7 women and 6 men; from 15 people of the third generation, 7 were women and 8 men. The mean age of the second generation was 81 (SD 3.08), the mean age of the third generation - 52 (SD 4.87). All the research subjects had high education. The second generation subjects' professions were: 3 doctors, 3 chemists, 2 engineers, 2 philologists, one economist, one agronomist and one biologist. At the research moment, none of them worked; all were on pension. The third generation subjects were represented by 4 doctors, 2 biologists, 2 economists, 2 architects, 2 engineers, 2 philologists and one lawyer.

From the second generation, all 13 subjects had their fathers repressed by the regime. One of the subjects had other repressed family members as well (a grandfather and an aunt). Of the repressed fathers, three were having high positions in the Soviet hierarchy (out of those three, one was a head of so called "Military Tribunal" – the main institutional tool of the Great Purge period repressions), 3 were

peasants, 2 were scientists, 2 were engineers, one was a doctor, one was a worker and one an actor. Before the repression, 3 families lived in different villages, two of them in the regional centers, 8 of them in Tbilisi. The formal reasons of the peasant repression was “Dekulakization” (blamed to be reach); those living in cities shared the same formal accusations: “Trotskyist”, “Wrecking”, “The Peoples Enemy”. Only one of them returned home, the rest of the 12 people died far from their families. Out of these 13 cases, 3 families were immediately notified of their family member death (one of the families even got a shirt with blood spots which the deceased person wore during the shooting); 4 families had thought their fathers were alive but during the Khrushchov ‘rehabilitation’ period they found out that their family members were shot right after their arrest. One family was advised not to send a parcel as their family member was already dead. The rest of the fathers died in resettlement, but the families learnt about that in 1950-ies.

The six (out of 15) respondents from the third generation, who did not have any kinship with the second generation respondents, had the following repression related family background:

Four respondents had more than one family members repressed:

- Two respondents (who were a sister and a brother), had a repressed grandfather from mother’s side and, at the same time, their grandmother was in forced resettlement for ten years. The mother of these two respondents was 4 years old when her parents were repressed, had 11 years old sister and the siblings were separated and raised in different families of relatives;
- In one case, a grandfather and an uncle from mother’s side were both repressed;
- in another case a grandfather and his two brothers were all repressed;

Out of the repressed grandparents of these six respondents, only one survived and returned from the resettlement. The repressed people’s professions were as follows: 4

teachers, 3 peasants, 2 scientists and one engineer. During the repression, 3 of their grandparents families lived in the regions of Georgia (two of them in the regional centres and one in the village), two families lived in Tbilisi. For illustration, please see the appendix.

We do not describe repressions related background of other nine respondents from the third generation, as they were family members of the second generation's respondents and thus, their grandparents' repressions data was already described at the beginning of this subchapter.

Description of the study sample is summarized in the table given in the Appendix no.2.

### ***4.3. Study Findings on the Second Generation***

The following codes were identified from the interviews with the second generation respondents:

- The family atmosphere connected to the repression trauma (sub-codes: idealizing the pre-repression family atmosphere, idealizing the repressed father, doubting father's innocence, fear, viewing non-repressed family member as helpless, upbringing style, paradoxical attitude towards Stalin's death),
- Symptoms related to trauma (sub-codes: hyperarousal, avoidance, traumatic identity),
- The perception of the social attitudes (sub-codes: hostile and stigmatizing, friendly and supportive, fearful and avoidant),
- The resilience strategies (sub-codes: integration into the totalitarian system, studying well, choice of profession, marriage/choice of partner, hidden demarcation from the totalitarian system, perceived social support, migration

from the village to the capital, assigning meaning to the repression, seeking rehabilitation and justice).

Below are given the research findings according to the identified codes.

#### **4.3.1. Family Atmosphere Connected to Family Trauma**

**Idealizing the pre-repression family atmosphere.** All the respondents describe the family atmosphere as perfect before the repression:

*“I was extremely happy before the repression ... mother, father ... we had an ideal family, musical, educated...” (Resp.13. 85, female);*

*“Before the repression? ... you have probably seen the film “Paradise Lost” ... it was like this and here I mean not the content of the film but its very title - I was in paradise; as soon as my father was captured, everything changed.” (Resp.1. 85, female).*

**Idealization of the repressed father.** The subjects idealize the father’s image as well:

*“My father was an exceptional kind of a personality; everyone knew him, he was everyone’s patron, everyone appreciated him (Resp.3. 78, female);*

*“He was a very good father, my sister has extremely sweet memories of him ... all this career . . . he made it all himself ... Russian language was (the main pillar of communication) then; you will see his letters, how perfect his Russian is ... sorry – used to be (Resp.11. 77, female);*

*“My father was a man with dignity, hard working, a good man. He had many talents ... the salt of the Earth, I would say it shortly - this type of a man” (Resp.8. 84, male).*

**Doubt about Father’s Innocence.** Along with idealizing their fathers, none of the subjects believed in their father’s innocence before the rehabilitation:

*“The Subject: - my mother always used to say that he did not deserve to be captured, that he was innocent and it was a huge unfairness. The Interviewer: - What do you think of all these?” The Subject: - I do not know ... what could I think ... At school I was pointed at as a child of the people's enemy ... I was a child and therefore I had my doubts. After the rehabilitation we were given a document saying my father was innocent and they had made a mistake ... It was such a shock for me then ... I was so deeply hurt, as if my father had been killed the second time. My anger grew about myself and my inner doubts, too.” (Resp.2. 83, female).*

**Fear.** When describing the family atmosphere, the subjects pointed out the fear atmosphere that constantly prevailed in the family.

*“The fear factor was terrible (of the mother, D.J.) She had a feeling that even the walls had ears ... “ (Resp.11. 77, female);*

*“We grew up in fear ... my mother always had a little case with underwear ready in case anything unexpected happened. As little kids, we knew it and feared everything: we were afraid that we would lose our mother; I remember all this bitterness from childhood.” (Resp.3. 78, female).*

**Perception of a mother as helpless.** The repression survivor mothers were perceived as weak, fragile figures by the second generation:

*“We were afraid of everything; she ingrained fear inside us, she always strained us with caution - ‘do not do this, do not do that, do not say this, do not say that, do not go there, ... Fear penetrated under our skin ... Fear was terrible ...” (Resp.1. 85, female).*

The research subjects recalled mothers' psychosomatic symptoms (headaches), somatic (heart diseases, cancer) symptoms and mental health symptoms (depression, anxiety) as illustration of her helplessness:

*“My mother was a very fearful person and subsequently got ill ... she had her first heart attack when I was at eighth grade ... I was at the tenth grade when she got the second heart attack; imagine my agony when all the children were playing outside and I was sitting at home; she nearly died in my arms twice; it was a very bitter childhood. “ (Resp.11. 77, female).*

Among mothers’ mental health problems (anxiety, depression), the subjects describe the hyperarousal which is a clear sign of trauma; it was connected to the fact that repressed family members were taken from home by the regime representatives during night hours:

*“My mother was 80 years ol, when she died; she never went to bed until 4 A.M.; she was used to it. This behavior would stem from the fact that the police would come take people before 4; she was expecting that she would also be taken, following her husband. She became a bed-sick patient until she died, when she was 80, but still did not sleep until 4am” (Resp.10. 83, female)*

**Up-bringing Style.** We distinguished three types of up-bringing from the interviews:

Mother as a strong authoritarian leader and perceiving her as powerful. The respondents recall that the mother was a leader at home and they as children would surrender to her will:

*“Of course, (the mother) was making decisions in my childhood and even afterwards ... at least, she tried to. I had an Armenian neighbor boy – we lived in communal living; so, he used to tell me: ‘you rest, your mother will think for you.’ of course, he was joking. “ (Resp.1. 85, female);*

*“My mother became the patriarch within the family and relatives’ realm; everyone would come and ask for advice from her, including us and our relatives*

*afterwards (after Stalin's death, D.J.) ... My cousin wanted to get married and before doing so showed the woman to my mother ..."* (Resp.8. 84, male).

A mother's leadership and total obedience to her was a common practice even for those who described their mothers as helpless:

*"She (mother, D.J.) was deciding everything. She was a family head, combining both father's and mother's role. There was no other way out of this..."* (Resp.11. 77, female).

*"My Mother would make all the decisions... I was very submissive, polite, never caused any problems for her"* (Resp.10. 83, female)

The research subjects would also underline the mothers' ability to be hard-working and resilient (which is also in conflict with the perception of her as helpless):

*"She was working from morning until night - she was good at sewing and all the neighbors would ask her to sew for them; she would start the family chores a little later, at 2-3 pm".* (Resp.1. 85);

*"My mother was working 12 hours to make ends meet."* (Resp.9. 77, male).

Hyper protection. As long as mothers were the main decision-makers in the families, they would direct the respondents what to do, limit their freedom and set the rules:

*"Mother set all the rules. We were young boys and we indeed needed control, but sometimes it was too much... we were submissive to her - we wanted to respect her will, we also did not want her to worry."* (Resp.8. 84, male).

Research subjects believed they obeyed mother because they did not want to cause extra trouble:

*"My classmates were out, and I was sitting at home; my mother would not allow me out, she was constantly worried. In the end, I even stopped telling her I wanted to go out. I knew the answer would be no and I did not want to worry her"*



*every time. That's why maybe I got married early: I got exhausted with limitations, I wanted to have my life." (Resp.2. 80, female);*

*The second generations' Parentization.* Having experienced hyper protection, the research subjects had to take the responsibility for their sick parents:

*"My poor mother ... I do not remember her being in good health. I was only in fifth grade when I was already giving injections to her; she needed a heart medicine every day." (Resp.11. 77, female).*

*"From fourteen years of age, I was working at different jobs and was studying at the same time. We did not have family support - a father in family; I tried to fill his role. I felt an extreme responsibility towards my mother." (Resp.4. 84, male);*

*"We worried about mother all the time; we were extremely lovable and caring children. And our mother for us was The Mother ... (Resp.13. 85, female).*

**Paradoxical Reaction to Stalin's Death.** All the research subjects distinguished Stalin's death as an important event for their family life. Their own reaction was a mystery for them and left ambivalent feelings for the rest of their lives. On the one hand, they had felt a kind of a relief after Stalin's death; on the other hand, there were signs of mourning of the dictator's death as well. Some of them explained this by the fact that Stalin's figure deeply intruded in their lives:

*"When Stalin died, my classmate and I cried; her parent was in resettlement and both of us cried along with others. Then she looked at me and said: "Why are we crying?" We burst into laughter, we cried and laughed and were afraid to be noticed. My mother cried too... Interviewer: - why were you crying? Respondent: - I do not know, I cannot tell why it was. Every morning started and ended with Stalin; every song or dance was dedicated to him. It was a terrible experience! - Interviewer: Frankly speaking, did you feel sorry over his death? Respondent: Not really. When I*

*thought about it deeply, I could not help mocking myself. But my tears were genuine then.” (Resp.11. 77, female)*

#### **4.3.2. Symptoms Related to Trauma**

**Hyperarousal.** Some of the second generation subjects described their fear and hyperarousal that he/she were feeling not only during the repression but also for the rest of their lives:

*“Even today, if a car stops in front of my window, I wake up, and fall into a panic!” (Resp.1. 85, female).*

Some of the research subjects describe insomnia as a family behavior pattern acquired after the repression:

*“We practically do everything at night - we have dinner at 10-11, do family chores and only after 3 am start going to bed, sometimes even later.” (Resp.2. 80, female).*

**Avoidance.** *The research subjects describe the specific forms of avoidance during the repression, connected to stigma and self-stigmatization:*

*“I had an English teacher [at school, D.J.], who knew my father; she was my patron especially when she found out that I was his daughter. She was taking care of me but trying to do it in a way not to be noticeable to others... I was feeling that and never approached her on purpose, did not want to bother her ... I was feeling that I had to abstain from communicating with some people.” (Resp.13. 85, female)*

*“Sometime, when I would go with my mother in the street, at some point she would ask me to go the other way, to cross the street not to encounter the man, not to put him in an embarrassing situation. “ (Resp.10. 83, female)*

After the repression period was over, the respondents were still trying to avoid being in the focus of attention:

*“I was not very active, did not try to achieve anything or try to attract attention by presenting myself. On the contrary: I did not like to be noticed, and I raised my children this way.” (Resp.1. 85, female).*

The tendency to remain ‘invisible’ could be explained by high anxiety level of the respondents’ mothers who were considering visibility as risk factor for repression:

*“My mother was always afraid of my older sister, because she was very eloquent ... she had excellent speaking skills ... she was also very educated, very distinguished and my mother was always afraid she would be noticed and arrested.” (Resp.13. 85, female).*

**Traumatic Responses on the Identity Level.** We found three main types of reactions from what the subjects shared narcissistic (1), feelings of guilt and shame (2), and the “black-and-white” strategy to seek identity (3).

*The Narcissistic Reactions on the Level of Identity.* In this case, the respondents talk about the sense of pride of being distinguished (and due to this distinguishes – repressed):

*“In my youth I of course had the sense of pride - ‘they’ picked the best people, that’s why they took my father; and others who were educated, had sharp points of view publicly, and loved their land. These were honest people. My family and I were among those ... I did not share my feeling of pride with others but I was feeling it within myself!” (Resp.5. 84, male).*

*Self-Stigma and the Feeling of Guilt.* Some of the respondents expressed the presence of self-stigma and the feeling of guilt fueled by surrounding people’s attitudes towards the repressed family members:

Respondent: - *“I was traumatized all my life long as if I had done something bad.”* Interviewer: - *“Was it something like a sense of guilt?”* Respondent: - *“Yes, it was! Everyone was looking at me as if I had done something bad... but it started to fade out with age” (Resp.11. 77, female).*

*'The Black-and-White' Strategy of Seeking Identity.* Some of the respondents talked about self-determination experiences motivated by 'The Enemy of People' stigma and at phenomenological level expressing itself via questioning own self, to whom does she/he belong - to "the good" or "the bad":

*"When my aunt came (from exile, D.J.), I had to think whom I belonged to: to the 'enemies' family or to the 'good people's' family. I was only 11 years old then. I had to think about it harder than other kids who were not affected by it (repression, D.J.). It troubled me a lot. "(Resp.12. 78, female).*

#### **4.3.3. Perception of the Social Surrounding's Attitudes**

All the respondents felt both good and bad attitudes from the social surrounding; also, they described motivated by fear avoidance:

**Hostile and Stigmatizing Attitude.** The respondents recall examples of hostile attitudes from the different social contexts, i.e. stigma "The Enemy of People's Child", "Trotskyist's Child," "Anti-Soviet Element's Child", etc. For some respondents, this experience started in their neighborhood:

*"We were considered to be members of the family of the Wrecker. Utilizing this situation, some people wanted to grab some of our family property and other assets... (Resp.9. 77, male).*

This experience was present at schools, too:

*"We were called the 'enemy's children.' There were five of us like this..." (Resp.1. 85, female).*

The respondents living in regions were more oppressed by teachers than those living in Tbilisi. Some of them even pointed about that the "people's enemy" stigma influenced their free choice of profession.

Respondent (Resp.): *"I had talents in music. I was 14 years old and I had to play in the concert dedicated to the NKVD workers [People's Commissariat for*

*Internal Affairs of the Soviet Union, KGB predecessor]. Just before the concert, some people approached me and told me that I could not play because 'I was 'the enemy's child.' – Interviewer (Int.) - Did it have any influence on your life? – Resp: I realized on that platform many factors would not depend on me, and I gave up. Then I was thinking of becoming a doctor but also gave up that idea. – Int: what was an obstacle there? Resp: my classmate's father asked to talk with him. He asked me not to apply to enroll in the medical school (he apparently thought I could be the competitor of his son). He told me I was talented and I could succeed in any field. I did not have a father and it was easy to defeat me! I promised him that I would not apply to the medical school. Finally, I applied where they were asking you to apply themselves: mining engineering - I went underground [the subject smiles, D.J.]. On the other hand, we had hard times and mining industry was a well-paid profession then.“ (Resp.8. 84, male)*

For some respondent, stigma appeared during the job search or actually at work:

*“Trotskyist's Child. I had no choice, my fate was decided from the childhood... it [the stigma] was not forgotten at my work, either ... The harm was not so great, but they did not let me go abroad, saying 'I was not trustworthy.' They did not like my parents. (Resp.6. 79, male).*

**Friendly and Supportive attitudes.** Parallel to hostile attitudes, the respondents talk about the friendly attitudes they got:

*“We were in terrible conditions and besides that ... there were such times then! What do we call 'such times?' was not it created by them [the surrounding people]? ... regardless of all this, there were people who supported us” (Resp.10. 83, female).*

According to the respondents, support was crucial for their survival:

*“When I became sick, my classmates collected some money to support me; my mother gave the money back to them (she was embarrassed). Then the class teacher visited us and asked her ‘not to break children’s hearts’ and she accepted the money they had collected for me. Two girls, whose fathers worked at the wine factory, brought 30 liters of the fresh grape juice for me to drink ... Some of them were this caring and we are still friends, at least some of those who have survived.” (Resp.13. 83, female).*

**Fearful and Avoidant.** Some respondents, parallel to hostile attitudes, felt avoidance and distance from some relatives, friends and acquaintances due to the fear these people felt:

*“Some people or acquaintances did not say ‘hello’ in the streets” (Resp.10. 83, female);*

*“None of the relatives would come [to our house] ... I had a cousin who kept coming, but his brother did not ... My uncle had taken out his brother's photos [from the family albums]. When I first saw it in his house, I hated him from that moment on.” (Resp.11. 77, female).*

#### **4.3.4. Resilience Strategies**

**Integration into Totalitarian System.** All of the respondents described integration into the totalitarian system as one of the key adjustment strategies. In particular, they were recalling honest desire to become Pioneers, Komsomol and even Communists party members then, and live “like others“:

*Resp: I was at the first year of the university when I was accepted to the Komsomol. As a child, I suffered because everyone was Komsomol member and I was not. It was not pleasant at all. They considered me as inappropriate for some reason - I do not know why - I was studying well, and if they would accept anyone, logically I*

should have been one of them. **Int:** - Did anyone ever tell you why were not you accepted after all? **Resp:** I remember I was called to the Komsomol Beauró. There were 2-3 pupils who were the best - the school gave the recommendation for us. I do not remember what question they asked me - there were 7-8 of us, kids - but I remember I left the office full of discontent. They knew everything [about repression].” (Resp.11. 77, female).

At older ages, system integration strategies included enrolling into the Communist party thus becoming an integral part of it:

“This was a possibility for further promotion and of course, I wanted it. I became a member of the Party to have further promotion. I would not be honest if I say today I believed it then, but I knew I had no alternative as well ... ”(Resp.6. 79, male)

Six out of 13 respondents from the second generation were members of the Communist party.

**The Hidden Demarcation from the Totalitarian System.** Along with their attempts to become a part of the system, the subjects also talk about their hidden spiritual life and practices at home: they prayed with their families, lit candles in front of the icons, dyed Easter eggs. Those who dared would go to church as well; all this helped them control their emotions and revitalization of the damaged feeling of security:

“If not for that, the hardship would have been harder to bear. It gave a little relief to me and my mother ... She was of course afraid of going to church - she was scared of being noticed there; I would go, trying to remain invisible, and prayed inside the church. She lit candles at home instead.” (Resp.1. 85, female).

“We would dye Easter eggs, hiding from everyone, would go to church, would light up a candle at home ... My mother would light up the candle secretly, she was

*praying at home; I even have my mother's icon kept at my home. She was still afraid of going to church.” (Resp.11. 77, female).*

**Studying Well.** Education and studying, as an important strategy, stemmed from the parents:

*“I remember my daddy ... why do I remember that: he wore a white shirt and his face was as pale as the shirt. He went down on his knees before my mother, embraced her legs and told her, ‘woman, please, do everything to provide education to these kids’ ... my mother swore before him, saying she would do it, even if she had to sacrifice her own life ... “ (Resp.13. 85, female).*

Four respondents out of 13 (belonging to the second generation) said they had finished school with golden medal honors. All the respondents underlined the importance of education:

*“I knew that I had to rely on my own achievement. I was so famous for studying well; everyone was pointing at to me as the best student... My grades were five [the best grade in the Soviet system]. (Resp.2. 83, female).*

**Migration from Regions to the Capital City.** Representatives of the second generation, who lived in regions during the repression period, described the migration as one of the resilience strategy. The big city brought chances to get better education and leave behind the social environment where they were stigmatized and considered as “Children of the Enemy of People”:

*“The repressed people's families came to the city ... acquired new friends, new perspectives” (Resp.14. 49, female).*

**The Choice of Profession and Professional Mastery.** When it came to the choice of profession, the first generation often advised their children to choose a profession that would help them to survive in case if they would be sent to Siberia as well:



*"I wanted to become a historian, but my father wrote to me from exile to choose medical doctor's profession. He was a medical doctor himself and this helped him to survive in Siberia. So he asked me to choose this profession, too... and I applied for the medical institute - I did have a golden medal and I did not have to take entrance exams at all" (Resp.1. 85, female).*

The third generation's respondents validated choice of profession motivated by survival among the second generation:

*"She [the mother, the second generation] always wanted to apply for the medical school but she was never accepted because she was deemed as a people's enemy's child. She had the highest scores but she was not accepted. She also wanted me and my sister to become doctors, but we did not want. At least, I met a doctor who became my husband." (Resp.16. 48, female).*

Whatever professions they chose, the second-generation subjects would always highlight the importance of mastery:

*"Wherever I would be, I knew I had to work hard. I had to be better than others - we were not in equal positions - I was 'the child of the people's enemy.' I did become a good doctor; I could not be otherwise. I have saved so many patients. There were no monitors then - I was sitting at the bedside of the patients to monitor (their health). I have saved people's lives, but I could become a good historian, too!" (Resp.1. 85, female).*

**Marriage.** Some respondents view marriage as a strategy to escape hyper protective parenting:

*"I wanted to live my life. I was tired of my family's past, so I got married early... like in a fairy tale - when kings claim to marry their daughters who proposes first. No, I cannot say that we did not love each other ... but still. If I had not done this hasty step, I would not have done it later." (Resp.2. 83, female).*

Two out of seven female respondents from the second generation married representatives of repressive regime. One of them saw no correlation between the repressive past of her family and her choice. The second one realized the connection only through this interview, as she qualified her marriage as something like a "restarting" attempt:

*"I married a [Communist] party member. At the time I even did not think why, now I realize – I wanted to start my life from a new page. I was looking for protection. During my whole life, I was looking for protection, and many things were conditioned by this. I interpret my behavior this way now. (Resp.1. 83, female)*

**Perception of Social Support:** All respondents remembered and appreciated people who helped them after repression.

**Resp:** *"My family was destroyed; only my mother and I survived thanks to relatives. Int: what kind of attitude do you remember at school? Resp: I remember, I was called a "child of an enemy of the people . . . there were two of us, none of the teachers (did it) . . . on the contrary they were helping us. Husbands of five teachers out of seven were arrested, too. (Resp.12. 78, female)*

*"The village saved us. My mother could sew very well, so people did not reject her. She got orders to sew clothes and got food in exchange." (Resp.7. 79, male)*

*"We were living with people from whom I never felt oppression. On the contrary, they supported us." (Resp.2. 80, female)*

**Assigning Meaning to the Repression related traumatic experience:** We envisage assigning the meaning of repression in traumatic experience as two-step act. The first step means to explain your traumatic experience; the second step means attempt to find gain some benefit from own traumatic experience (in the sense of personal growth, re-thinking values, etc.).

As for the attempts to explain traumatic experience, respondents were trying to clarify why members of their families became victims. At the same time, they were trying to explain phenomenon of totalitarian repressions as such.

Regarding causes of repression against family members, a number of reasons have been articulated including being against Stalin and not hiding this negative attitude, or, being denounced by colleague (accusing in not 'drinking a toast to Stalin'), etc. To sum up, the repression reasons include envy, desire to expropriate resources (job, property etc.), personal revenge (via defamation that a person was against the regime), family history (belonging to aristocracy), being against Stalin and collectivization, and finally having Western education and experience of living abroad.

As for 'repression theory', three different explanations could be identified, described by the respondents:

Narcissistic explanation: *"In fact, the best part of the Georgian society was destroyed, as well as the intergenerational link . . . they deprived me of growing up in a normal condition, I survived thanks to God. When I was young I was proud, I had a feeling that I was distinguished, that I am among those who were considered to be destroyed, I had a feeling I had to boast, a feeling of pride". (Resp.12. 78, female)*

"Economic Crisis:" *"The economic crisis started; there were not enough resources, people would start a riot, so they ruined people's lives in order to have lower population and workers whom they would not pay. It was a modern slavery and these workers were sent to the places where they would never agree to go. Later, the workers were killed when they became useless." (Resp.4. 84, male)*

"For the Sake of State Building": *"The repression took place because Stalin was building a state. There were people who were willing to hamper the state building process. There was a political admission that if "enemies of the people" were destroyed the state would be built. Human lives did not have any value. However, it*

*awakened subtle instincts of human beings, which were used for personal revenge because of envy or self-interest. However, the project was effective in the sense that strong statehood was built, the agrarian state turned into a nuclear power thanks to Stalin. No one can deny that he was a political genius.” (Resp.8. 84, male)*

The second step of the meaning making is more difficult than the first step and usually not so many traumatized individuals are able to accomplish it. As for the second-generation respondents, only one out of 13 succeeded in discovering benefit in traumatic experience of his family:

*“This experience taught me that nobody could knock at my door and come for me because of the deeds I had done in my life. I was honest; nobody could reproach me and doubt my decency.” (Resp.8. 84, male)*

**Search for Rehabilitation and Justice:** All the respondents desired to rehabilitate repressed family members and prove that they were not “Enemies of the People”.

*“After so many years, I wanted people to read the autobiography. I wanted them to know that he was not guilty! I read it to my friends, colleagues. (Resp.10. 83, female)*

At the same time all the respondents considered that any attempt of rehabilitation at any stage (starting from Khrushchev’s and ending with the post-Soviet period) did not bring sufficient moral, material or procedural satisfaction.

*“It was a mockery, not a rehabilitation. Families were given 50,000 rubles and the adult members of the families were assigned to get two months pension of their parents. The men were killed and we were offered two months pension; obviously it was a mockery.” (Resp.5. 84, male)*

Because of disappointment in the state, some respondents hoped for supernatural justice:

*“But the God punished a denouncer; the person was arrested immediately and disappeared without having children. As it says, he just disappeared from the Earth.” (Resp.5. 84, male)*

*“But a denouncer was affected by a tongue cancer and died.” (Resp.11. 77, female)*

*“The denouncers did not survive. Later they (secret police) came after denouncers and killed them.” (Resp.4. 84, male)*

#### ***4.4. Study Findings on the Third Generation***

In the course of analyses of the third generation representatives' interviews, the following codes and sub-codes were identified:

- Perception of repression trauma related family atmosphere (sub-codes: family conditions, related to the trauma of repression and up-bringing strategies);
- Family narratives (sub-codes: repressions related information's sharing style, causes of the repression, attitude from the side of the social surrounding, narratives on paradoxes, narratives about rehabilitation and restoration of justice);
- Resilience strategies (sub codes: loyalty to the totalitarian system, open demarcation from the totalitarian system, fixing “mistakes” of the parents up-bringing strategies within own families, humor and sarcasm, assigning meaning to the repression related family trauma).

Below are presented the findings based on the listed above Codes.

##### **4.4.1. The Family Atmosphere Associated with the Repression Related Trauma**

###### **Family conditions associated with trauma**

**Fear of the state:** All third generation respondents described feeling of fear of the state, which existed in the second and third generations:

*"What do I remember? . . . Fear. My grandmother was a very brave woman, but if I said something [against the political system] she would immediately say – 'stop saying that,' and that lasted until her death. She died in 1988." (Resp.22, 58, male)*

*"My grandmother, my grandmother's brother and my uncle had a feeling of fear; my father not that much, but he hates communists. Some of the family feels fear; others feel hatred based on fear." (Resp. 20, 55, male)*

**Distrust of the Social Environment:** The interviewees pointed out the general mistrust of their family members towards social reality; they recalled advice such as "you should not trust anybody, you will be betrayed by those you least expect". (Resp.27, 57 years old, female). "People are so bad, if you do well, they will pay you badly." (Resp. 19, 62 years old, male); "Don't ever tell anybody *anything*." (Resp: 25, 50, male).

**Avoidance:** Based on the distrust described above, respondents highlighted specific form of avoidance, such as escaping contacts with unknown people.

*"Resp: I got acquainted with a woman, later she came to our village and became our friend. We never accepted unknown people into our family. With her, we used to go to collect delicious mushrooms. Some women and shepherds were there, too. Some were laying on the grass, some were knitting, some were spinning thread, later they let me spin the thread, I came back home with enthusiasm . . . and the situation again became strained, because I was asked who and what kind of women they were. I was surprised* **Int:** *what did you feel that moment when you were asked these questions? Resp: I felt pressure; there were people in the village with*

*whom I was advised not to communicate with, whereas these people did not do any harm.” (Resp.14. 49, female.).*

Similarly, the representatives of the third generation avoided being “noticed.”

*“My father did not like showing himself up. He did his PhD, but my family did not parade it.” (Resp. 27. 57, female)*

*“My father was afraid of being distinguished: he did his PhD covertly, without speaking out too much.” (Resp.20. 55, male)*

*“Resp: my family was not ambitious; we were not aiming at achieving something important - neither in terms of education or career. I could not say that they (parents) were uneducated. My aunt was an architect, my father was an engineer, another aunt was a wonderful philologist. But they did not want to be promoted. My father was working more than others at work, he was doing other's jobs, for example, writing reports or reviews, but those others were promoted. Nobody talked about going abroad in the family. **Int:** did they want to go abroad? Or they were not allowed? **Resp:** sometimes you avoid doing something because you do not want to be treated like your parents”. (Resp.14. 49, female).*

**Hyperarousal:** Five respondents of the third generation (Respondents 20, 25, 26, 27, 28, representing three families) defined the mode of their family life as a "night life". All domestic chores as well as communications were done from midnight until 4:00 am. Bedtime started at 3:00-4:00 am. One respondent, whose family members suffered from sleep disorder for a long time, correlated short and interrupted sleeping pattern of his/her family members with repression.

*“I remember the fear of Beria's time through the conversation heard at my house from the people sitting around the table, that some did not sleep because they did not know when they (secret police) could come after them . . . Once when I was in the fifth grade, my father suddenly jumped out of bed; he was standing at the*

*window and I could not shut my eyes. It did not happen often, but I do remember once he was waiting for “them” until the next morning. My grandmother died when she was 104, she never had health problems, but she went to sleep at midnight and woke up at 4:00am. They had very short sleep. Often, I do not sleep during the night. I barely manage to sleep in the morning; my sleep mode is messed up. My aunt also had only 3-4 hours sleep; she used to sleep between 12:00 and 4:00am.” (Resp.20. 55, male).*

**Family Conflicts:** Some respondents described family conflicts, which they connect with the Soviet repression.

*“My grandmother was a wife of a repressed man, and my father was a member of the Communist party. For my grandmother he was a representative of the repressive regime. She never called him by name, but referred to him as “he”. Their disagreement was something symbolic, but in the family, my father was a victim of [my grandmother’s] repression [laughing]. There was always tension; we were afraid of confrontation, my mother used to stand aside. Frankly, my childhood was quite complicated because of their constant arguing. We [children] were necrotized.” (Resp.25. 50, male).*

**Negative Cognitions.** Some respondents described mistrust and doubts towards families with no repressive experience in the first generation:

**Resp:** *My grandmother always used to tell positive stories about people, saying that somebody did a good job for her [while in exile], that they were kind people. I had a strange feeling towards the people who had grandparents. While visiting my classmates’ families, when I was meeting their grandfathers or grandmothers, I was wondering whether they were KGB stooges, as survived repressions. Int: so you did not have positive opinion about them... Resp: the fact that they were not sent to [labor camp] was provoking doubts in me. Certainly, there*



*were decent and kind people at that time as well, but for them the chance to survive was very low. (Resp.17. 46, female)*

**Mothers' Mental Health Problems and Their Impact.** Some interviewees pointed out mental health problems of their mothers, associated with repression:

*“Unlike my grandmother (who returned from resettling) my mother was very depressed. Psychologically my mother was more damaged than my grandmother was. My grandma had relatively happy childhood and apparently, psychologically she was more resilient. Those who experience repression in childhood were more vulnerable. My mother was four when the repressions occurred. I always had a struggle with my mother attempting to help her recover from depression. I had a quite complicated life. (Resp.17. 46, female)*

*“Due to repression my mother’s mental health deteriorated. She was anxious, extremely sensitive, taking everything too personal. She did not expose her anger. She was not bad tempered, but when she got angry, she locked herself in her room and nobody could enter there. It took her several hours to calm down. (Resp.19. 62, male)*

**The perception of personal growth in the first generation.** The third generation respondents identified repressed family members (grandfather and grandmother returned from forced resettlement, or grandmother who managed to survive settlement) as powerful.

*“The prison strengthened her, [grandmother was resettled for ten years]. She was telling the stories of her imprisonment in a positive manner. The prison made her optimist, such a surprising thing!” (Resp.16. 48, male)*

*“Hard times made my grandmother stronger. She survived the repression, but her husband was killed. For us she was something very special, like Ursula from “100 Year of Solitude” by Gabriel Marquez.” (Resp.23. 55, male)*

### **Up-bringing Style**

**Authoritarian Style:** The majority of respondents (12 out of 15 of the third generation, 8 of 12 families) pointed out the authoritarian style of up-bringing:

*“We had to obey my father; often I was complaining, but mostly I was following him. I know he did not want to harm us. He never beat us, but he was very strict” (Resp.24. 49, male)*

*“I had a fear that my father would find out everything and I would be beaten with his belt. Once he did because I smoked pot and was behaving stupid. Ever since I have never smoked marijuana.” (Resp.20. 55, male)*

In some families, fathers were authoritative leaders (second generation); in others mothers (second generation) and grandmothers (first generation, a wife of the repressed). Often the authoritarian leader was a composite of two family members - for example, father (the second generation representative) and grandmother (the first generation representative) together:

*“In the family my father was in charge of making final decisions, he was discussing the issue with mother but the final decision was his. However, he was listening to my grandmother. She had a huge authority and was my father’s ‘Consiglieri’ if you know what it is.” [Laughing] (Resp.22. 58, male)*

**Hyper protection:** In the context of the described above mistrust of social surrounding and increased anxiety, hyper protection was a widespread up-bringing strategy in the studied repressed families. Some respondents shared stories of restrictions set by the first (wife or grandmother of the repressed) and the second

generations (children of repressed/father/mother), for social networking of the third generation:

*“When I befriended new children at school or at the university, my grandmother used to tell me – do not trust them, they might not be as good as it seems at first sight. So I had to keep and sustain friends while fighting with my grandmother”. (Resp.26. 55 female)*

*“In general, my grandmother was against new friends; she was kind of jealous. Once at school, probably I was in the fifth grade, a teacher asked me who was my best friend. I stood up and proudly said that my best friend is my grandmother. My classmates laughed at me. I was telling truth. Later my friends saved me from her. She kept pressuring me (Resp.25. 50, male)*

**Parentization of the third Generation:** Based on the information received from the respondents, hyper protective up-bringing did not exclude parentization of the third generations. For example, third-generation respondents with authoritarian mothers (who were trying to control their friendmaking and entering romantic relationships behavior, choice of profession, etc.), later, when health condition of the parent deteriorated, stayed in the dyad and became parents of their parents. In the two families, the bonds between mothers and children were so strong that young people married only after the death of their mother. Hyper protection up-bringing pattern was identified in non-authoritarian families, too:

*“You know how it is? . . I am a mother and She [in fact, her mother] is a Child. She could not control emotions; I have to control my emotions. I was always eager to help her doing family stuff... When I should do something else, instead I could sew a dress for my mother, you understand what I mean? In our case the roles were changed.” (Resp.17. 46, female)*

#### 4.4.2. Family Narratives about Repression

**Ways of Informing Third Generation about Repression.** The respondents received the information about the repression at different age and via different style of information sharing. Those (third generation representatives) who highlighted mental health problems of mothers learned intrusive and emotional stories about repressed family members at an early age:

*“I lived with my mother’s memories about her father and brother. She was telling in a way that I was very worried; actually, I was participant of those events too. Not a single day passed without her telling the stories about her father and brother” (Resp.19. 62, male)*

*“Our childhood was distorted. Whatever we talked about with our guests around the table suddenly there was a cry and conversation about memories like the last time my grandfather brought an ice cream to my parents. In addition, they said that if my father (grandfather of an interviewee) had been alive, my life would have been different.” (Resp.17. 46, female)*

Since none of their relatives spoke about repression, two respondents found out about their repressed family members in late adolescence. One was a student, and another even older:

*“Nobody was talking about my grandfather in the family. There was one photo in the village house and another one in the family album. I knew that was my grandfather, nothing else. I learned about him when the Soviet archive was disclosed in 1998” (Resp.14. 49, female)*

Majority of the interviewees learned about repression only in their adulthood; however, the ways of receiving information was different. In some families, teenagers and children accidentally heard about the repression when grown-ups in the family were talking about the issue secretly.

**Narratives on the Causes of Repression.** Family narratives show that the causes of repression are explained by the two categories of factors. One category characterizes family itself (social class, disobedience to regime, acting against regime, refusal to cooperate with the regime, education abroad, public activism, visibility). The second category refers to the external factors, such as envy and condemnation from the closest social surrounding, being a scapegoat at workplace, etc.

*“They were so aristocratic, they would have been killed, probably someone envied”. (Resp.16. 48, male)*

*“There was one guy, how can I call him friend. My grandfather taught him writing ... he denounced my grandfather because of envy. People are like that: you do good to them, they do harm you in response.” (Resp.19. 62 male)*

*“The reason was that he [grandfather -- D.J.] was rich. He had cows, buffaloes, big cattle. He had good reputation; his words in the village had value. He was a rich ‘Kulak’, and all rich were considered enemies.” (Resp.29. 55, male)*

*“Somebody denounced him, which is what I know. A man who was studying in Germany and France was an enemy of the state by definition. He had a writing desk ... the main reason was that he was studying abroad.” (Resp.18. 45, male)*

*“In that environment they (grandfather’s family) were distinguished; they had a farm, everything was brought from Switzerland. Both were very beautiful, everyone was gazing at them while walking down the street. They took part in building of university. They brought stones with bullock carts 18 times, also wood. They did not lag behind in the social life; this family was “noticeable”. (Resp.17. 46, female)*

**Narratives on the Attitude of Social Surrounding.** Respondents of the third generation highlighted stigmatization, indignation, envy and intolerance from their social environment:

*“People wanted to kick them out, whereas just a while ago they brought literacy to the village. People were threatening them, saying that they would be kicked out. They had been doomed. People are evil.” (Resp.14. 49, female)*

However, the same respondents recalled the support of people who helped their relatives survive:

*“My grandmother told me that my father was 7-8 when my grandfather was arrested. Once somehow, my father managed through a small window to give him a box of cigarette. Because of that, he was caught and they wanted to kill him, claiming that he was a son of Trotskyist. I do not know where this happened, in the prison or somewhere else. My grandmother fainted when she saw her child crying and being grabbed by someone. The people around were about to attack [prison guards] to defend the child. Then prison guards realized that it would be better to release a child, otherwise something bad would happen there.” (Resp.14. 49, female)*

During the interviews, the respondents reminded the devotion and care of their neighbors:

*“Thanks to our neighbors we have some stuff – not valuable but meaningful to us. They kept them for 10 years while my grandmother was resettled. You know how they saved these things? When “Chekists” [KGB people, D.J.] who embezzled my grandmother’s property, living in my grandmother’s flat, were throwing away, for example, broken plates, neighbors were collecting these broken parts and keeping them, saying that when my grandma would return it would make her happy. Later my grandmother glued the broken pieces. What a devotion to keep something for 10 years” (Resp.17. 46, female)*

In addition, respondents looked back on stories of social exclusion caused by fear dominating the society:

*“You know how it was, other families were frightened once somebody was arrested, they were afraid of arrest” (Resp.19. 62, male); Many relatives “washed away” (Resp.14. 49, female)*

**Narratives on the Paradoxes.** All respondents paid particular attention to paradoxes told by the second generation. They were emphasizing these issues without the interviewer asking them, as it remained topic leaving question mark for the whole family. Three types of paradoxes were identified:

While one member of the repressed family had been resettled as "The enemy of the people", the surviving member of the family was awarded (such as the Lenin Order) for service to the country:

*“Paradoxically, my grandfather was resettled and my grandmother received Lenin’s order. She was a teacher ... it happened before rehabilitation in 1950, I think after the war, in 1946. Communists were making such inconsistent decisions. Meanwhile part of them [Communists] were destroying rest of the family. (Resp.18. 45, male)*

The second type of paradox included oppression of a person due to being a child of “The People’s Enemy”, and at the same time, in the same social system (system of education, or job place), awarding her/him with the certificate of achievement on behalf of Lenin or Stalin:

*“My mother remained homeless, in the kindergarten she was beaten, ridiculed because she was a daughter of an “enemy of the people”. Later she went to school and she got certificates. What a paradox, with one hand the system kills your parents, whereas with the other it gives you a certificate with a picture of Stalin and Lenin for good academic achievement.” (Resp.17. 46, female)*

All respondents pointed out a third paradoxical reaction, which concerns response to Stalin's death:

*“Apparently, my mother and grandmother [whose father and husband were killed] were crying when Stalin died. My father furiously asked them why they were crying; they were ashamed and stopped crying. I do not know what kind of a syndrome it is. Stalin himself signed orders for killing people. But when this devil died, people were crying. I do not know, what kind of a behavior is it?” (Resp.19. 62, male)*

**Narratives on Rehabilitation and Justice:** For the interviewees, the rehabilitation process initiated by the government was formal and insufficient in almost all cases, leaving family members most often in deep frustration:

*“Rehabilitation . . . unlike others my family received an excuse sooner, saying it was a mistake and he was not guilty. So, did their lives change? It was the same . . . he was just ‘rehabilitated’”. (Resp.14. 49, female)*

Some of them showed an ironic attitude to rehabilitation:

**Int:** *What has changed after rehabilitation?* **Resp.** *“nothing, just memorial was created in 90s, my mother was given 45GEL compensation, she was happy. She was getting it when pension was 14 GEL. That was it, nothing else”. (Resp.19. 62, male)*

Some cases demonstrated that the insufficient and unsatisfactory rehabilitation process re-traumatized the parents of the respondents.

*“Later they were kind of rehabilitated . . . that was a torture, torture!.. They had problems and their life was very complicated. Imagine, you are rehabilitated and you get a letter of apology and 250 Rubles, today it equals 100 GEL. You are told it is your father’s money. These people took money away from my grandmother to pay for bullets by which my grandfather was killed. Later my mother was given 250 Rubles, with which she bought a wardrobe. She often said - what a tragedy it is, that instead of a father, she has a wardrobe. Now when she hears about rehabilitation, it makes*



*her depressed. What for they give us money, she asks - for ruining my life?" (Resp.17. 46, female)*

Because the state mechanism of rehabilitation did not function properly, both the third and second generation speak about 'supernatural justice':

*"It was December when they took my grandmother and my mother was about to be taken to the orphanage; it was December 18, if I remember it correctly. [My mother] asked the relatives for socks for the child, but they did not give them, and then their three-year-old child fell from the balcony and died; after that they took our belongings and went to Yerevan." (Resp.17. 46, female).*

Along with a belief in supernatural justice, in terms of ineffective/inactive state mechanisms, the third generation respondents described how they were collecting information about their oppressed family members in resettlements or in detention (before execution). As it referred to positive narratives, according to respondents this was filling in a 'rehabilitation gap' to some extent:

*"Later my father (whose father-in-law was repressed) saw the case and was very proud. He said that he [grandfather] did not denounce anybody, saying nobody was with him, so he passed away with decency" (Resp.17. 46, female)*

*"In the 60s a man who was in the prison with my grandfather told my father that my grandfather kept his dignity in the prison, was treated by all the prisoners with respect, and helped him to survive. So, the guy came to say thank you to my father". (Resp.23. 55, male)*

*"I knew neither my grandfather nor my uncle, but they are alive in my imagination. A story from my mother: her brother (my uncle) saved a friend who was arrested with him. My uncle told them that his friend did not know anything, so he took all responsibilities and thus rescued his friend. My uncle was shot, his friend survived. A day before he was shot, there was somebody with him in the cell to*

*whom he gave his sweater. Later that guy told this story to my grandmother.” (Resp. 19. 62, male)*

#### **4.4.3. Resilience Strategies**

**Loyalty to the System.** From childhood, all respondents passed through the "Soviet Factory"; they used to be Pioneers and Komsomolets. The families were encouraging their children to be the members of the party as this trajectories imposed by the system were considered normal by the families:

*“It was a norm. When I became “Komsomolets” I was told at home: good for you, good job. At the same time my family was a victim of repressions, but back then it was normal and I was happy.” (Resp.2. 50, male)*

*“Nobody asked me whether I wanted to be a Komsomolets or not... I was told it was a rule, that is it. **Int:** You were against? **Resp.** In fact, no.” (Resp.28. 45, female)*

*“Of course, I became Komsomolets, I could not even imagine not. Moreover, my mother was promoting that. She was a teacher of Scientific Communism and she was teaching it us too (laughing). She had a degree in philosophy and later choose scientific communism. After our conversations, I realize that she has done it to defend herself, as her uncles were repressed and she might be afraid of being repressed. I have never thought about this from this angle.” (Resp.23. 55, male)*

**Critical Evaluation of the System and Resistance.** All respondents emphasized the critical attitude towards Soviet system, which, in the majority of cases, started to develop in their adolescence. In some of the respondents at the beginning it manifested itself as resistance to the authoritarian style of up-bringing in the family, defending own rights from the controlling parents, skeptical attitude to the school culture, which in many cases later led to dissident-type thinking and participating in the political activism against the Soviet system at the end of the 80-ies of the last Century. One of the 15 respondents of the third generation played pro-active role in

the National-Liberation Movement, which began in the late 80's, though was not 'visible' on a socio=political stage.

Some respondents described passive sabotage as a form of resistance to the weakened Soviet state:

*"Milk was brought to the grocery early morning' if you did not buy early you could not get it. So, I was in a queue in the morning, and later used to go to work near Lisi Lake, in Tsodoreti at a research institute. All day we were playing card games and dominos, or collecting mushrooms; it was like a swamp. Not everybody managed to do PhD". (Resp.20. 55, male)*

**Humor and Sarcasm:** While telling stories about repression, some respondents actively used hum our and sarcasm.

*"You know what they did later (after grandfather's arrest)? They took away his pig, too, saying it was Trotskyist – they 'arrested' Trotskyist pig and ate it (sarcastic smile D.J.). Accusations against him were the following: why was he closing window after coming home from work – answer was that he was tired and wanted to sleep. They said no, he is doing something else. [sarcastic laugh, D.J.]" (Resp.19. 62, male)*

Some of the respondents also used humor while describing communication between the first and second generations' of the family:

*"My aunt was one year old than my father. She did not realize that her father came back from resettlement . . . So she approached him saying that she had to tell a lyric about Stalin" (the respondent laughing, D.J.) (Resp.18. 45, male)*

### **Assigning Meaning to Family Repression**

#### *Explanation of what happened*

Like the second generation of the respondents, the third generation has its own explanations of the state repression, kind of 'naive theory of repression', which

consists of the following assumptions: anti-humanism of the system, instrumentalizing fear, and malevolence of human beings. Below the identified 'theories' are briefly introduced:

*"People are Spies":*

*"Every third or the second was a spy. You were told to spy on your neighbor, otherwise your life would be destroyed. People had to spy on each other. Some did it willingly; they might like somebody else's house or wife. If it is 1937, now they would do the same, people are the same, they gossip about each other. . . at any place that I worked the people were gossiping – this is not good. No trust, but cruelty towards each other . . . Just spying on each other. People were fabricating stories against others. (Resp.19. 62, male)*

*"In Order to Govern":*

*They wanted to frighten people because it was easier to govern them. Some used it to get bigger property (sarcastic smile) (Resp.23. 55, male)*

*Anti-Humane System:*

*"The state building was done for the state, not for people. That was a motto; people were doomed. They did not care about people, human beings had no value and this situation created perfect environment to destroy each other" (Resp.21. 52, female)*

#### Considering traumatic experience in the positive frame

As for the second stage of assigning meaning to repression related traumatic experience of the family, not all respondents could see positive outcomes in the history of family repression; but still more than among the second generation respondents. The third generation respondents were finding positive impact of repression related trauma on the following domains of their lives:

**Influence on formation of system of Values and personality.** To see positive results in the history of family repression is relatively easier for the respondents whose family members were suppressed because of the fight with the regime, as the reasons for the repression in these families were constantly discussed with a focus on victims' positive legacy. These respondents talk about the formation of values influenced by the repressed relative, for example, such as the love of the homeland:

*“I was so proud that my uncle died for Georgian independence. For me he was a history of my country, my dead uncle made me love my country, which is his positive legacy.” (Resp.19. 62, male)*

The respondents who were complaining about the mental health of their mothers still managed to look at the repression trauma of their family in a positive frame and shared that family history made them more sensitive towards poor, oppressed and orphans:

*“My attitude to poor and orphans is oversensitive. For example, when I was a HR officer, as soon as I found out that somebody was orphan, something unusual used to happen to me. I was trying to help her/him as much as possible, which might be strange for a regular person who might not understand pains of those people. I had a feeling to be too much responsible to help others” (Resp.17. 46, female)*

Some respondents also emphasize their ability to fight and survive, which they claim they would not have had without repression:

*“My father lived in a way that nobody could blame him for anything. Partly because of a fear of the system, he tried not to give reasons to be compromised. He was very decent and honest. I knew from childhood that you should never hope to live with protection and bribes (like everybody around) and unlike others, I should survive alone. Therefore, I am a fighter, I am fighting with life” (Resp.21. 52, female)*

**Fixing Parents' Mistakes.** The subjects who understand the impact of repression on their childhood and adolescence attempt not to repeat the mistake of their parents while bringing up their children. In particular, they describe that they use a more democratic style of raising their children, trying to exclude parentization and avoid hyper protection:

*“I remember how terrible was that constant control. So, I try to give my child more freedom. I have never intervened his personal life. For me, my son have personality and I do respect him. I put aside my ego. Am I worry? Yes, I am, but it is my personal business that never should become his problem.” (Resp.26. 55, female)*

Out of the 15 third generation respondents, eight respondents (from five different families) managed to look at their families' repression experience from a positive perspective. The seven respondents who could not find any significant value, learned about the repression and its direct implications on their families in early adolescence, as this issue never had been discussed between the family members in front of them.

#### ***4.5. Patterns of the Dysfunctional Family System***

Based on the interviews with the second and third generations' representatives, the study revealed two main patterns of the family system related to the experience of repression. Two subtypes had been identified in one of the patterns. Each of them is described below:

##### **The family system with *Dependency* basic assumption**

**“Cult of Personality”.** hyper protection, motivated by anxiety predominates in such a family system. Here a mother (the second generation representative) is an authoritarian (let's say, totalitarian) leader who establishes rules that all members of

the family obey. Stories and experience of repression is not shared with the third generation until late adolescence/early adulthood. While describing the relationship, family members use an expression “Mother’s Cult” (An analogy to “Cult of Personality”); however, this term has positive connotation for the family members, as it clandestine under traditional articulated respectful attitude towards mother within Georgian culture. Mother is hyper protective to the children, is jealous of potential friends and romantic partners of them and tries to replace them. In response to mother’s anxiety children take on responsibility for diminishing her anxiety and starting parentization. As a result, an ambivalent attachment is formed which causes complications in achieving separation, individuation and autonomy in children. In best-case scenario, children find intimate partners only after mother’s death, in her 40-ies.

**“The Lost Paradise”.** This model of family life is motivated by depression and nostalgia. Here, the representative of the second generation tries to return the loss. It refers to the choosing of a husband (with a principle of resembling father), defining the number of children, to the lifestyle of family reminiscent of childhood memories or the first generations’ narratives, to an attempt to have similar apartment/house as their original family, to follow the same rituals and traditions, etc. As a result, she becomes the only leader in the family dictating over spouse and children. She organizes family life in such a way that she could “reanimate” her nuclear family. In this system, third generation are told about the repression from early childhood. During adolescence, either children understand that mother attempts to shape their lives by her own schemas, which leads to protest and drastic separation; or, children obey and separation and achievement of autonomy fail.

### **Family System based on *Fight & Flight* Basic Assumption**

"**Battlefield**". This family system is also motivated by anxiety. The representative of the second generation chooses a partner who completely differs from her father. As the father was a victim of repression, she marries a man from the regime (Komsomol member or Communist Party member, or leader). At the same time, the second-generation representative involves the first generation in the family system - the mother who survived the repression enters the conflict with a son-in-law. Mother and son-in-law are fighting for influence over their daughter/ wife. It clandestine under normalized within the Georgian society confrontation between mother-in-law and son-in-law. Meanwhile, the family becomes dysfunctional, as children are brought up in a constant conflict environment.

## ***4.6. Findings of the Second Component of the Study***

### **4.6.1. The System of Stressors Affecting Georgian Population during the Totalitarian Regime and Mourning of the Traumatic Experience**

In terms of traumatizing the country's population, the Soviet regime involved a complex system of stressors, functioning on different levels. Most of the time these stressors were not one-time and transient. If we use Lenore Terr's classification, the totalitarian stressors were not the ones causing the so-called *Type I trauma*, meaning the simple trauma (one-time, limited in time) (Terr, 1990), but causing the so-called *Type II trauma* (complex). Judith Herman calls this a complex trauma (Herman,1992). The totalitarian stressors were repetitive in nature, extended in time, they caused direct or indirect physical and/or psychological damage, were unpredictable and at the same time, avoiding/escaping them was impossible. If we use Earl Hopper's classification of traumatizing stressors, we will see that the entire



system of stressors was affecting the Soviet Georgia (Hopper, 2000). The table 5 presented below describes the system of these stressors.

**Table 5: the system of stressors affecting the Georgian population in Soviet period**

	<b>Everyday life strains</b>	<b>Cumulative stressors</b>	<b>Catastrophic stressors</b>
<b>Affected levels</b>	overall totalitarian control, affecting individuals and families	small scale incidents caused by regime, affecting Families and close community	mass killings by Soviet regime, affecting all levels of society
<b>Illustrations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fear to express a different opinion;</li> <li>- fear to be denounced by ones neighbor or colleague;</li> <li>- fear to be blamed for 'subversive' activity; etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> interestingly, one of the common warnings against doing something, used in Georgia in the Soviet period, (in the late 1970-ies often as a joke) was "dag(v)icheren" meaning "you/we'll be arrested".</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- arrests of family members;</li> <li>- attending interrogations;</li> <li>- "wearing" the stigma of the "People's enemy's family member";</li> <li>- somatic illness facilitated by trauma and the inability to obtain proper treatment due to poverty, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Russian annexation in 1921,</li> <li>- the suppression of the rebellion against Russian annexation in 1924,</li> <li>- the shooting of young demonstrators protesting against the condemnation of Stalin's cult by N. Khrushchev in 1956,</li> <li>- the violent dispersal of the peaceful assembly demanding independence from Russia on 9 of April, 1989.</li> </ul>

As we can see from the table, totalitarian stressors affected all levels of society and accordingly caused multiple losses – loss of safety and predictability of life, self-esteem, dignity, illusion of control of one's own life. In parallel, the middle column of the table lists the traumatizing stressors of repressed families. Therefore, in addition to experiencing the stress caused by complex stressors that was affecting the whole country, the repressed families were experiencing even more traumatization. In this case, people were losing the objects in which they had made the most important emotional investments – from the loved ones and family members, to personal belonging and private property.

The above described multiple losses accumulated on individual, family and societal levels, but we can discuss the repressed families as the most vulnerable and most damaged (interested) subject by the totalitarian regime. Therefore, we call them “Identified victim” of the totalitarian regime.

According to Hopper, from psychotraumatological perspective, in violent society three symbolic modes can be separated: victim, aggressor and bystander (Hopper, 2003). This works for totalitarian society and for our analysis, I call this triangle the “totalitarian triangle”. In totalitarian triangle, these three modes are interchangeable: today’s aggressor may become a victim tomorrow, today’s victim – tomorrow’s aggressor etc. The victimization of the victim by the aggressor refers not only to the victim; in reality, this is super-powerful message for the bystanders, causing them to be scared, hopeless and silent. Because of hopelessness, the bystander identifies with the victim, and because of silence – with the aggressor. For the bystander, this is a way to internalize the totalitarian object – as a result of internalization the totalitarian object exists not only in external reality but also in an individual’s and society’s intrapsychic realities. This makes the bystander vital after physical totalitarian object’s death and after the collapse of regime as well, which creates the danger of replacing one totalitarian object with another in post-totalitarian period and consequently the danger of reproduction because its external place is vacant (Sebek, 1996).

In order to make the situation healthier during post-totalitarian period, the victims’ needs to share their experiences/pain with society, the aggressor should admit to the crime and atone, and the bystander must validate the situation – verify that the victim’s experience was a reality. On the one hand, this is possible by lustration and restorative justice. In Georgia, this has never happened. On the other hand, in parallel with lustration and restorative justice, the mourning of loss on societal level and the related societal trauma can be implemented in the direction of reflection on

the past, explanations, giving meaning to the past experience, re-think and re-evaluate it. This can take place through science, art, cultural or religious rituals. Every subject in the country can contribute to this process – politicians, scientists, artists, church representatives, and generally all citizens. The types of work will differ from each other: creation of monuments symbolizing the loss, scientific research on totalitarian regime, implementation of religious rituals etc. In parallel certain processes can take place on unconscious level (for example increase in birth rate, in case of Aberfan tragedy) (Volkan, 2006). In Georgia, such overcoming mechanisms have not been activated, because after the collapse of totalitarian regime, the existing political dynamics did not leave any space to the creation of institutionalized mechanisms for overcoming the past and for the society's awareness of its importance. Below we will try to analyze the barriers to mourning the past in Georgia.

Right after gaining independence, during president Gamsakhurdia's short-time ruling, two ethno-political conflicts and civil war did not allow the government or the society to shift their attention from critical present to rethinking of the past. The national-liberation movement, which preceded the independence aimed its main vector at liberation from Russia, this was leaving the totalitarian dimension of the past beyond societal attention. Although the saying "agent of KGB" became a common stigma at that time it was mainly used for internal-political battles, rather than rethinking/realization of part, or for creating institutional mechanisms of lustration. During Shevardnadze's governance lustration and reflection on the past was practically removed from the political agenda, because Shevardnadze himself represented and served the Soviet regime. After Shevardnadze, Mikheil Saakashvili came to power through "Rose revolution" and one of his and his party's program-based promises was exactly the lustration process. In the programmatic document elaborated by the united national movement "Enough or Ten Steps towards Freedom", implementation of lustration was the fifth step. In the eighth year of the

parliament's governance (in 2011), the parliament finally adopted the corresponding legislation (law "Chertier of freedom"). Neither before adoption, nor after, this law has never become a matter for public discussion. Before adoption it was not discussed with the civil society representatives either. The law comprises of three parts – the first part refers to antiterrorist activities, the second – lustration (before 9<sup>th</sup> of April 1989 certain posts of high ranking officials associated with secret Soviet services should have been limited), and third – prohibition of Soviet symbolism. In order to execute the law, the special committee was to be created within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which would lead the lustration process, however up to this day it has not been implemented. Thus, the law was and still is more a façade, rather than preparation of soil for real changes. In order to start the lustration process, the package of legislative changes was prepared in 2013 and on December 25 of 2013, the parliament approved this package; it should have initiated the real activation of the law but that did not happen. Execution of this law once again is not in the political agenda. Execution of law is complicated due to the fact that almost three decades have passed after the Soviet Union collapsed. Apart from this, during civil war, part of the security archives and agency related materials were burnt or taken out of the country. However, alongside the political and legal reasons, and physical barriers there is a number of psychological factors preventing the country from re-evaluating the totalitarian past. Volkan calls the psychological factors having impact on societal dynamics - "the software factors" (Volkan, 2004). Below we try to analyze the "software factors" obstructing reflection of the totalitarian past in Georgia:

**1) Actual conflicts and constant sense of related aggression threat.** During national movement's governance, the vector of reflection on the past was completely shifted towards Georgian society's external enemy. The country's occupation-de-occupation became the dominant discourse and with this, the totalitarian dimension of the past

was once again left beyond societal attention. This did not leave space for self-reflection, learning from the past, lustration, introduction of restorative justice mechanisms and healing of the society.

**2) Internalized totalitarian object.** After coming to power, the United National Movement's (UNM) governing style became more and more authoritarian, this allows us to discuss internalization of totalitarian object by the ruling party (Sebek, 1996). During its ruling period, UNM carried certain signs of internalized totalitarian object – for example, segregating the social reality according to the “bad” and the “good” (“washed away” and “exemplary (role models)”). The trajectories of the “good” and the “bad” never crossed. It was impossible for “the bad” to have any positive qualities, or for “the good” to have negative ones; this kept the ruling party in Kleinian Paranoid-Schizoid position and, prevented it from transitioning to so called Depressive (more mature) position, where goodness and badness could be qualities of the same object. Depressive position would prepare adequate context for evaluating the past but this never happened.

**3) Rebirth fantasy.** One more psychological barrier by the UNM towards reflection of the past was the so-called fantasy of rebirth and death, described by Carl Gustav Jung in 1939 (Jung, 1939). With this fantasy, the government comprised of representative of UNM in fact denied everything that had happened before them (people, institution, approaches, etc.) and drew on the basic assumption that Georgian history started with their ruling. Due to this psychological phenomenon the past per se was denied, which of course removed the issue of overcoming the past from the party' political agenda.

4) **“Crumpling” of time perspective.** The leading party of Georgian Dream also does not have dealing with the totalitarian past on a political agenda. Apart from specific political reasons, which we will not be discussing here, psychological factors play important role in denying the totalitarian past. Since the coalition came to power in 2012, its focus narrowed down to the UNM’s mistakes. The coalition came to power with the slogan “to restore justice”. During the pre-election period, it created the enemy image out of its political competitor; therefore, under “restoring justice” it meant taking the country back to the pre-UNM condition. With this it turned coalition’s slogan into a fiction: neither Shevardnadze’s corrupted period, nor Gamsakhurdia’s short-term ruling filled with pain and conflicts, or Soviet totalitarian past represent the just situation that Georgian society would be willing to restore.

Any attempt to reflect the totalitarian past was met with criticism by representatives and supporters of the Georgian Dream (who were the majority of the voters). As an opposing argument they claimed that the Great terror “took place a long time ago” and so it is not actual (timely), whereas during the last 9 years the injustice that occurred in the country “was no less in strength and we experienced them on our very skins and so they are much more important” (Javakhishvili, 2013).

It is widely known in psychology that psychological time differs from factual time (Кроник, Головаха, 2008). Knowing that, such “Crumpling” of the time perspective by the Georgian Dream voters is not surprising. It is noteworthy that the pre-election battle was especially intense, cruel and intolerant. The coalition that came to power, in fact, could not get out of this battle mode, because its opponent had a large number of supporters it did not feel safe. The lack of safety feeling caused the coalition to “get stuck” in constant election battle mode, we can assume that because of this the time perspective crumpled and got limited by the last 9 years.

**5) Double binding and internal split.** In terms of re-evaluating the past, one of our country's key stakeholders carries out the double standard politics – the Orthodox church of Georgia. On the one hand, the Georgian church views itself as the victim of repressions. Since 2002, based on the constitutional agreement, the state pays the patriarchate 25 million Gel annually “to reimburse the damage that was inflicted to the church during XIX-XX centuries, first by Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union”. We may assume that during Sovietization, destruction of churches and church servants is meant in this damage as well. In his epistles, the patriarch of Georgia mentions “the Communists” as aggressors and their damaging power to Georgia. Simultaneously, the patriarch himself as well as today's popular church speakers, i.e. Teodore Gagnidze express positive attitude towards Stalin, in their public speeches. These double messages coming from a high authority put Georgian society in the situation of “double binding”, a risk factor of psychotic splitting (Bateson et al, 1956).

**6) Unauthentic patterns of mourning in Georgian society.** Despite the fact that totalitarian system stressors affect entire society, we can call repressed families the “identified victims”, because they were directly exposed to repression. Accordingly, they had special needs and required special attention from the State and society. Efforts directed on taking care of this part of our society (through implementing justice, lustration, restorative justice, etc.) could have become *an entry point* through which the post totalitarian Georgian society would start mourning of loss related to the totalitarian past and consequently, mechanism for promoting and achieving healing. However, due to the above described barriers, this healing process did not begin, on the contrary – the trauma of repressed families was suppressed from society's awareness, encapsulated, and society dissociated from it. This obliterated the possibility to authentically mourn the totalitarian trauma in the post-totalitarian

period. The conditions of mourning the societal trauma clearly did not exist in totalitarian period, because authentic mourning would be in conflict with survival instinct. As a result, un-authentic patterns of mourning spread in society.

Hopper separates three main patterns of unauthentic mourning (Hopper, 2003), which occur when the society fails to authentically mourn the trauma. These are:

*Sentimental mourning*, or “masochistic defence [from anxiety, D.J.], implying compulsive ritualized prolonged wailing and sentimental optimistic clichés”(Hopper, 2003, p.63);

*Revanchist mourning*, a sadistic form of pseudo-mourning, which involves rage, revanchist aspirations and relevant action;

*Triumphant mourning* represents “manic defence against anxiety caused by loss, denial of grief accompanied often with the illusion of own omnipotence” (Hopper, 2003, p.63). Triumphant mourning implies transforming the mourning into a celebration.

In Georgia’s most recent past, the interchange of these three patterns of pseudo mourning can be observed via societal reactions on the tragedy of April 9. On April 9, 1989, the Soviet army dispersed the peaceful demonstration, using the neuro-paralyzing gas and minesweepers’ shovels; as a result, 21 people died, most of them were young women. The mourning of this bloody incident took a long-term, ritualized sentimental mourning form, which on the one hand was manifested by spreading a sentimental- pathetic song “Let’s give each other violets”, and on the other hand, by addressing of large number of civilians to the hospitals, for help. They were given the names “poisoned on April 9”. Some of these people (small number) were really poisoned by gas; but according to the medical personnel (Javakhishvili, 1990), the large number of people who addressed the hospitals believed they were not poisoned but in reality, they developed mental health problems that corresponded to conversion disorder. In the same period, “women in black” appeared in streets of



Tbilisi, in the tents set up for protest; they were personified mourners, a specific, emotionally loaded (charged) group, accompanying the National-liberation movement. At certain point, in the background of accumulated victimization, the sentimental unauthentic mourning transformed into a revanchist mourning, which on the one hand gave more impulse to the national-liberation movement, but simultaneously contributed to escalation of internal conflicts of Georgia at that time. On April 9, 1991, the democratically chosen Georgian government signed “The Act of Restoration of Independence of the Republic of Georgia”. With this act, the tragedy of April 9 became a celebration day and in fact transformed into the mode of triumphant mourning.

The examples of unauthentic mourning can be observed during the last decade as well: for example, a triumphant mourning (concert) at Liberty Square, where an end of a five-day Russian-Georgian war was celebrated by singing, rhymes and dancing. Triumphant mourning did not allow the Georgian population to mourn the loss caused by 2008 war either, and caused confusion in one part of the society about who won the war.

One of the examples of revanchist mourning is the situation of “prison riot” in 2012: the former government representatives (in the role of “aggressors”) did not recognize the violence in prisons, the investigation process was procrastinated and became non-transparent, and the issue became mythologized. Based on this a part of the society do not believe that violence took place in Georgian prisons and consequently the bystanders did not validate the traumatic experience of the victims. As a result, a group of the prisoners (the “victims”) turned to revanchist mourning and attempted to raid the former government representatives several times, and so they transformed into the mode of “aggressors”. This example illustrates the fact that the totalitarian triangle, not addressed so far, has not been demolished in Georgia. It

shows itself in various social and political contexts, in the form of destructive processes.

#### **4.6.2. Basic Assumptions based Psychodynamics in Georgia**

Unmourn loss and unprocessed traumatic experience causes shared feeling of hopelessness and fear for identity loss (Hopper, 2003; Volkan, 1997; Volkan, 2002; Volkan, 2004; Volkan 2006; Volkan, 2013; etc.). This can be observed in Georgia as well. I.e. the discourse “Georgiannes is taken away from us” is often and intensively dominating in public space. When the group cannot handle such feelings and fears constructively, it regresses to the earlier stage of development and loses “effective contact with reality” – defined by Volkan as large group’s narcissistic regress, by Bion – as a group’s psychotic state, when the group’s psychodynamics is defined by three basic assumptions, interchanging each other, like a kaleidoscope. These are Dependency, Fight & Flight and Paring basic assumptions. Earl Hopper added basic assumption of incohesion to these three. Incohesion has two modes of manifestation – Incohesion/Massification and Incohesion/Aggregation.

In case of Dependency basic assumption, the group members deal with their feeling of hopelessness by idealizing the leader and perceiving him/her as omnipotent. At the same time, the group envies the leader who is equipped with resources (jealousy as an immanent phenomenon by Klein). The expectations towards the leader are so high and own sense of responsibility – so low, that usually the leader cannot satisfy the group’s needs. As a result, unconscious envy transforms into rage towards the leader and the group tries to replace him/her with the new one. At this moment, *Fight & Flight* basic assumption shows itself and splits the group into two: it may correspond to transitional period, when the group is separated into the supports of the old and the new leaders, some group members fight each other, some members leave the group. *Paring* basic assumption tries to handle the fear of identity loss by

satisfying the need of reproduction. This can be implemented by focusing on certain members of the group, encouraging flirt and pairing, and simultaneously demanding that the encouraged group members be ready to sacrifice themselves for the interests of the group.

The *Incohesion* basic assumption involves two poles of defense against fear of identity loss (and, annihilation): *Incohesion/Massification*, which means that the group becomes a homogenous mass, where individual autonomy disappears and is replaced by anonymity and minimal role differentiation. In this case, unification of beliefs occurs, and any attempt of deviation from the group's values and norms is seen as threatening identity and therefore is not tolerated. According to Volkan, in this case "minor differences become major issues"(Volkan, 2009). In massified group, the affects are contagious, and magical thinking (believing in miracles) and pseudo-morality are common. As for *Incohesion/Aggregation* basic assumption, it turns the group into the conglomerate of conflicting with each other sub-groups/fragments, with high role differentiation, polarization, mutual oppression and absence or neglect of solidarity and shared norms (Hopper, 2003).

Bion elaborated the basic assumptions theory based on working with small groups, however, Hopper explored relevant processes and elaborated a theory based on studying larger groups (150 persons). Volkan described the "parasite Dependency" basic assumption already on national scale, which unites millions of people. According to Volkan, this can be explained by the large group's regress to the earlier stages of development, which reduces the large group's psychodynamics to the psychodynamics of a small group or even to the individual's intra-psychic life (Volkan, 2009).

Based on analysis implemented within the frames of this research we tracked patterns of all described above basic assumptions in Georgia's socio-political life. We will describe them below.

The Dependency basic assumption in Georgia's social-political life can clearly be observed during election period. Specifically, it is characteristic to Georgian voters to "bet on" one concrete political leader in order to achieve their own welfare, to minimize their sense of responsibility and to fully associate future hopes with the leader's governance. At some point, there is a disappointment because the leader cannot meet the unrealistic expectations and the psychodynamics led by Fight & Flight basic assumption begins.

Change of Dependency basic assumption by Fight & Flight mode in Georgia can be observed all the way from gaining independence until today, in the relationships between every leader of Georgia and the society. Gamsakhurdia – the former Soviet dissident and the leader of national-liberation movement – was elected as president of Georgia with the majority of votes (87.03 % of active voters), in 1991. At the first stage of his ruling, the majority of voters idealized him. During Gamsakhurdia's one-year administration, in the context of frustration of basic human needs (Neef, 2011), there was a growing discontent with the leader in the society, which replaced the Dependency basic assumption with Fight & Flight basic assumption (behind this was the "old new" leader Shevardnadze). Fight & Flight grew into the civil war, which the Shevardnadze supporters won and Gamsakhurdia and his supporters were forced to leave the country. In this context, the society was divided into "Zviadists" (the name called to Gamsakhurdia's supporters by Shevardnadze's supporters) and "Putschists" (the name called by Gamsakhurdia's supporters to Shevardnadze supporters). The conflict divided not only the society, but families as well, where one member (i.e. wife) was a Zviadist and another one (i.e. husband) was a Putschist. The conflict continued until 1993, when Gamsakhurdia died in one of the villages of Samegrelo. Russian army

formations helped Shevardnadze to fight for power, which clearly shows that geo-political factors played crucial role in the described development. However, in parallel with internal and external geo-political factors, the psychodynamics of basic assumptions greatly contributed to the destructive development of events as well. Shevardnadze as a leader was in large part legitimized by Georgia's patriarch. In particular, in 1993, after the conflict in parliament Shevardnadze publicly declared that he was resigning from the position of the country's leader; the patriarch had a crucial speech that gave Shevardnadze his position back: "As the spiritual father of Georgia, and your spiritual father, I have the right to give you my blessing to tell the entire country that you are the leader of Georgia" (Maisuradze, 2013). In 1995, 75% of Shevardnadze's voters was still partially indicative of Fight & Flight. The disappointment with Shevardnadze reached its peak in November of 2003, again in the background of the frustration of society's basic needs. The Fight & Flight basic assumption intensified in 2003 – now between Shevardnadze and Mikheil Saakashvili, which grew into peaceful revolution, with the help of movement "Kmara (enough)" and support from the West. In the beginning of administration, Saakashvili received 96 % of votes, which can be regarded as the indicator of Dependency basic assumption. In 2008, his rating dropped significantly (up to 53 %). There are a number of factors for this: lost war with Russia, authoritarian governing style, repressive politics (the prison population had a 300 % increase from 2003 to 2012), double standards concerning the supremacy of law, external geo-political factors, etc.

Saakashvili's government effectively implemented a number of reforms (police reform, improvement of safety situation etc.), that can be regarded as an indicator of Georgian society being in a position of (Bionian) Work group (Bion, 1961). However, sliding towards authoritarianism and the reasons listed in the paragraph above, especially in the context of emergence of the new leader, lowered Saakashvili's rating sharply. As a result, in the 2012 parliamentary elections, coalition Georgian Dream

received the majority of votes (54.97%), the National movement had 40,34% of votes. Actualized Fight & Flight basic assumption became the basis of especially ruthless pre-election fight. Both sides created special groups, that were especially hateful towards each other (i.e. journalists of the so-called “media group”, after the change of government – the so-called “free zone” and “free generation”, etc.). According to unofficial information, some of the priests of Georgian Orthodox church were preaching in defense of Georgian Dream and against Saakashvili. The Fight & Flight did not end after the elections; this made the cohabitation of political opponents impossible, and obstructed the implementation of restorative justice to reconcile the divided society. Once again, the diminishing nicknames were created and certain triangle was formed: “Kots” (the name of Georgian Dream created by UNM supporters) and “Nats” (the name of UNM created by Georgian Dream supporters) and the “Shuashist” (middlemen) – people who did not belong to any of the extremist sides, symbolizing Bystander. Such fragmentation of the society once again indicates the reproduction of totalitarian triangle. As a result, Saakashvili and his team left the country and some of the team members are arrested.

The leader of Georgian Dream, Mr. Ivanishvili, the wealthiest citizen of Georgia, who acquired his capital in Russia in the 90-ies, before coming to power had been implementing a number of charitable projects. He still implements some (i.e. – i.e. regular financial aid/pension for a number of scientists and artists). We can assume that this played a role in his and his voters’ relationship and contributed to actualization psychodynamics corresponding to Dependency basic assumption. Before elections, his perception as omnipotent by the voters was interlinked with unrealistic expectations (i.e. “dissemination of free of charge money”, etc.).

The 2013 presidential elections are also the illustration of Dependency basic assumption’s actualization. Ivanishvili (then a premier-minister of Georgia) introduced the presidential candidate Margvelashvili (philosopher, the former

principal of one of the successful universities in Georgia, after the winning by Georgian Dream – the Minister of Education) as his “best friend” to voters and promised that he “would be a very sweet president” and advised the voters to vote for him. Margvelashvili received a majority of votes.

Within the frames of kaleidoscopic interchange of Dependency and Fight & Flight basic assumptions, and mildly manifested work group psychodynamics, we can also observe realization of Paring basic assumption in Georgia. Just like in case of Dependency and Fight & Flight basic assumptions, the Georgian Orthodox church plays an important role here as well. In this regard, it is noteworthy that in order to boost reproduction, since 2008 Georgian Patriarch initiated baptism of every third and next child of the Georgian Christian-Orthodox families. According to 2017 data, the Patriarch has more than 31,000 godchildren. Another illustration of Paring basic assumption is the marriage between the representatives of the Georgian ex-royal families residing in Georgia and in Spain, supported/catalyzed by the patriarch in 2009. The marriage took place in the context of Patriarch’s speeches on the need to restore monarchy in Georgia (2007-2009). In 2011, the married couple had a son, whom Patriarch baptized and declared as the heir to the throne, although the Georgia kingdom has not existed for several centuries now. Meanwhile, the ex-royal family members divorced, are in a Fight & Flight mode and have no consensus re child’s status (as a legal heir).

Dependency, Fight & Flight and Paring basic assumptions take place in the context of Incohesion basic assumption’s actualization. Specifically, the life of Georgian society’s majority runs in two parallel realities. One – as the congregation of the Georgian Orthodox church - submits to Incohesion/Massification sub-assumption where individuality is lost, norms are mandatory, difference is not tolerated, mass is homogenized, etc. The good illustration of Incohesion/Massification is May 17, 2013,

when the representatives of church mobilized the congregation to raid the peaceful demonstration of sexual minorities.

The second reality where the Georgian society exist and the Incohesion/Aggregation assumption is actualized is the socio-political arena of the country. In this case, we can observe fragmentation and polarization of the society and political spectrum, mutual intolerance by fragments, and opposition (different minorities and majorities, governmental and non-governmental sectors, civil servant and “NGO-shniki” – a common stigma to describe the people working for civil organizations, etc.).

Neglect of norms characteristic to Incohesion/Aggregation can clearly be seen in the premier-minister’s resigning and his continuous governing from behind the scenes. In the background of mutual conflicts characteristic to Incohesion/Aggregation, the church still remains as one of the main interested subjects, its active interference with state matters is a good indicator of that; the church itself explains this by the necessity to fight the threat of identity loss. One of the examples of this is the case of adoption of the anti-discrimination law in 2014; the church representatives attended the parliament hearings, and intensively opposed its adoption, because of this, some of the formulations in the law were changed. After the law was adopted, the church representatives mobilized the followers to collect the signatures against the law; this was done in the streets of Tbilisi, in specially built tents.

One of the examples of Aggregation and Massification interchange is the 2014 case related to reburial of a Georgian monk, father Gabriel. This case is especially interesting because his life story reflects features of both Georgia’s totalitarian past and post-totalitarian present.

*According to the publicly available information, father Gabriel (Goderdzi Urgebadze at that time) was born in 1929 in the family of Soviet regime’s servant*



*father and a religious mother. The father was forbidding the mother to live religiously and threatened her with physical violence, until he died by the hands of Soviet regime fighters in 1931. Father Gabriel started ecclesiastical carrier after coming back from the army in the 1950-ies. It was still Stalin's period of governance, although in 1951 he built a small church in his garden. He was the first person to become a monk in totalitarian regime. During Khrushov's ruling, in 1965, at the May 1 demonstration, he put Lenin's big portrait on fire. He was arrested immediately and was sentenced to death. Later he was diagnosed with mental health diagnosis and transferred from prison to a psychiatric clinic for treatment. He spent several years there, this way he escaped the death sentence. After release from the hospital, he started living in the monastery and treated people with folk medicine. As a result, he became very popular. In parallel, he was distanced from Georgian Orthodox church, because he was an uncompromising person and could not tolerate the church's cooperation with Soviet regime. In the 90-ies, after regaining independence by the country, he continued to live in monastery, helping/healing people and avoiding the Church where comfortable life and fight for power became a norm. His popularity grew because of his decency and the skills to heal people. He died in 1995 and according to his will was buried in the garden of the monastery. His grave became the sacred place and had many pilgrims and visitors. After his death, the nun, mother Paraskeva, who took care of father Gabriel until his death, became a certain symbolic gatekeeper of father Gabriel, of his grave, and his personal belongings. After father Gabriel's death, his popularity increased even more. In 2012, the Georgian Orthodox church canonized him as the saint, and with this became his symbolic legal successor. In January 2014 mother Paraskeva told the people around her that she had a dream that those who would visit father Gabriel's grave before January 7, their two wishes would come true. Tens of thousands of people went to visit the grave, waiting for a miracle; the transportation on the highway connecting the capital to other regions of*

*Georgia was blocked during those days. Soon after this incident, in February, Georgian Orthodox church removed father Gabriel's relics (body) from the grave and transported it to Sameba cathedral and held the official funeral, which lasted for two weeks. Numerous pilgrims went to visit the cathedral. Many people wanted to attend the opening ceremonial of the grave but in cooperation with the government the church fenced the space with iron barriers, selected those who would attend the ceremonial and distributed the VIP passes among government representatives to assure their attendance. After everything was finished, father Gabriel was not returned to his grave, but instead was buried within the monastery building. Soon after these events mother Paraskeva, as she reported in a TV interview, was forced to leave the monastery. Thus, instead of mother Paraskeva, the church became the Gate Keeper of father Gabriel's legacy.*

This case clearly reflects several moments of destructive psychodynamics of basic assumptions: the massified people, following mother Paraskeva's dream, started pilgrimage to father Gabriel's grave waiting for a miracle. By having direct impact on a massified congregation mother Paraskeva in fact competed with the church and thus threatened their ownership of Father Gabriel's legacy. The church immediately reacted and assured own role as gatekeepers of Father Gabriel (via reburial, distributing the passes for ceremonial, holding public funeral, reburying father Gabriel to another place, against his will). The dissemination of VIP passes clearly shows shift from Massification to Aggregation catalyzed by the Church (by dividing the congregation into "goods" and "beds").

As we can see, the Georgian Orthodox Church and especially its leader play crucial role in realization of all the basic assumptions in the country. Since regaining independence, the Patriarch has become the most popular father figure in Georgia. The sociological surveys reflect his stable approval rating (NDI, 2014; NDI, 2015). The norms of the Georgian Orthodox Church – full obedience of the believers to their

“spiritual fathers”, forbidding the application of critical thinking both to the instructions received from them as well as to the religious dogma, and instrumentalization of fear (of God’s punishment) to achieve obedience – pretty much reproduce the totalitarian set up. This gives reason to suppose that the Georgian Orthodox Church and its leader filled a gap, which appeared after the country became independent and became a totalitarian object for the Georgian population as a large group.

## **4.7. Discussion**

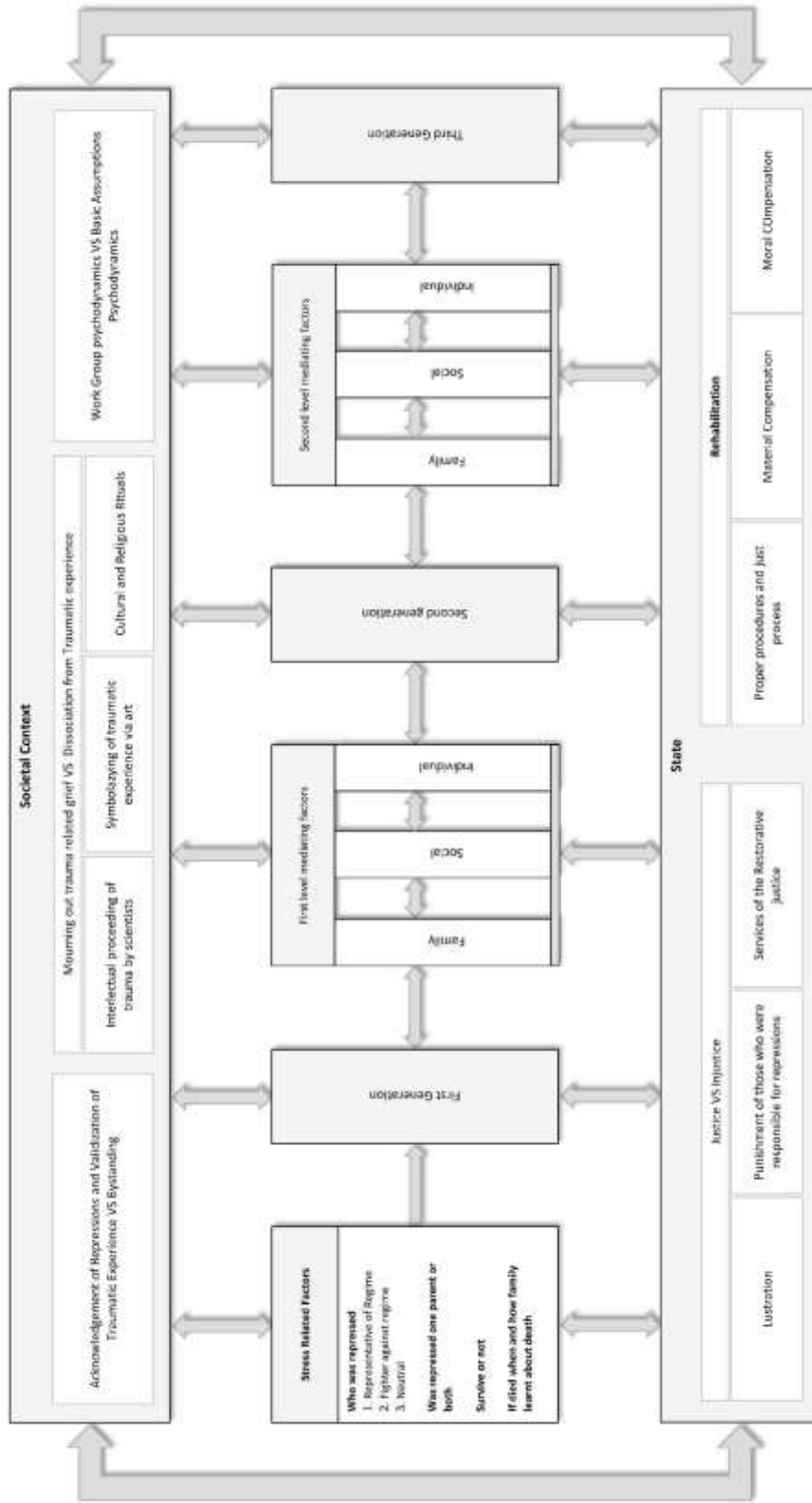
### **4.7.1. Psycho-Socio-Political Model of Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma**

Considering findings of the first and second components of our study together shows that repression trauma and its transgenerational transmission is a multidimensional phenomenon, which involves a complex system of interrelations and requires a complex multi-level vision and approach.

In order to understand this system of complex interrelationships as a whole, based on our research, a model of *Psycho-socio-political model of transgenerational transmission of trauma* was elaborated, which clarifies the dynamic interaction of the various level factors that are involved in trauma-transmission process (See Figure 2):

**Figure 2: Psycho-socio-political model of the Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma**

## Model of Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma



The inner part of the scheme shows impact of traumatic stressor on all three generations of repressed family, which is mediated by a number of factors of family, social and individual levels. The outer “layer” of the scheme shows the macro-social factors that are involved in transmission of trauma.

Below, based on a scheme, we will try to explain the factors that influence transgenerational transmission of trauma:

### *Exposure to Traumatic Stressor*

To gain insight in the repressions related trauma of the second generations, it is important to consider a number of characteristics of a traumatizing stressor itself, namely:

- Was one parent subjected to repression or was it both parents (the latter was a stronger risk factor);

- Did the parent(s) survive death or not;

- In case of death, how and when did the family members learn about it. Some families learnt about their family member’s execution (which took place immediately after arrest) in 1950-ies, which means that those families spent almost two decades in the state of ambiguous loss, with all the psychosocial consequences related to it (Boss, 2000);

- Who was the repressed – an active fighter against the regime, passive opposer of the regime, the regime representative, or someone neutral to the regime. Depending on who was the repressed (or, how he was qualified by the family members), families were putting different meaning in the fact of repression (“the hero”, “the victim of a misunderstanding”, etc.), which was influencing dealing with the traumatic experience.

### *Impact of repression related trauma on the second generation*

The impact of repression trauma on the second generation is mediated by individual, social and family level factors:

**Individual factors affecting the second generation.** Age of the second generation representative in the moment of repression is important here. While the first generation representatives were adults in the moment of repression, the second generation representative respondents were in the age range between infancy and pre-adolescence (10 years). Child's response to the traumatizing stressor depends on the parent's reaction (Cohen et al, 2006). In a result of repression, one or both parents would disappear from the family, and another (surviving) parent would suffer a lot, thus they cannot be supportive enough for the second generation in coping with the repression related trauma. Consequently, the second generation respondents were more vulnerable towards repression trauma, than the first generation representatives. This is in-line with the Latin-American psychotraumatologists' findings on the impact of political repression trauma on the sons and daughters of the repressed (Becker & Diaz, 1998).

In our case, considering a system of stressors that affected the second generation respondents, we can talk about so-called *adverse childhood experiences* (Felitti et al, 1998), and consequently - about *developmental trauma* (Van der Kolk, 2007). If we take into account that both the second and third generation respondents of our study describe persistent symptoms of hypervigilance, depression and difficulties of emotional regulation among the second generation representatives, as well as the characterological problems in some of them, we can assume that in some cases (of the second generation) clinical condition was manifested. As this condition was never identified and treated, it is possible to assume that later it developed into characterological problems.

Despite the high risk, not all the second generation representatives developed mental and physical health related problems, because apart from individual factors, they were a number of family and social factors influencing their well-being. The overall impact of the repression trauma depended on dynamic interaction between all these factors.

**Family factors affecting the second generation:**

- At which extend was family functional before the repression: If family was functioning good enough before repression, it played a role of protective factor after repression, in case if one of the parents survived repression/was present in the family;

- Composition of the family after repression: did one of the parents, or other family-members (grandmother, grandfather) present in the family or not, does the respondent have sibling(s). Presence of other family members in the family system also served as a protective factor;

- Family atmosphere after repression: generally, all respondents described the fear atmosphere which constantly accompanied the internal life of family;

- Communication on the fact of repression: the families differed in this regards. Some second generation representative had the possibility to reflect together with the first generation representative about the fact of repression which played a role of protective factor. However, here was important what messages the second generation representatives were receiving from the first generation representatives. If the message was “poor guy, it was a misunderstanding”, this prevented the second generation representative from putting meaning into traumatic experience and thus was a risk factor for dealing with it.

- The upbringing style: the research revealed a paradoxical pattern - hyper protection from the side of the survived parent (the first generation) and parentization from the side of the child (the second generation). This problematic pattern of upbringing and interrelations between the generations was preventing the

second generation from separation, individuation and achievement of autonomy. This paradoxical pattern was revealed in relationships between the second and third generations as well, which makes us to think that it was transmitted transgenerationally.

**Social factors affecting the second generation:**

- Social capital of family before and after repression: how many people were brave enough to greet them and say hello, how many were there ready to help them in times of need (i.e. providing food once a week, as was the case with one of our respondents). Perception of this social support was one of the main coping strategies for the second generation representatives;

- Presence of people (around the second generation representatives) who expressed positive attitude towards their repressed parent(s), opposite to scratching his/their face(s) from photographs – this helped the second generation representatives to overcome self-stigma and related identity problems;

- A number of other “relatives (children, wives) of people’s enemy” present around the second generation representatives in neighborhood or at school and how many “wives of people’s enemy”, among teachers at school. This helped the second generation representatives to *normalize* the problems related to “people’s enemy” stigma (and once again with self-stigma).

***The impact of repression related trauma on the third generation***

As the study revealed, the second generation was directly exposed to traumatizing stressors, therefore we talk about transgenerational transmission of trauma only in case of the third generation.

According to our model, the repression trauma is transmitting to the third generation “through” first and second generations, and is again mediated by the



number of factors existed on family, individual and social levels. We will describe each of these levels below.

**Family factors affecting the third generation:**

- Family atmosphere: fear related to repressions experience, anxiety related to parents' mental and physical health problems, etc.;

- Upbringing style: the paradoxical pattern (co-existence of hyper protection and parentization) described in relationships between the first and second generations repeats here (in relationships between the second and third generations) as well. It hinders the third generation's separation and individuation process, if not confronted/balanced by the emancipation and grouping with peers reactions of the third generation representatives. Some of the third generation respondents of our study described how circle of friends entered in power-struggle with their parents and helped them to achieve autonomy. However, it is important to consider the shared values and norms of the circle of friends as it might serve as a risk factor for anti-social behavior;

- Communication about repression within the family system. Based on study findings, we can distinguish four styles of communication on repression within family system: Reflective, Emotional, Emotional-reflective and Conspiracy of Silence. Conspiracy of Silence was preventing, while Emotional-reflective style was facilitating putting meaning into repression related traumatic experience, and consequently – dealing with it;

- Openness of the family system: Research revealed importance of the family's openness-closeness (and consequently trust-mistrust towards the social environment) which increases or decreases opportunities for a new person (the third generation's friend, girlfriend/boyfriend) to enter a family system. If the family system is open enough for new people, to some extent this compensates the paradoxical symbiosis of

hyper protection – parentization and serves as a protective factor for the third generation.

All the above-mentioned correspond to the findings of a number of studies on the mechanisms of transgenerational transmission of trauma (Bowen, 1976; Figley, 1988; Janoff-Bulman, 1992; Young et al, 2003; Maerker & Horn, 2013; Maerker & Hecker, 2016). In addition to these findings, based on our research, we identified and described three types of dysfunctional family system, peculiar to the impact of trauma caused by the repressive political regimen. Two of them are based on Dependency basic assumption (“Cult of Person” and “Lost Paradise” family systems described in the chapter of study findings), and the third – on Fight & Flight basic assumption (“Family – as a Battlefield” described in the Study findings chapter). Our conclusion is that the peculiar dysfunctions of the described family systems serve as systemic mechanism for transgenerational transmission of trauma from the first and second generations to the third generations of the repressed.

At which extend family dysfunction will affect the third generation representative depends on their resilience strategies, other individual and social factors influencing their life, and on dynamic interaction between all these factors.

**Social factors affecting the third generation:**

- Social circle of the third generation. It is important for the third generation respondent to separate from the family and enter new relationships. Our research revealed that in case of some respondents, their family members (the first and second-generation representatives) opposed them to have friends or girlfriend/boyfriend. Therefore, In terms of friends’ circle it is important if (s)he managed to integrate into that circle, what are the values of the circle, etc.;

- As latest studies show, resilience does not function in isolation. Resilience is the function of interaction between individual’s resilience strategies and his/her social environment (Maerker & Hecker, 2016). Therefore, the direct social environment is

also important in the sense that it gives the third generation representatives possibility to actualize-realize their individual resilience strategies.

**Individual factors affecting trauma transmission in third generation:**

- Age when the third generation representative learn about family member's repression. According to research, learning about it too late (i.e. in adulthood, or late adolescence) prevents the third generation representative to put meaning into the family's repression experience;

- Sense of humor. According to our study it is also important if the third generation representative has the sense of humor that he/she could apply to family trauma to distant from this experience. This is in-line with the results of Holocaust survivor families study in Brazil (Braga et al, 2012);

- The resilience strategies used by the third generation representatives. Ability to put meaning in the family trauma related to the repression experience is especially important here.

Since putting meaning into traumatic experience is one of the important indicators of its mastering (Lueger-Schuster, Bogensperger, 2014), while analyzing the research results, our special interest was focused on the success-failure of the third generation in this regards. The following factors facilitating success (especially in achieving the second stage of meaning-making – positive re-evaluation of the traumatic experience) were revealed: perception of a family member as the fighter against the regime (as opposed to the supporter of the regime or neutral) and, open conversations about family's experience of repressions since childhood, especially distinguished Emotional-reflective sharing style. The factors preventing meaning making were Conspiracy of Silence, and therefore absence of opportunity to reflect on repression experience, and viewing repression as a "misunderstanding". On the one hand, this is in-line with the Maerker and Hecker's study findings showing that the sharing style (on traumatic experience) used by the parents affects their children's

wellbeing (Maerker & Horn, 2013; Maerker & Hecker, 2016). On the other hand, our findings contradict Maerker and Hecker's research conclusions in the following: according to our research, despite the second generation's extreme traumatization and excessive emotional sharing, this helps the third generation representative to give meaning to the family's traumatic experience in case if the repressed family member is presented as the fighter against the regime. In terms of meaning-making, those third generation representatives, whose repressed family members served the regime and the families gave their family member's execution a qualification of "misunderstanding", were the most vulnerable. We may assume that this is characteristic to the overcoming of trauma that was experienced within the totalitarian regime in the post totalitarian period or during its weakening (because during regime's weakening and during post-totalitarian period, the image of a fighter against regime is positively reinforced).

*Societal and State level factors influencing the first, second and third generations' representatives*

**Societal Level Factors:**

The upper part of the scheme shows the societal level factors influencing transgenerational transmission of trauma. Here the following is important:

- To what extent does the society acknowledge the reality of repressions and validates the painful experience of traumatized families;

- To what extend the society creates possibilities to authentically mourn the repression trauma (through art, science, social activities, religious or other cultural rituals, etc.);

- To what extent is the society in the mode of Work group (as understood by Bion, 1961 and Hopper, 2003) as opposed to the psychodynamics that is determined by the basic assumptions of Dependency, Fight & Flight, Paring and Incohesion.

If the society acknowledges the repression trauma, works on its authentic mourning and is in the condition of a Work group, this creates the societal protective factors to overcome the repression trauma not only on societal level but also on family and individual levels. If the opposite happens, this creates risk factors for overcoming the repression trauma on all the three levels.

**State level Factors:**

The lower part of the scheme shows factors influencing transgenerational transmission of trauma on the state level. Here the following is important:

- To what extent does the state acknowledge injustice of repressions and in response to that, will it bring the legal mechanisms into force, implement lustration, try and punish the offenders;

- Whether the state provides the services of restorative justice (i.e. mental health services for second generation representatives who - as it was discovered through our research - have been experiencing hypervigilance symptoms throughout their entire life);

- Based on all the above mentioned, how well will the state conduct a just, procedurally and institutionally well-constructed rehabilitation process that will assure the repressed people's moral and material compensation.

If the above mentioned is not implied, the state creates favorable conditions for basic assumption psychodynamics, totalitarian object reproduction and keeps the country society within the totalitarian triangle. According to our study, this is confirmed by today's social-political dynamics of Georgia.

As it is shown in the scheme, all these levels and mediating factors are interrelated and affect each other; this means that in order to break the cycle of transgenerational transmission of trauma, it is necessary to catalyze the relevant processes on all the levels of the scheme.

#### **4.7.2. Paradox as a Survival Mode in the Totalitarian Period and as a Barrier to Development in the Post-Totalitarian Period**

The multiple paradoxes, revealed from the in-depth interviews with the respondents in the first component of the study, became subject of my special attention and interest. Therefore, in this sub-chapter I will discuss this issue in more detail.

The first component of our study (the research of the second and third generations of the repressed families) shows that a whole range of paradoxical reactions appear in these generations:

The second generation respondents view their repression survivor parent (mother) as weak and helpless, and simultaneously as the sole authoritarian leader of the family (hence a powerful figure);

Due to repression related anxiety, the first generation representatives use the hyper-protection upbringing strategy towards their children; at the same time, the second generation representatives, due to the first (repressed) generation's repression related anxiety, imply parentization. The Hyper-protection & Parentization pattern reveals itself in the relationships between the second and third generations as well. This paradoxical pattern significantly limits the second and third generations' individualization and separation processes, and therefore, achievement of autonomy. This indicates the insecure, ambivalent style of attachment, which can be regarded as symbolic correlate of traumatic bonding. This finding echoes to the findings of Bar-on study on attachment type in the Holocaust survivors' families (Bar-on, 1998);

The second generation's resilience strategies are based on good performance at school and job places, and achievement of professional excellence. At the same time, they try to be invisible, because "visibility" is perceived as containing threat of repression;

One of the key resilience strategies of the second generation is integration into totalitarian system and passing through all steps of Soviet “factory” (being a pioneer, member of Young Communist Union, Communist party member, etc.). At the same time, they secretly try to separate themselves from the system and use spiritual practices to do so (i.e. praying);

The third generation representatives are loyal towards the Soviet system and becoming members of it (as “Young Leninist”/pioneer, “Young Communists Union members”/Komsomolets, Communist Party members) is a norm for them. At the same time, they are critical towards the system;

- The Hyper-protection combined with Parentization paradoxical pattern observed between the first and second generations repeats itself again in interaction of the second and third generations.

Based on all the described above, both the second and third generations are in a certain state of schism, simultaneously implementing a number of mutually exclusive strategies at the same time. Additionally, the second and third generations (thanks to their parents’ narratives) have split the social reality into “good” and “bad”. Consequently, the respondents are split internally, which in fact keeps them in Klein’s Paranoid-schizoid state.

The State, on its turn, implies double-binding strategies in relation to the repressed families as well, i.e.:

Repressing a family member, and at the same time awarding another member of the same family with Stalin’s or, Lenin’s orders (at kindergarten, or, school or at work);

Acknowledging innocence of repressed people (during Soviet rehabilitation), and at the same time, explaining it only as Stalin’s and his team’s fault and not fault of the totalitarian system as such; thus, preventing moral, procedural and material compensation for the victims’ families;

The double binding strategies from the side of the State went on in the post-Soviet Georgia as well: again, implementation of rehabilitation on the one hand, and sparing the efforts to build relevant institutional mechanisms for moral, procedural and material compensation on the other hand.

Gregory Bateson described the algorithm of double-binding communication:

- the first subject has a certain power over the second subject (1);
- because of this the second subject cannot leave the communication field (2);
- the first subject gives the second subject contradictory instructions (3);
- as a result, the second subject is either immobilized and learns helplessness, or has internal splitting, or these two conditions take place at the same time – i.e. simultaneous identification with victim and aggressor (4) (Bateson, 2000).

This phenomenon, described by Bateson, in fact describes the communication pattern in totalitarian situation and possible reactions as well, where the optimal option for self-survival is possibly the congruency of the system and hence the schism.

Consequently, we should assume that in the totalitarian period, in the context of the state's double-binding strategies, the second generation's paradoxicality was the relevant survival strategy. If we use a famous formula of psychotraumatology this was "a normal reaction to abnormal situation" (Marmar et al, 1993). This assumption, derived from our research corresponds to Dan Bar-On's conclusion, based on meta-analysis of the three Holocaust studies in three different countries (Holland, Israel and Canada) (Marmar et al, 1993). In particular, based on research data analyses, he revealed two paradoxes. One of them is identical to ours: Hyper-protection combined with Parentization; the second pattern described by Bar-On was controversy between concealing of trauma by the parent in order to spare the child and as a response, the emerging sense of insecurity in child. Beyond those, paradoxes Bar-On presumed insecure (ambivalent and disorganized) attachment and concluded that this type of



attachment was the adaptive strategy in the context of families who had endured the Holocaust trauma (Bar-On, 1998). Bar-On sees the problem with this type of attachment only in relation to the vulnerability towards stressful situations. However, in our opinion, the schisms determined by the described above multiple paradoxes is a problem (impediment) not only in terms of tolerance to stress, but it prevents normal development – on the individual, family and societal levels – in the post totalitarian period. This creates a vicious circle: described internal splitting in one (repressed) part of the society (we can call them ‘Identified Victims’) does not serve well to the improvement of socio-political climate. Similarly, the double standard politics towards repression trauma by the state as well as the society, continued during post-soviet period as well, does not help the repressed families to overcome the repression trauma. All this hinders the mourning of trauma on individual, family and societal levels and feeds the problematic (based on the basic assumptions and not the work group condition) socio-political dynamics; this creates fertile context for reproduction of internalized totalitarian object and keeps (detains) the Georgian society in the totalitarian triangle.

#### **4.7.3. Manifestation of Repressions Related Trauma in the Second and Third Generations. How and What Transmits Transgenerationally**

The impact of repression trauma manifests through psychopathological symptoms (hypervigilance, avoidance, negative cognitions about oneself and the surrounding social reality) in the second generation, which is not surprising because the second generation representatives themselves were exposed to the traumatic stressor. This corresponds to the research findings on the problem patterns among the children of Holocaust survivors (Kellerman, 2001), and also to the analysis of clinical cases referring directly to the traumatized children of the victims of repressive political

regimes, reported by Latin-American colleagues in Chile and Argentina (Becker & Diaz, 1998; Edelman et al, 1998).

Our research did not reveal psychopathological symptoms in the third generation of our respondents. At this stage our goal was not the assessment of their mental health condition – we did not conduct appropriate screening tests, and unlike the second generation, the psychopathological symptoms were not evident with “naked eye”. It is possible that the third generation representatives do not even have the psychopathological problems – and the explanation could be found based on our model – via studying various level protective factors and their interaction. The opposite is also possible, the third generation might have mental health problems, but as in the family (in parents’ generation) there is a long lasting “tradition” of overlooking the trauma related mental health problems, these problems could be normalized and the respondents might not be able to imagine how they can feel better. This phenomenon has been described based on research of Georgian IDP population (Makhashvili, 2014). In any case, in order to answer this question, further research is required.

Our research revealed problems insecure type of attachment (in the context of paradoxical coexistence of hyper-protection & parentization) both among the second and third generations, which complicate separation, individualization and autonomy and, underlie characterological problems and problems in social relationships. These finding corresponds to the studies done by Rieck, Magids and Liceto, in different times among the second and third generations of Holocaust survivals (Rieck, 1994; Magids, 1998, Liceto et al, 2011). Hyper-protection & parentization paradoxical pattern was revealed both in the second and third generations, therefore we can assume that attachment problems are transmitted transgenerationally.

According to our study findings, repression trauma most visibly manifests itself during making important life decisions, as are choosing a profession, choosing a

partner, etc. This indicates that the impact of repression on the lives of the second and third generations is revealed in the life path that is shaped by the family's repression experience, resilience strategies, social factors affecting these strategies and their dynamic interaction.

#### **4.7.4. Gender Issue**

During research planning, we did not think about studying the issue in relation to gender, however in the process of analyzing the data, we had an interesting finding with regard to gender, which I would like to discuss. Part of the respondents talked about their grandmothers' (first generation) personal growth in relation to the experienced trauma. These are the grandmothers who, according to the second generation's narratives were depressed and suffer from physical or mental health problems; on the other hand, they took the place of "the head of the family", they worked hard and were strong enough to feed and protect the families. The third generation already perceived them as independent, self-confident, in some cases – "the charismatic leaders of the family". It is possible that this situation contributed to the change of gender stereotypes, at the very least in their own families. This corresponds to Benzo and Magi's research on Holodomor research, according to which during Holodomor, death of large number of men resulted in women's overtaking of their places, which caused the changes in gender roles on societal level (Benzo & Magi, 2015b). The issue needs the further research.

#### ***4.8. Limitations and Delimitations of the Study***

Qualitative research undoubtedly has its limitations: it cannot be generalized to all the repressed families and (the second and the third generation) members of the families. But it was not my aim: instead of numbers and statistics, my research interest was to understand the repression impact on the families and the resilience strategies.

The lack of generalization could be viewed more as a specificity of the research rather than a limitation. That's why the research subject selection was based on the non-random principle considering that the research would not show the whole second and the third generation of the repressed families.

It is important to mention that I am from a repressed family. This could also be considered as a limitation. My grandfather from my mother's side was resettled to Siberia in 1937; he came back after 8 years, with heart problems and died relatively young. In this research, my family history may have influenced my scientific integrity. Therefore, coding strategy was used to avoid my possible subjectivity: we coded all the text lines, discussed the coding issues that we originally had a little disagreement on, and came to mutual conclusions. Having realized my family history's possible influence, I wrote the reflection document of my research, where I asked various questions about the in-depth questionnaire and challenged my own conclusions. All these strategies alleviated my potential subjectivity.

The young age of the second-generation participants could also be viewed as a research limitation: they were less than 10 years old during the repression period. If they had been older than 10 then (teenagers, for example), the repression may have had a different influence on them. At the given moment, it is impossible to find out what would have been the difference, because the people who were teenagers during the repression years are not available for research now.

As for the second component of the study (impact of totalitarian trauma on societal level), we can consider as a limit that all the case studies which served as the material for our analyses are based only on the publicly available statistical, textual/printed and audio-visual information. We did not conduct interviews with the involved in the cases stakeholders, which would probably provide us with the additional material for case analyses. However, as we were interested in analyses of the discourses available publicly, we consider that the method was congruent to objective of our analyses and the research questions to answer.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

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Trauma inflicted by the Soviet totalitarian regime to Georgia is not mourned and therefore has not been overcome. During totalitarian regime, the entire society was subjected to a complex system of stressors – among them *intrusion of totalitarian object* (Sebek, 1996), double binding (Bateson, 2000), and in response, developed schisms and regression to Paranoid-Schizoid position (Bion, 1961, Hopper, 2003, Klein, 1997, Volkan, 2009). However, in parallel with the impact of these common stressors, characteristic to the totalitarian context, the repressed families suffered far more severe traumatization and loss: imprisonment and execution of a loved one, psychosocial problems related to carrying the stigma of “the enemy of people”, etc. As a result, they in fact became the most vulnerable group of the totalitarian society. Based on this we can conventionally call them “Identified victims” of the totalitarian regime.

In case if the state and the society had cared for the repressed families (‘Identified Victims’ of the system) in post totalitarian period, they could have become exactly that Entry Point that would help to start the work on healing of the Georgian. However, this did not happen. Lustration did not take place, the justice process focused at dealing with the past was not put in motion, and adequate institutional mechanisms for rehabilitation of the repressed persons/families were not established. As a result, the dissociated, encapsulated, fragmented past experience of totalitarian trauma comes to life in one form or another in Georgia’s social, political, family and individual realities. As Earl Hopper writes: “Within traumatized societies, people tend to repeat traumatic experience within their families, schools, military, political and religious institutions and organizations, and within their groups generally.” (Hopper, 2003, pp. 63), and in this regard Georgia is not an exception.

Totalitarian trauma, unprocessed at social-political, family and individual levels manifests itself as fear of identity annihilation and in response - regress of a Georgian society as a large group (according Volkan, 2009a) and Basic Assumptions based (Bion, 1961, Hopper, 2003) socio-political psychodynamics. As a result, the nation is split into “good” and “bad” (“Nats” and “Kots”, “Zviadists” and “Putchists”, etc.). Primitive defense mechanisms come into action and the society exists in Paranoid-schizoid infantile position described by Melanie Klein.

According to our research, in the repressed families, if there is a vicious development, (which depends on multiple factors shown in our model), totalitarian trauma manifests itself as three types of vicious family systems. Out of those three, two are based on *Dependency* basic assumption (“Personality cult” and “The Lost Paradise” family system patterns); the third pattern (“Family as a Battlefield”) is based on *Fight & Flight* basic assumption.

At individual level, some of the second generation representatives have trauma-related psychopathological symptoms (most commonly - hypervigilance); the third generation did not reveal any psychopathological symptoms. At the same time, the paradoxical co-existence of Hyper-protective up-bringing strategy from the side of the parents and Parentization from the side of the children were revealed both in relationships of the first and second, and the second and third generations. The revealed pattern keeps both generations in symbiotic bonding and threatens children’s separation, individuation and achievement of autonomy.

Research revealed a whole range of contradictory (paradoxical) patterns and strategies in the second and third generation representatives. These patterns facilitated their internal split and division of the reality into “good” and “bad” objects, which corresponds to the Kleinian Paranoid-schizoid position. This was useful for self-survival during totalitarian period, in the regime’s double binding context, but became a problem in the post totalitarian period and obstructs development.

Within the frames of research, from psychotraumatology perspective, based on the study of the second and third generations of repressed families and, analysis of modern Georgia's social-political life, a Psycho-social-political model of transgenerational transmission of trauma was elaborated. This model shows that transgenerational transmission of trauma is a multi-dimensional, multi-level, complex process. How the "inherited" trauma of family repression manifests in specific representatives of the third generation depends on individual, family, social, socio-political and cultural factors and their interaction. One individual's trauma has the potential to influence the entire system. A large group's trauma (the whole generation's trauma) has potential for bigger impact on the surrounding social-political reality. In order to break the traumatization cycle, it is necessary to work on specific changes on all the levels of this model and catalyze relevant changes.

The elaborated Psycho-socio-political Model of Transgenerational Transmission of Trauma enables us to draw up recommendations in order to break the described vicious cycle in Georgia. At given stage of our country's life, the work on reprocessing of totalitarian trauma should concentrate in the upper part of the scheme, on the societal level, with State's help. Neither the state nor the society are ready to concentrate on the lower part of the scheme (lustration, restorative justice, building/developing institutional mechanisms for rehabilitation etc.) as none of them realize importance of work on dealing with the totalitarian past and, corresponding Software factors (Volkan, 2006) for healing the society.

The work on dealing with the totalitarian past should start by raising awareness on importance of this. This will help the society to start authentic mourning of the totalitarian period. Below is a set of recommendations focused at intellectual exploration and symbolic reprocessing of the totalitarian period to trigger further processes of dealing with the past.

### *Recommendations for Dealing with the Totalitarian Past*

- Breaking the Conspiracy of silence may start within academic circles, via intensifying research of the totalitarian period. Therefore, it is important to stimulate historians, psychologists, lawyers, and other scientists, to intensify efforts in the direction of exploring totalitarian period of Georgia, preferably in a multidisciplinary format and conclude corresponding lessons;

- To study particular cases of repressions (i.e. the events happening in the 30-ies at Writers' Union, or in the Georgian theatrical society) by multidisciplinary teams with participation of not only scientists but also by media and art representatives, which will enable us to spread the jointly elaborated information in multiple formats (media, audio-visual, print, etc.), including symbolic formats;

- The material resources for research on totalitarian trauma should be allocated not only by foreign funds (i.e. Heinrich Boell Foundation), but also by the Georgian government. This will be both real as well as symbolic gesture showing the political will to deal with the totalitarian period;

- The legal environment should allow interested scientists to work on the relevant archive materials. In this regard, I would strongly recommend to amend the *Georgian Law on National Archive and Archival Fund*, to make documents of the totalitarian period accessible to the historians;

- It is important to raise awareness of young generation of artists about totalitarian past, to increase their involvement in symbolization and memorization of the totalitarian experience;

- It is also desirable to think about symbolization of repression trauma in terms of religious ceremonies;

- It is necessary to initiate intersectorial cooperation (with participation of the Georgian Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of culture, Ministry of Justice and local governance structures representatives as well as the academics/experts



community), in order to elaborate the strategy and action plan for memorizing the repressions related past. This can be about creating a special museum, or, considering the German experience of dealing with the past, installing large number of easily accessible, relatively cheap small-scale memorials in the public spaces;

- The strategy of informing the young generation about the totalitarian past should be elaborated for public schools and higher education institutions, to avoid further suppression/dissociation from the totalitarian past in the country and to give the next generations chance to learn appropriate lessons from the country's history.

All these will lay the foundation for reprocessing of the totalitarian past on political level (lower part of the model scheme) and for authentic mourning of totalitarian trauma. According to Hopper, Klein and Volkan, if the large group mourns the trauma authentically, this makes the group healthier. In this case, the vicious cycle of basic assumptions based psychodynamics will break and, the social system will transform to the condition of a *Work group*. According to Earl Hopper, this will lead the members of the society to „...increased sense of personal autonomy... development of a hopeful attitude, the capacity for trust and optimism, and a new or renewed commitment to law and order... These qualities of personal and collective life lead to more satisfactory social adjustment – by which I do not mean submission and acquiescence – to the prevailing social, cultural and political conditions, allowing for attempts to change those conditions that are felt to be unacceptable, or in other words, to good citizenship.” (Hopper, 2003, pp.62-63).

### ***Recommendations for further research***

The presented phenomenological research is an attempt to cartography the “intact (not studied) territory” of the psycho-socio-political impact of the totalitarian period repressions on our country. Studying impact on individual, family and societal levels enabled me to elaborate the Psycho-social-political model of transgenerational

transmission of trauma. It can be viewed as a conceptual framework for conducting a series of research on transgenerational transmission of trauma. The identified mediating factors on each level of central part of the scheme are in fact the hypotheses, which must be subjected to verification through research. The outer upper and lower parts of the scheme allow the multidisciplinary approach to studying the repression trauma, together with historians, law specialists, sociologists, representatives of political sciences, etc. Thus, using Winston Churchill's words, given research "is not an end, it is not beginning of end, it is not even beginning, it is the beginning of the beginning". I hope it breaks a certain Conspiracy of Silence about the totalitarian past within the circle of my colleagues and will prepare the ground for series of research aimed at verifying the proposed model.

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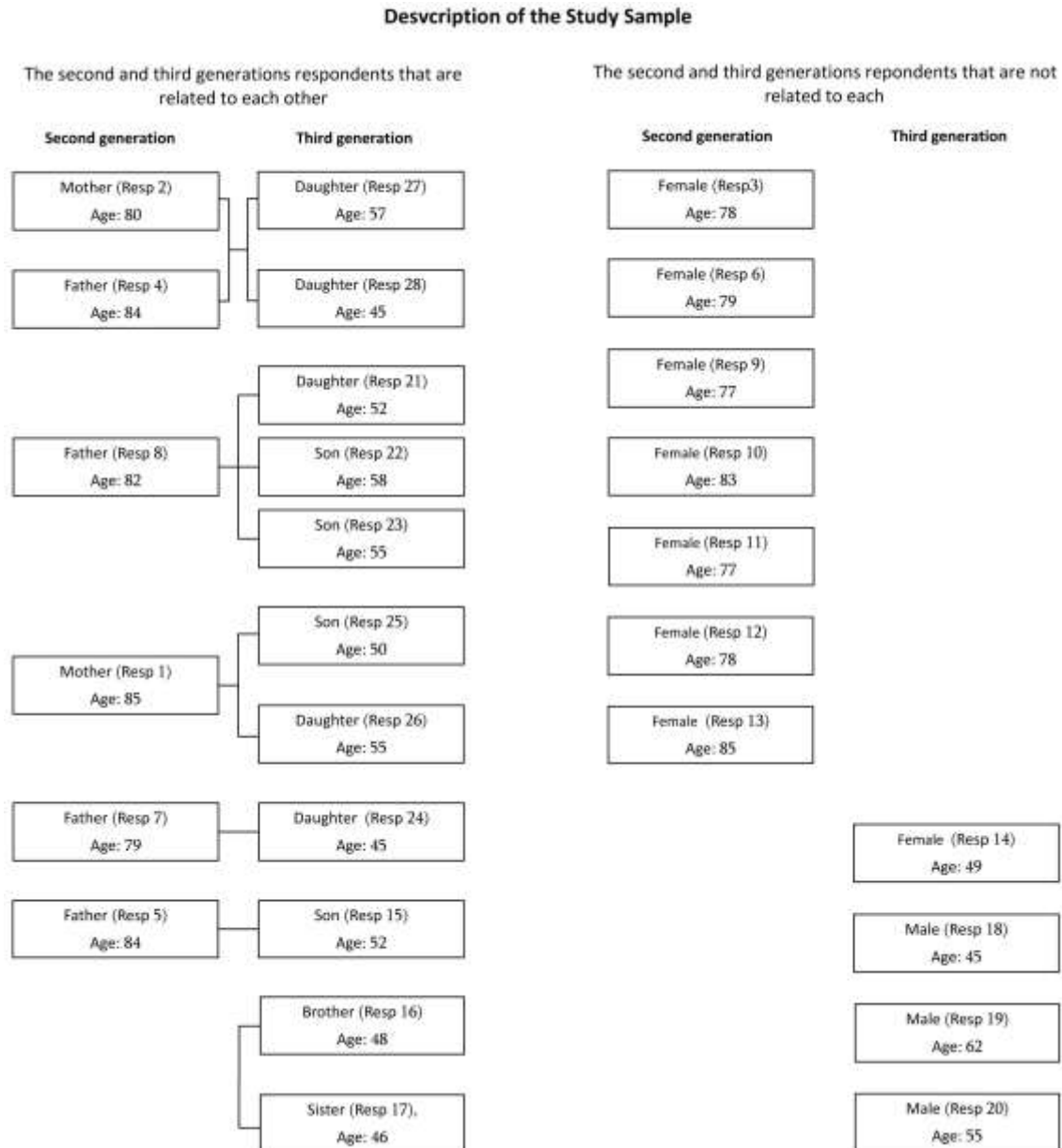
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## 7. Appendixes

### Appendix no.1:

Figure 3: Description of the Study Sample via Showing Inter-relationships between the respondents of the Second and Third Generations





### Appendix no.3: In-depth Interview Guide for the Second Generation

1. What can you say me about your family history?
2. What do you remember about repression of your family member(s)?
  - How arrest was implemented, in which period of day or night, at home or at another place, if at another place – how did you learn about it, who, what and how told you; if you witnessed it do you remember how was it implemented? how old you were then, what was your reaction, what were reactions of your family members, how did you and your family members explain what had happened?
3. What do you know/remember about your family's life before the repression?
  - Who lived in the family, where did you live, what kind of atmosphere was within the family, do you remember your relationships with the repressed family member, How was it? Do you remember how decisions were made in family, what were the rules, traditions, rituals before the repression?
4. What did change in the family after repression?
  - Who staid in family, where did you live, did you speak about repression and repressed family member or not, how the family atmosphere changed, how rules, rituals, traditions, process of decision-making did change? What do you remember about physical and mental health of the family members then?
5. How did the relationships with the social surrounding change after the repression?
  - Did the circle of friends changes, who staid with you and who left, who were helping, who not, whom did you perceive as unfriendly, whom did you perceived as friendly?..

6. What kind of attitude towards yourself and your family did you observe/face from the side of the different institutions (kindergarten, school, university, job-place) and people you were meeting there?
  - Do you remember kindergarten? Do you have any memories from there?
  - At school? How school administration and teachers treated you?
  - What about university?
  - At job-place?
7. Do you know what resilience is? (defining the term together with the respondent)
  - What resilience strategies did you and your family members imply then?  
How these strategies changed in the course of life?
8. How do you think, what kind of impact trauma related to repression of your family member has on your life? On life of your current family?
  - Could you please share your life-story, about way you live, your life-style, principles you follow, methods of decision-making you imply, values you are based on? Which values you are based on in upbringing of you children, what do you try to pass on them?
9. What is your „Theory of repression“?
  - How did you explain repression then (not only your family members repression but repressions which were going around you, with other people, other families?
  - How do you explain repressions now?
  - Can you look at the repression history of your family as experience which can enrich you in terms of personal growth or changing values, contributing to your wisdom? If yes, what in particular you would like to share in this regards.
10. What would you say about rehabilitation?

- Is your family member rehabilitated? Is what was done by the State in terms of material, moral, procedural compensation/satisfaction of your family, sufficient and helpful in dealing with repression experience?
11. Would you lie to add something, which is important to you, but we have not touched so far?

#### **Appendix no.4: In-depth Interview Guide for the Third Generation Respondents**

1. What would you say me about your family history?
2. When and how did you learn about repressions?
  - Who said you, when, how, what was your reaction – what did you think, feel, how did you behave in responde? Did anything change after learning about it for you, or inside you?
  - Did you have conversations about repressions and repressed family member in the family? Who was speaking with you about it, how, what were the key messages?
3. What do you know about your family’s life before the repression, what kind of narratives your family members or relatives share about it?
  - Did family members speak on this theme in the family? Who? How often?
  - What do you know about how did they live before the repression, what was family structure, what kind of family atmosphere there was, what kind of relationship your father/mother had with the repressed family member, what do you know about him/her?
  - What kind of family rules they had then, who and how was making decisions – do you know anything about that?.. What kind of family traditions and rituals did they imply?
4. What do you know about repression?
  - What was cause of it?
  - Which sentence was applied to your family member, did (s) he survived or not, if not – how and when the family learned about that?
  - Do you know (from family narratives) how the arrest was implemented, which time of day or night, did it happen at home or outside, if outside, how your parent learned about that, what was his/her reaction, how family members explained the fact of arrest?

5. What do you know about how your parent's life changed after the repression?
  - Who remained in the family, did they change place of living or not, was the flat or any other goods confiscated?
  - Can you recall if your family members had conversations in your presence about the repressed family member? What they say about changes which were brought/triggered by the repression? How do you know, did the family atmosphere change? How? What about physical and mental health of the family members?
  - How family and family members were coping with the changed life circumstances?
6. What is your and was your family members reactions on repression of your family member?
  - What do you know about your family members thoughts, feelings, behavior in response to the repression and changes which it brought?
7. How do you know, did anything changed in their relationships with the social surrounding since repression?
  - Did a circle of family's friends change? Who remained with them and maintained friendship, who left, who was helping, who was not, where there people whom they perceived as threatening? Did these narratives influenced your Worldview, relationships with other people?
8. Did you ever noticed that repression background of your family plaid some role in relationships or attitudes from the different institutions and people working or studying there:
  - In the kindergarten?
  - At school? From teachers and school administration?
  - At the university?
  - At job-place?

9. Do you know what resilience is? (sharing definition);
  - What kind of resilience strategies your parents implied to cope with the stress caused by repression trauma? Other family members? You?
10. How do you think, what kind of impact your family members (grandfathers or/and grandmothers) repression has on your life (as representative of the third generation), on your current family life?
  - Could you please share your life story, say something about your life style, principles, values, way you live? How do you make choices, what are orienteers and rules in decision-making?
  - What kind of rules are in place in your current family?
  - How do you make decisions?
  - Which values you try to pass on your children, can you say few words about up-bring strategies you and your family imply?
11. What was your parents explanation of repressions and how do you explain:
  - What is your „repression theory“?
  - What is your parents „repression theory“?
12. Could you look at the repression history of your family as experience which enriched you and/or your family in this or that sense? Contributed to your personal growth? Wisdom? Forming of values? If yes, what can you say in this regards?
13. How you view the rehabilitation – do you feel/think/consider that your repressed family member and family in general is rehabilitated?
  - What kind of information do you have about rehabilitation and what is the source of this information?
  - What is done so far by the State do you think it is satisfactory enough in terms of moral, material, procedural satisfaction?



- If you would plan/design rehabilitation process, how would you design it, what would be your approach?
14. Would you like to add something, which is important to you, but we have not touched so far?