GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY IN GEORGIA

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Abstract
       The author describes the so-called Post-Soviet Phenomena and defines its aspects.   The article shows Past and Present conditions of Group psychotherapy and its Current and future challenges and perspectives. The paper describes the correlation between post-Soviet phenomena and the challenges of practicing psychodynamic group psychotherapy.

Keywords: Group psychotherapy, Georgia

Introduction
       E. Hopper (1996) stressed that the groups and their participants are constrained unconsciously by social, cultural and political facts and forces as well as unconscious. He writes: "The central theme in my work is the study of the constraints of social systems on people and their internal worlds, and, in turn, the effects on social systems on unconscious fantasies, actions, thought, and feelings. An analysts who is unaware of effects of social facts and social forces cannot be sensitive to the unconscious recreation of them within the therapeutic situation. He will not be able to provide a space for patients to imagine how their identities have been formed at particular historical and political junctures, and how this continues to affect them throughout their lives" (Hopper, 1996). According to him, here and now is influenced by the there and then in ways that affect the group's functioning. Identifying this influence accents what is possible or not possible in the therapy group as a social microcosm or mirror of the society in which it is embedded (Hopper, 2003).
       Thomas Singer and Samuel L. Kimbles (2004) developed the notion of a cultural complex from Jung's theory of complexes to build a new idea for the purpose of understanding the psychology of group conflict. Cultural complex, as defined by authors in their books "Cultural Complexes" is a psychoanalytical term applied in a global anthropological context to help describe the splintering of identity and resultant anger and conflicts in the post –Soviet, non-binary era. Cultural complexes are highly emotional, function independently of the ego, and possess multilayered dimensions, their content being structured by archetypal, cultural, and personal elements. They also suggest that cultural complexes can

manifest in the individual psyche as a collective inheritance, formed over generations. A cultural complex, then, is a psychological complex applied to the collective consciousness of a group, as well as its individual members. The authors have defined cultural complexes as tending "to be repetitive, autonomous, resist consciousness, and collect experience that confirms their historical point of view." (Singer and Kimbles, 2004).

In order to explain the conditions of Group psycho therapy in Georgia , I would like to describe the phenomena that we inherited from the Soviet Union.

The past
Soviet Mentality

Soviet Ideology has had an important influence upon the development of psychiatry in Georgia. The Soviet Mentality included: 1. Materialistic world view; 2. Authoritarianism; and 3.Intolerance against dissidence.

Materialistic world view

During Soviet Times, Psychiatry and Psychotherapy was based on the materialistic understanding of a human being**.** Although Marxism-Leninism distinguishes dialectical materialism from the reductionism of crude materialism, which fails to account for the significance of social and cultural life. (Calloway P. 1992**).**

During the early years, there was a small psychoanalytical movement based in Moscow. In the 1920s, there was a Moscow section of the International Psychoanalytical Association. Russian Psychoanalytical Society was disbanded in 1933.

Authoritarianism

The relationship between the State and the People can be characterized as one between the Master and the Slave (Hegel, 1807). The state power, especially the Leader, has always been identified as a masculine human being - a strong, just, merciless father, who protects, supports and takes care of the people (Urbanovich, 1999). Yet Russia was a closed and isolated political system. It was based on dogmatization of social life and society, with rigid norms to which one had to conform and obey (Chaadayev, 1970; 1991; McNally, 1969; Kliuchevskii, 1960). In this grey and oppressive atmosphere, people had to conform to survive. Such a system can give birth to a benevolent dictator or a "tyrannical omnipotent father." Russia has almost always created conditions favorable to the rise of such omnipotent and tyrannical leaders, violators of human's rights and dignity, such as Ivan the Terrible, Peter the Great and Stalin. At the individual level, the internalization of

such figures leads to the creation of a rigid and destructive super-ego that can easily degenerate into an internal totalitarian persecutor.

Intolerance against dissidence

Snezhnevsky A. (1960, 1970) widened the frames of Schizophrenia. People who were against Soviet regime could be treated as having personality disorders or psychosis with slow -flow Schizophrenia i.e. Psychopathic-like Schizophrenia. Thus there was theoretical and legal substantiation for using compulsory, involuntary treatment of dissidents in psychiatric hospitals. Sane people were admitted to psychiatric hospitals and treated against their will. (Calloway, 1992). The practice began with the revolution. However, it was only from the 1960s onwards, with the growth of civil rights movements within the Soviet Union, that there was awareness of the issue in the West.

Theory and Practice of Psychotherapy
The Leningrad and Moscow Schools of Group Psychotherapy

Personality theory based upon the theory of attitude was developed by Miasishchev V.N. (1893-1973). Miasishchev considered that the most important aspect of personality was the system of relationships/attitudes or attitude (especially the social relationships), but this was not independent of the functioning of the brain or Pavlovian physiological Principles (Miasischev, 1960).

Pathogenetic psychotherapy was the only dynamically oriented psychotherapeutic approach within the Soviet Union. The aim of pathogenetic psychotherapy is reconstruction of the disturbed system of relationships/attitudes. The disruption of the attitude should normally be resolved by satisfying a need, resolving the contradiction, or changing the relationships or attitude. Failure of resolution produces a state of tension and excitability in which thought processes become subjective and behavior lacks clear direction so that it is no longer adaptive.

The psychology of relationships/attitudes or attitude is becoming increasingly used in soviet psychotherapy. It is taught at All -Union psychotherapy center in Moscow under the guidance of Prof. V.E. Rozhnov. The All Union psychotherapy center helped psychotherapists from all over the Soviet Union to learn more about depth psychology and group psychotherapy.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation has a special place in soviet Psychiatry. According to M. Kabanoff (Kabanoff, 1978), systems theory is more helpful in rehabilitation than simple psychoanalytic or behaviour models. (These allow one to avoid the dichotomy of social versus biological.) He wrote that rehabilitation presents an

arena for systemic activity, where interacting participants became an organism that is an open system, altering social and biological environment.

Professor M.M. Kabanoff was the director of St Petersburg V. Bekterev Psychoneurological Research Institute. He was Director of the first rehabilitation Psychiatric department in USSR. He considered Rehabilitation as a dynamic system of measures and activities that included medical, psychological and social ones. The rehabilitation concept developed by him and his associates had wide application in medical practice in USSR.

Group Psychotherapy

Group psychotherapy in the former Soviet Union could be described as authoritarian, hierarchical, psycho-educational, and directive. Psychotherapists did not necessarily have psychiatric training, although they were usually medically trained (Calloway, 1992).

Therapy groups are led by doctors and psychologists. Techniques used are: 1.Nonverbal   activities: psychogymnastics, pantomimes, miming; 2.Discussion: A) Biographical (discussion of the past) B) Thematic; (discussion of general problems such a Health, Neurosis, Healthy Relationship, Conflicts) C) Interactive (Analysis of interactions, Role-playing and role reversal) Transference issues are not discussed (Libich, 1974 Karvasarsky, 1975).

Georgian Psychiatry and Psychotherapy
Mikhail Asatiani and Jungian Influence

Georgian psychiatry differed from the Soviet one. The founder of the Georgian Psychiatric School and Institute of Psychiatry, Mikhail Asatiani, practiced psychoanalytical treatment. In 1908 he met C.G. Jung. After this event, for the first time in the history of the Russian psychiatry, the outline of C.G. Jung's Analytical Psychology was published (Asatiani, 1910). The tradition of psychodynamic approaches was continued by Serge Tsuladze who studied medicine psychiatry and psychoanalysis in Paris at Sorbonne University (Miller, 2001). He was analyzed by the famous French psychoanalyst Francoise Dolto. In 1961, he came back to Georgia and started to work in M. Asatiani's Institute of Psychiatry in Tbilisi Georgia. In 1978, a conference was held in Tbilisi dedicated to the problems of the unconsciousness. This conference was attended by: George H. Pollock from Chicago Institute for Psychoanalysis, North western University Medical School; Silvano Ariety from New York Medical College; Roman Osipovich Jacobson from Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institutes of Technology; Didier Anzieu and Serge Leclaire from Paris University; Gunter Ammon from German Academy for Psychoanalysis and others (A Collective Monograph, Tbilisi, 1978).

Uznadze Theory of Set.

It is worth mentioning the contribution of the Georgian school of Psychology and its founder D. Uznadze (1887-1950). He was the first among soviet psychologists to acknowledge and experimentally prove the ontological existence of the unconscious mind. He elaborated the Theory of Set (Uznadze, 1933, 1966). According to him, the unconscious exists as a set (Uznadze, 1966).

D. Uznadze received education in Germany, under the guidance of the famous German Psychologist, W. Wundt (1832-19200)**,** one of the founders of Experimental Psychology. Under his influence, Uznadze became interested in exploring the unconscious mind. According to Uznadze (1939, 1966), in classical Depth Psychology, the ontological content of the unconscious is substantiated theoretically but not empirically; (the unconscious is a hypothesis but not reality). Uznadze recognized the need to study processes that lay beyond the boundaries of consciousness and accepted the principle that these unconscious processes determined the direction and content of psychic activity. He maintained that man has no true idea of the true sources of his motivation - they remain hidden. According to him, the ontological nature of the unconscious is a Set that cannot be conceived of in purely physiological or purely mental terms. Set constitutes a primary, mentally and physiologically integrated state of personality, out of which the purely physiological and purely mental activity derived (through abstraction).

Uznadze attempted to prove experimentally the existence of Set. In his experiment Set is revealed through the fixation process. During the experiment the subjects are exposed repeatedly to objects (for example: two balls) differing in size. After exposing him two objects equal in size these were perceived as unequal. Uznadze thinks that this demonstrates the effect of preliminarily fixated Set. The Set explains the purposefulness of any behavior, since it represents both the need (subjective factor) and the situation (external factor).

The general structure of psychic reality implies not only consciousness and the unconscious mind taken together, but Set as a certain protopsychic state of integrity, underlying the realization of consciousness and unconsciousness, including a full realization of the personality. This resembles the Jung's notion of psychoid pole.

Individuals are not aware of these Sets, although this does not stop them from being active forces in controlling their activity at a given moment. They cannot check or abolish these Sets (of which he is not aware) so they are forced to control the act of their thoughts under the decisive influence of these Sets. Uznadze believed through objectivization, a maladaptive response could be corrected, and new or different Sets could be brought into play. He also emphasized education as the way to elevate awareness. Sherozia A. (1979) has tried to develop the Uznadze's theory of Set, and suggested a tripartite system of psych: consciousness, unconscious psychic activity and Set. For him Set

functions unconsciously to direct the focus of consciousness, but this is only part of the unconscious. Other parts include traces of wishes, strivings, imagination, thoughts and ideas. Any of these can be reactivated by the selection process of Set, when need and situation combine to require their representation in consciousness.

Current characteristics
Post Soviet mentality
Master- slave relationship between the state and people
This type of relationships still exists in the psyche and mind of some people. People can have a high valence for Bion's dependency basic assumption group. They can see the leader as a savior and they project their own responsibility onto the leader. A common observation among scholars is that the authority of the father and of the <u>political</u> leader are closely intertwined, that there is a <u>symbolic</u> identification between domestic authority and national political leadership. In this sense, links have been shown between the concepts of "<u>patriarchal</u>", "<u>paternalistic</u>", "<u>cult of personality</u>", "<u>fascist</u>", "<u>totalitarian</u>", "<u>imperial</u>" (Borneman, 2004).

Following is an example where the "master-slave mentality" resonates in the family and how it expresses itself in a therapy group.

Mr. D was   a 55 year old man. He had long standing dysthymic disorder and constantly complained of sleep disorders, difficulty in making decisions, lack of energy and anxiety. He managed to show up at his job conscientiously, but he found it difficult to take any initiative when it was expected of him. In the group he initially presented himself as a rather submissive and passive " good boy" who was completely unable to express any anger within session .

In the group he revealed a lifelong pattern of anxious dependency. He shared with group member his concern that he had always experienced considerable anxiety at the prospect of doing something alone or upon initiating any plan of action without consulting others. He was unable to make decisions for himself; even everyday decisions depended on excessive amount of advice and reassurance from others. He was unusually submissive and always in need of others to assume responsibility for major areas of his life. His fear of loss of support and approval made it difficult to express disagreement with others. He went to excessive lengths to obtain nurturance and support from others to the point of volunteering to do things that were unpleasant to him. He was unrealistically preoccupied with fears of being left to take care of himself and could not function well without someone else to take care of him.

He was brought up in a very old fashionable family. The father was a high rank official in Soviet Government. He was also fascinated by the great dictators and was very strict in the matter of discipline. Mr. D's mother never really wanted a child and had only produced him as a sort of gift to his father

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and she took little interest in him. She seemed hypnotized by his powerful and glamorous father who was idealized in the family, sometimes to the point of worship. Father held them in contempt and ridiculed their shortcomings. He turned Mr. D against his mother and in so doing he fed his own narcissism by ensuring that all of his son's love was directed towards him. The atmosphere of constraint, hidden existential dissatisfaction, fear, punishment, suspicion and basic lack of love for oneself and each other was reigning at home. The same was at school. People surrounding him impressed upon him what lucky a boy he was to be son of such a wonderful father. The father forced him to become an "example" of a diligent child, well-bred in the communist spirit. The boy had to conform to these rigid norms.

His admiration of his tyrannical omnipotent father had never been total and there was also a strong wish to be free of it. He complained about his father's tyrannical character in the group. "I felt smothered and exploited by him. I always felt his strict eyes within me, controlling my every step. He controlled my life but if he didn't, my life would fall apart." Further group psychotherapeutic sessions led to uncovering anger at his father. Any independent action on his part seemed to reactivate feelings of painful anxiety, fear and guilt associated with early separations and punishment. He behaved as though convinced that he would be abandoned and punished for any autonomous behaviour.

This example illustrates that patient's internal world was dominated by his relationship to tyrannical father. The father was feared and idealized. Society encouraged him to develop an attitude of worship towards his father. The entire family was captured by the tyrannical omnipotent father. In his inner life, Mr. D was persecuted by a strict rigid Super Ego, which functioned like an internal tyrant. He develop a negative father's complex.

Under Father complex I mean a group of emotionally charged unconscious representations, or a strong unconscious impulses about the <u>archetype</u> of the <u>father</u> ,which may be either positive (admiring and seeking out older father figures) or negative (castrating , distrusting or fearful). The negative father complex might leads to a distrust of older males, including one's own father. It generates resistant attitude to hierarchical organizations: corporations, religious institutions or the military. This attitude may hamper the person's career, which may depend on participation in one or another of such bodies. An authority complex can derive from the father complex. (No matter the gender of the authority figure, authority is considered to be an aspect of the archetypal father.) Sometimes the complex is manifested in an individual's desire and effort to be boss or to be the ally of a strong leader. The leader may take the form of a charismatic public official, a spell-binding preacher, a street gang leader--or a Hitler.

Due to group psychotherapy, his harsh Rigid Super ego structure gradually became softer. Interaction with members helped him to be more tolerant to himself and others. Group as whole provided him with a Holding environment, secure space of good enough mother (Winnicot, 1960; 1965) and thereby strengthening his Ego structure.

Nostalgia for and Idealization of Soviet Times

The idealization of the Soviet past consists of denying the   horrible and negative sides of Soviet times: political repressions, concentration camps, conformism, empty shops without necessary things and total lack of initiative and individualism (Solzenitsyn, 1978)**.**

Identity Crisis

A trauma for the Georgian State was the loss of its territories and distortion of its territorial integrity. The country got split, causing people to lose links to each other. The harshness of economic realities after the break up also contributed to an identity crisis. Compared to the big European Empires, the Soviet Union was unique. More than 100 nations, having different ethnic roots, languages and religious beliefs lived together for centuries, first within the Russian Empire and later within the Soviet Union. Russia never had overseas colonies. Russia did not have an identity independent from its colonies; there was never a clear division between Russia, as a nation, and Russia, as an imperial power. Economy, very hard condition of life cause depreciation of idea of social justice and protection.

Socio-economic traumas
Catastrophic Events

April 9, 1989   -This mass meeting promoting independence was attacked by military forces of the Soviet Empire; 21 people were killed. April 9 has become a symbol of the innocent heroes sacrificed for independence of their motherland. A year later, on April 9, 1990, the parliament adopted and signed the Declaration of Independence of Georgia and thus mourning was transformed into celebration. April 9 became the symbol of National Independence (Baltic Assembly, 1989**;** Sarjveladze, 1999).

During ethno-conflict in South Ossetia and *Civil War in Abkhazia people were cruelly victimized* and heavy casualties were reported. More than 250,000 Georgians were ethnically cleansed from Abkhazia by Abkhaz separatists and North Caucasians volunteers (Dale, 1996).

War with Russia

After the war with Russia, approximately 20,000 Georgians were displaced who - in addition to the many thousands more forced into flight by the conflicts of the early 1990s - need to be rehoused and provided with the means of

access to food and healthcare. The damage to Tbilisi, capital of Georgia economically and politically, was severe. There was severe destruction of roads, installations and army bases, and housing of approximately 20,000 ethnic Georgians. The more definitive loss of the two territories was less easily quantifiable or repairable (Rayfield, 2008).

Rose Revolution

Massive political demonstrations (the so-called "Rose Revolution") were held in Tbilisi between November 20 and November 23, 2003. Many called the change of government a popular coup. Opinion polls suggest the President M.Saakashvili had been the country's most popular politician, but critics describe him as a demagogue and a populist with a strong lust for power.

After the Rose Revolution, there were bold measures to fight corruption were taken. However, afterward,   antidemocratic tendencies emerged and human rights violations flourished. The judiciary was seen as the government's "appendix" (Amnesty International Georgia 2005; Humans Rights Watch 2005). There also have been concerns about the freedom of the media. There is a tendency toward fragmentation of society and to Dysutopian anarchism, a contentious "us - over -them" culture (Ettin & Cohen, 2003). There is danger of a return to an authoritarian and totalitarian structure. One can imagine how difficult it would be to provide psychotherapy under these conditions. Ettin posit that developmental phases in process –focused therapy groups are comparable to corresponding stages of political evolution in the history of the human governance (Cohen, Ettin & Fidler, 2003). Dependent phases in therapy groups corresponds to monarchist macro political cultures. Counter dependent phases in therapy to anarchism in macro political situation. Dystopian and utopian phases to authoritarian collectivism which emphasize either difference within and between groups (Facism), or similarities within and between groups (communism) and independent and interdependent phases to liberal Democracy and Social democracy respectively. Anarchy is a counter dependent response to authoritarian control. A counter dependent culture may manifest through active (dystopian) or passive (utopian) forms of anarchism. The Dystopian form accentuates the differences separation an aggressively self –anointed in-group from all other which differs from utopian one where member deny their differences and relax in the warm, if illusory glow of wished-for harmony. Dystopian anarchism tends toward a contentious "us-over-them culture and utopian anarchism toward a universal "we –are- all –one" culture (Cohen, Ettin,2003).

Current and future challenges

After the breakdown of totalitarian and authoritarian ideology, the possibility of integrating western spiritual approaches emerged.

In 2003 in order to improve Group psychotherapy services in Georgia the Georgian Group Psychotherapy Association GGPA was founded It is a voluntary, non-governmental professional organisation. It unites psychotherapists, clinical psychologists and members of other professions who are interested in these sciences. Honorary members of the association are Mrs. Susanne Jensen and Mr. Douglas Greve from AGPA.

With the help of American Group Psychotherapy Association (AGPA) and International Association of Group Psychotherapy and Group Processes (IAGP) we are on the way to establish the Training for Group Psychotherapy in Georgia. The principle promoters of this project are Ilia State University and the Georgian Group Psychotherapy Association. The aim of the project is to establish training programs, 3-4 year institute with invited international group psychotherapists/faculties 3-4 times per year, for group psychotherapy in Georgia according to International Standards.

Throughout June 22-24, 2015 in Tbilisi with the help of the IAGP there was a 3-day training for psychologists and psychotherapists from Georgia conducted by Dr. Jeff Kleinberg, former President of the American Group Psychotherapy Association and the editor of the recently published Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of Group Psychotherapy. The training program should continue in order to prepare qualified Group Psychotherapists according to the international standards and establish an Institute of Group Psychotherapy in Georgia.

This project has a great importance for Georgia for the following objective reasons:

I. Political - Georgia is on the way to creating democratic Western values and integrating with the European Union. Group therapy is a product of Western civilization and the development of it in Georgia is a small but significant lepton, with considerable power for the process of convergence with Western values.

II. Economical - Group therapy is a treatment method, which does not require such costs as surgical and medicament treatment. Group psychotherapy has the advantage in comparison to the individual and/or drug therapy as it encompasses a larger number of patients for a certain period of time. It will be a big help to the poor layers of the society in Georgia, which is still economically backward country in comparison with the Western countries.

III. Medical aspect – 1). Group psychotherapy designed not only for treatment but also for prevention of mental problems and problems of day-to-day living.

2). It's focus is not only on the result of a problem and symptoms as it occurs in drug treatment but it is oriented to the cause, purpose and meaning of it.

Cultural aspect

Group psychotherapy is aimed at growth of personality at its cultural and spiritual development. It also gives a good opportunity   to study transcultural issues (cross cultural study) in experiential groups, in the Post Soviet area in particular.

Conclusion

The collapse of the Soviet Union gave birth to 15 independent states and dozens of expected and unexpected challenges that are described as Post Soviet Phenomena. The Soviet Mentality included: .materialistic, biological world view, authoritarianism and intolerance   of dissidence. The Post-Soviet mentality is characterized by master- slave relationship between the state and people, nostalgia for and idealization of Soviet times, identity crisis, socio-economic traumas and political and economical conditions. Current and future challenges consist of improving psychotherapy services in Georgia and bringing its practice closer to western standards.

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