

## **Ethnos and Demos in Tiflis (Tbilisi) – Armenians, Georgians and Russians in the City Duma campaigns between 1890 and 1897<sup>1</sup>**

### **Abstract**

*The paper analyses the narratives about the City Duma elections in Tbilisi between 1890 and 1897 in local Georgian and Russian newspapers in terms of the instrumental relationship between a socio-cultural ethnos and a politically restrictively defined demos under the authoritarian Tsarist regime in the Caucasus. It traces a trend of increasing mutual estrangement of the intellectual elites due to internal status reversal of the Georgian nobility, the Armenian merchant class and the Russian imperial civil servants as well as external attempts by Russian administrators to instrumentalize ethnic identity for their purpose of securing a sufficiently strong power basis in the Caucasus region. It concludes that with the successful introduction of ethnic categories the establishment of stable democratic institutions has been subverted at the beginning of the 20th century.*

**Keywords:** elections, electorate, nation building, ethnic identity, elites, city council.

“The core of minority and nationality issues is situated in the tension between the modern notion of citizenship defined by political equality on the one hand and the diversity of other social and cultural solidarity groups in a society as ethnic groups, religions, classes, etc. on the other.” That is how R. Lepsius describes the contradiction between the politically drawn up *demos* and the historical, diverse and re-interpretable *ethnos* of a community defined by origin or culture. He prioritizes the constitutionally concretely defined *demos* (Lepsius 1988, 250) and concludes that ethnicity is not always the most appropriate principle, according to which social activities and identities can be arranged. Only under certain conditions ethnicity can be turned into a resource (especially as patterns of the interpretation of reality) for a social, cultural or racial group to be mobilized to their advantage or to become an obstacle (Wallman 1979, IX).

In this article I would like to demonstrate, on the example of the Caucasian metropolis of Tbilisi in the late Tsarist Empire, how the complex and problematic relationship of *ethnos* and *demos* can unfold in a culturally diverse environment without a coherent, homogeneous community with mutually dependent interests. I will focus on the three largest ethnic groups of Armenians, Georgians and Russians and on the issue of their political representation in the City Duma of Tbilisi. It is precisely the introduction of democratic principles of municipal self-government that required necessarily the definition of this new sovereign. Simultaneously with democratic institutions, for the first time, elements of competition and support of groups are introduced, since the access to political power – albeit locally and in a limited way – just depends on the degree of their mobilization. Elections are therefore nothing more than the struggle for support and competition between different groups. Ethnic definitions offer, thus, a simple and obvious basis to create and ensure group support. And thus it also triggered – intentionally or unintentionally – their politicization.<sup>2</sup>

The framework of the Russian Empire can only partly be discussed here. Inasmuch as the concentration of power in the centre and its fragmentation at the periphery are typical, ethnic boundaries can become “predetermined breaking points/cleavages” of this fragmentation, if they correspond with social inequality and are interpreted by intellectual elites accordingly as such.

### *The “Ethnos”: Demographic and social processes in Tiflis*

The city of Tiflis (in Georgian Tbilisi) has changed its face in the 19th century fundamentally. After its destruction by Aga Mohammed Khan in 1796 and the annexation of East Georgia (i.e. the former kingdoms of Kartli and Kakheti) by the Tsarist Empire in 1801, it evolved from a feudal, oriental royal seat of the Bagratid dynasty into a more European style administrative and commercial centre of the Caucasus region. In Tbilisi, as well as in a few other cities of the Southern Caucasus, the processes of social change in the region were concentrated. In particular, after the complete conquest of Transcaucasia in 1828 by the Tsarist Empire, the city experienced a hitherto unknown in its history period of peace, security and economic recovery. This was accompanied by a corresponding increase in population. From about 15,000 inhabitants at the beginning of the 19th century Tbilisi increased to 70,000 inhabitants in 1865, ten years later, there were already 100,000; by 1897 after

Baku, Tbilisi became, with just under 160,000 inhabitants, the most populous city in Caucasia (Ismail-Zade 1991, 11).

Although all ethnic groups absolutely increased, they showed strong relational differences in the *ethnic composition* of the city population. The proportion of *Armenians* declined continuously. While at the beginning of the 19th century they represented  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the population of Tbilisi, it was only 47.4% in 1864 and 36.4% (63,000) at the end of the century. Through the influx of Armenian refugees from the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 20th century, the Armenian population increased again strongly.<sup>3</sup>

With 26% or 44,900 inhabitants in 1899, the Georgians had almost reached its initial second position from the beginning of the 19th century again. As a new ethnic element, the Russians became firmly established in Tbilisi. In 1899, they represented, with about 35,500 inhabitants or 21.1% of the total population, the third largest group in the city. The remaining 38 *other ethnic groups*, ranging from Turkic peoples and mountain dwellers to Polish exiles and German colonists, experienced a not less remarkable increase of their share up to 14.2%. Apart from the Azeri, Persians and the Polish none of these groups exceeded a share of more than 2% of the total urban population.<sup>4</sup>

This period of recovery and the political and administrative incorporation into the Russian Empire also brought about social change. After the annexation of the Tsarist autocracy in 1801, the Georgian princes or *tavadni* had to give up their role as the dominant multifunctional elite of a feudal agrarian society. The autocracy was able to integrate the Georgian aristocracy as their power base in the Caucasus, gradually involving them in the control of the country by appointing them to high-ranking posts mainly in the army and to a lesser degree in the civil administration. However, for a life befitting their rank and social status as members of the Tsarist *dворянство* the Georgian nobles had to move from their estates to Tbilisi, "the city," and became estranged from their peasants through the excessive demands of duties to finance their European life style and culture. But neither those duties based on a backward subsistence economy nor a comparatively meagre salary as civil servants were sufficient to compensate for the rising demand in expenses. The proud Georgian prince therefore turned with the request for assistance to the Tsarist government or became increasingly indebted to Armenian merchants, who were despised for their economic activity. In the end, they bought up the estates and city residences of the nobility. The broad mass of the gentry also was increasingly impoverished and often differed only by the privilege of nobility from the peasants.

Many peasants, who could no longer subsist in the countryside, also migrated to the towns, mainly Tbilisi, in search of work. There they competed as unskilled day labourers with Russian skilled workers, strong Armenian craftsmen and other ethnicities that specialised in certain crafts for the few available jobs. So, the major elements of the feudal agrarian society, the *nobility* and the *peasants*, found themselves in *marginal positions* in the urban setting of Tbilisi.<sup>5</sup>

The *Armenian city bourgeoisie* dominated, however, not only demographically in Tbilisi, but also economically. Business, trade and crafts were controlled by their professional guilds (*amkrebi*). The members of the upper class, the rich *mokalakeebi*,<sup>6</sup> were elevated to the status of “honorary citizen” (*pochetnye grazhdane*) and so won over the support of the Tsarist Empire in the cities.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, this “class of the Armenian bourgeoisie,” according to Ischchanian (1914), represented the most mobile social group in the Caucasus region, which freed itself as an element of a future civil society from feudal shackles and found itself in transition from traditional agricultural to a money-goods economy. However, one must note that only 6% of those Armenians living in towns dealt with small and medium size trade, but 90% were busy with crafts, therefore “less a bourgeoisie, than what one would call petty bourgeoisie” has developed (Armjane 1910, 517; Sazonov 1896).

The leading groups of both peoples were diametrically opposed to each other in social terms. While the Georgian nobility descended, the Armenian “bourgeoisie” ascended in the social hierarchy of Tbilisi, which inevitably led to tensions among them.<sup>8</sup> As soon as by the 1870’s and 1880’s, the dominant position of Armenian traders and entrepreneurs in the South Caucasus impeded Russian economic interests, the Tsarist administration and Russian merchants became more critical towards them (Gugushvili 1979, 339).

The new layer of Russian *chinovniki* from the Tsarist regional administration legitimized their political dominance in a foreign cultural environment with a “civilizing mission” against the supposedly “backward” peoples of the South Caucasus. Ignorant, they shut themselves off from local cultures (as they did not speak, for example, any of the local languages). This ignorance led to a latent distrust of all ethnic groups, which changed depending on the political climate between the consideration of regional characteristics and crude centralization. Since the mid-1880’s, the latter attitude dominated the relationship between the Tsarist governorship towards their local supporters, the Georgian princes and Armenian urban bourgeoisie.<sup>9</sup>

The segregation between Georgians and Armenians that developed since the Middle Ages, where the socio-professional and ethnic boundaries

coincided, had been updated under the power relations increasingly shifting in favour of the latter. This peculiar “ethno-specialization”, i.e. the orientation of a particular ethnic group on the fulfilment of certain professional roles (Anchabadze and Volkova 1990, 73), turned into “ethnic classes”, i.e. “groups, which are characterized by common features, both ethnicity as well as the position in a social structure” distinguished (Milton Gordon).<sup>10</sup> This of course applies to all ethnic groups in the multi-ethnic city, only that they are more clearly perceived among the dominant forces in the city. Through this kind of segregation social differences could be identified with ethnic characteristics and social tensions could take ethnic forms. However, during the civil unrest of the city dwellers in Tbilisi, in 1865, under the still intact patriarchal social structure, the ethnic factor did not play any role, where Georgian craftsmen protested together with Armenian merchants. But with the erosion of these patriarchal structures in particular with the limited implementation of “major reforms” in the Caucasus these socially, ethnically and spatially coincident segregations in Tbilisi became more and more significant.<sup>11</sup>

This segregation was also geographically reflected in the various districts of Tbilisi. The traditional old town on the left (*Avlabar*) and right bank of the river Kura at the foot of the destroyed fortress *Narigala* was populated by the so-called “Tatar”, Armenian and Georgian craftsmen and petty traders, which were organised in the above mentioned crafts guilds. They served traditional buyers in their small workshops at the bazaars.

The modern Russian neighbourhoods were founded by Viceroy Mikhail Vorontsov in the years 1845–1854 and stretched north of *Erivan Square* with the City Duma (today Freedom Square). Firstly there was the exclusive residential district *Sololaki*, especially for prominent Armenian citizens, the *pochetnye grazhdane* or *mokalakeebi*. Around the turn of the century they formed the dominant, prosperous class of the city (*tsenzovoe obshchestvo*). In 1901, they owned 328 of the 407 houses of this district. To the west of Erivan Square followed the representative, official *Mtatsminda* district with the palace of the Viceroy or Governor General, administrative buildings, schools, the Opera House and six foreign consulates along the Golovinski Avenue (today Rustaveli Avenue). Here resided the Russian and Georgian aristocracy amid European shops, horse-drawn trams, hotels and restaurants, clubs and a library.

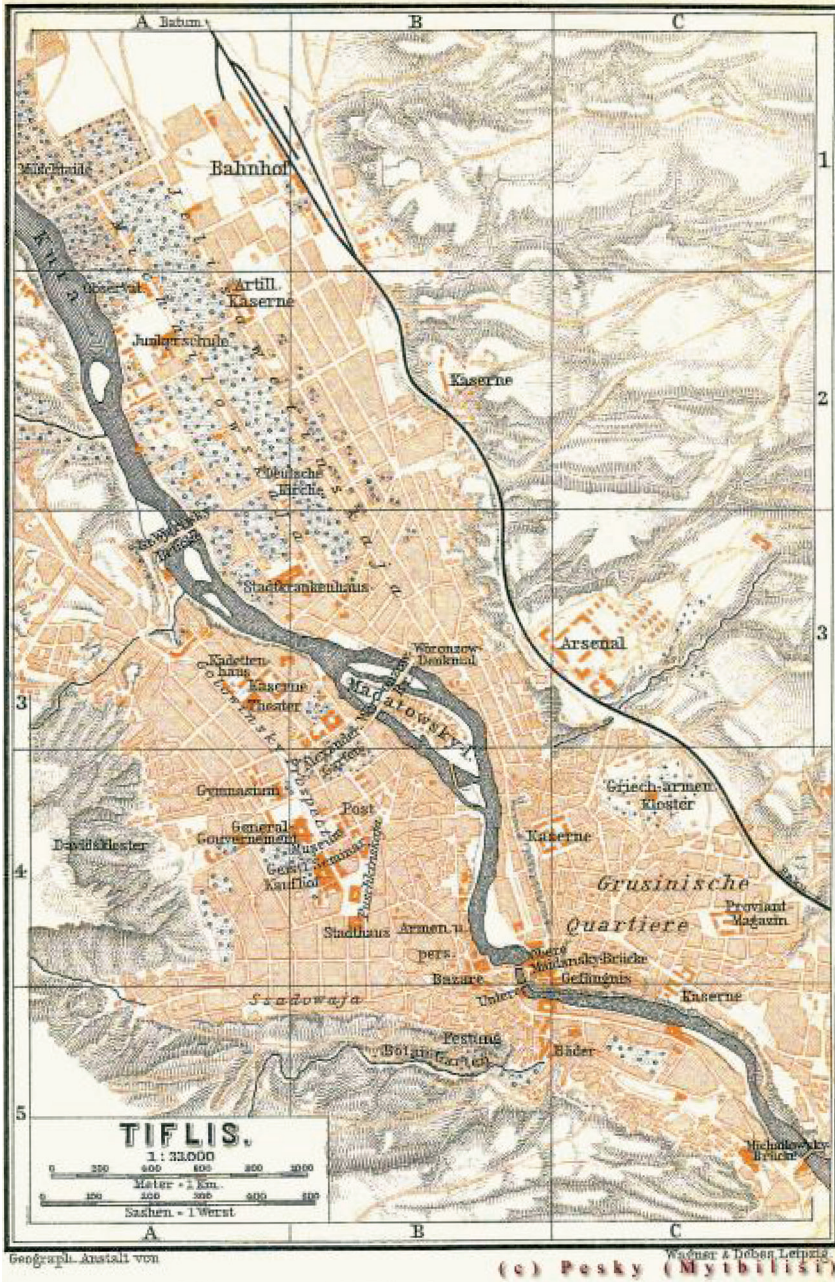
The middle and lower Russian civil servants, the *chinovniki*, lived further west in the bordering Vera District. On the left bank of the Kura River Protestant colonists from Wuerttemberg established the first German colony in 1817, which was later incorporated with the expansion of the city known as *New Tiflis*. In the vicinity of this settlement also the train station and the rail-

road depot were built. That is why the neighbouring suburbs of *Didube* and *Nakhalovka* (Georgian *Nadzaladevi*), initially wild settlements, mushroomed here, in which Russian railway workers and particularly unskilled Georgian peasants settled, who flocked in from the countryside into the city to make their livelihood. They were predominantly male and violent neighbourhoods. Here they had to live under extreme conditions of an absent infrastructure in a kind of slum (Figure 1).

### *The formation of the demos in Tiflis (Tbilisi)*

The urban self-government or the *demos* had its beginnings in Tbilisi already – four years before the new empire-wide city ordinance of 1870. A revolt of the urban merchant and artisan guilds (*amkrebi*) against newly introduced taxes in June 1865 had demonstrated the strength and capacity of this traditional, particular power in the city. As a result, the influence of these guilds had to be limited.<sup>12</sup> On August 11, 1866 Alexander II approved a reform project of urban self-government, which divided the urban *demos* into four voters' curia – one for the hereditary nobility, another for the service nobility, a third one for the hereditary townspeople (*pochetnye grazhdane*), and a fourth one for the petty bourgeoisie (*meshchane*) and for those with municipal obligations beyond taxation or trade taxes. Each curia could appoint 100 electors, from whose ranks then 25 representatives were sent to the “general town meeting”. This model of the future city Duma, thus, had 100 deputies, who in turn filled all posts of the city administration by election. The mayor and eight members of the city administration (two per curia) were elected in this way, a ninth representative was appointed by the Tsarist administration as their official immediate supervisor. In addition, separate governments for the petty bourgeoisie and craftsmen were formed to provide for the protection of their interests. Overall, this solution favoured the nobility in Tbilisi at the expense of traditional guilds and the urban elites, but only for a couple of years.<sup>13</sup>

Namely, in 1874, following the reforms of the central Russian provinces, a reform of the city administration of Tbilisi, Baku, Kutaisi and Yerevan was “gradually” carried out against the resistance of the governorship (Ismail-Zade 1991, 193). A reform, which would introduce a fundamentally new type of public administration. It was based on a civil property census, the separation of the legislative (*rasporiaditel'nyi*) and executive power, as well as the principle of self-government, neglecting the previously dominant role of the traditional estates.<sup>14</sup> Despite all the limitations by the autocracy, with the



**Figure 1.** Map of Tbilisi from 1892  
Geographische Anstalt von Wagner & Debes, Leipzig

transfer of the city government to elected public bodies of the City Duma and City Council, (*uprava*) in the fields of activity entrusted to them, they obtained a certain independence. Since the regional self-governing bodies or *zemstva* were not introduced in Southern Caucasia, the City Councils remained the only elected public bodies.<sup>15</sup>

The *demos* was constituted by the right to vote. Among those who were entitled to vote were all male townspeople independent of their affiliation to a certain estate with Russian citizenship and those who owned property, commercial or industrial establishments within the city limits.<sup>16</sup> Also eligible to vote were legal entities, such as authorities, associations, cooperatives, churches and monasteries. Wage workers, who did not, in general, possess real estate and also the educated class, the intelligentsia, which also did not own houses, but lived for rent, remained practically excluded from the right to vote. Next to the *chinovniki* these included in particular the free professions such as engineers, doctors and teachers. There was a census suffrage, which weighted the votes according to the municipal tax performance in three curia of voters.

In the first municipal elections that were conducted after the adoption of the new town charter in 1874, in total, 4,500 people or 4% of the total city population were eligible to vote: 45 in the first electoral curia, 227 in the second and 4,228 in the third, but each curia had to elect 24 city deputies (Bendianishvili 1982, 22). This meant that the weight of each vote per deputy differed considerably from 0.5 in the first curia, 9.5 in the second and 176.2 in the third curia.

The contemporary chronicler, Giorgi Tumanov, identified three phases in the development of the city Duma of Tbilisi towards the turn of the 20th century (Tumanov 1902). The first is the *phase of self-formation* (1875-79), in which – headed by “excellent *sluzbbisty*” (i.e. civil servants) like Dimitri Kipiani or L.K. Elimirzov, the frame of competences and the right of self-government were set out and defined. Kipiani came from the lower Georgian nobility and advocated the interests of the privileged class during the liberation of the peasants in the Caucasus as a marshal of the nobility in the Tiflis Guberniya.<sup>17</sup> However, he was elected by an Armenian-dominated city Duma. This circumstance, as well as the political and intellectual discussions in the press, which were sparked by the growth of industry and capitalism, the debate over the future of the nobility or the national liberal and revolutionary opposition to tsarism, coincided the lack of ethnic or national issues. Only in the 1870's and 1880's broader ideologies, such as a cosmopolitan liberalism, a multinational revolutionary populism, along the lines of the populists (*narodniki*), and a new, virulent, nationalism, formed as political base currents came to fruition.<sup>18</sup> Only a few Armenians and Georgians, who adhered to



the first current, initially developed an increased interest in the work of the City Duma. As mostly young civil servants, merchants, doctors, engineers and lawyers with higher education they represented a group, which Tumanov characterized as “European”. They wanted a European style city. They advocated fundamental reforms in the municipal facilities and more effective self-government against the traditional, “Asian” minded merchants. These professionals found the support of the financially strong Armenian businessman Isaia Eg. Pitoev. The city council members met regularly with him privately to discuss urban affairs and plans. During the reign of Alexander II this was an absolute novelty. Thus, the first “party” for reforms was formed in Tbilisi, which was chosen by wealthy Armenian community members.

The years from 1879 to 1890 include the second or the “construction phase” under the liberal and reform-minded mayor A.S. Matinov and the city councillors P.A. Izmailov (a representative of the “third element”) and A.A. Tamamshev. Tumanov (1900, 94-95) notes that under the diversity of urban tasks, financial mistakes were also made, and that they were strongly criticized by the local press, “because of the one-sided civic orientation of the party”. Nevertheless, the urban infrastructure had been improved in the centre (sewers, bridges, town houses, horse-drawn trams, street lighting, new markets, etc.).

### *The Introduction of ethnic issues in the City Duma elections between 1890 and 1897*

#### **The City Duma election of 1890**

Until the 1880's the nationalism of the Armenian and Georgian *intelligentsia* focused on their own cultural institutions, associations and activities. The rise of Armenian city dwellers and the simultaneous decline of the Georgian aristocracy was experienced as a replacement of the latter by the former. This status reversal was also noticed by outsiders, such as the German entrepreneur Werner von Siemens.<sup>19</sup> In addition to this, the question of the future of Georgians and Armenians in an increasingly Russified and modernizing Tsarist Empire was becoming more and more urgent. The growing uncertainty ultimately also found its expression in the policy of the City Duma of Tbilisi (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Ethnic Composition of the Tiflis (Tbilisi) City Council<sup>41</sup>

Election period	Armenians		Georgians		Russians		Others		Total	Entitled to vote	Head of City Administration
	n	%	n	%	N	%	n	%			
1. 1875-1878	53	73,6	14	19,4	5	6,9			72	ca. 4.500	D. Qipiani
2. 1879-1882											A. Matinov
3. 1883-1886	58	80,6	7	9,7	7	9,7	0	0	72		A. Matinov
4. 1887-1890	54	75	8	11,1	10	13,9	0	0	72	4.808	A. Matinov
5. 1891-1893	38	52,8	22	30,5	11	15,3	1	1,4	72	4.088	N.V. Argutinskii-Dolgorukov
6. 1893-1897	55	76,4	6	8,3	11	15,3	0	0	72	2.770	P. Izmailov
7. 1897-1901	54	65,1	9	10,8	16	19,3	4	4,8	83	2.854	G. Evangulov
8. 1902-1906	53	67,1	13	16,5	13	16,5	0	0	79	3.222	Ch. Vermishev
9. 1907-1910										2.581	V. Cherkezishvili
10. 1911-1915										3.567	A. Khatishvili

If the Georgians, until then had shown little interest in the city Duma (out of 400-500 Georgian voters only 10-15 had actually participated in the elections in the 1880's),<sup>20</sup> now, for the first time, a "party" was formed from the ranks of the Land Bank of the (Georgian) Nobility to participate in the municipal elections. Their shareholders' meetings provided the discussion fora for the Georgian public, which is why the Russians called it "Georgian Parliament". Ilia Chavchavadze, as the leading figure of the national movement, held the chair. The British diplomat Oliver Wardrop (1888/1976) called him "a Georgian Gambetta".

From here, in 1890, for the first time, a Georgian opposition was formed, which challenged the city council and thus introduced the *third phase*. The opposition began with journalistic criticism on the pages of the newspaper *Iveria*, complaining that so far only 100 to 200 individuals in private circles had chosen 72 candidates for the City Duma, that were not appropriate to serve the interests of the city. According to the correspondent of the newspaper *iveria* the wealthy would be "armed" with a club, wherever they gathered. The poor, however, were denied the option of public gathering and the unjust voting system in the three curia excluded the concerns of the majority of the population (Bendianishvili 1982, 33-34; Akhali ambebi 1890; E-i 1890). Everyone knew that in the elections representatives of their own guild

or *amkari* were always preferable to other candidates (Gr. 1890). With the postulate addressed to their Georgian fellows, to participate more actively in the future in municipal affairs, and the nomination of their own candidates they questioned the previously existing proportional representation of 55-60 Armenian and 12-17 Russian or Georgian candidates. Another opposition group was formed among the richest men in the city. It was called "Palace Room" (*dvorcovye nomery*), since they convened under K.M. Alikhanov's and M. I. Tamamshev's leadership in the hotel next to the governor's palace. They also prepared a list with their own candidates. Among them were also Georgians and Armenians from Karabakh. In the elections of the first curia on November 4, 1890 all the candidates of this group succeeded. In response to this success, the city council then formed a coalition with its former adversaries, the supporters of the Armenian newspaper *Ardzagank* (Echo), the Georgians, A.A. Ioannisiani and Prince Bebutov. In the elections of the second curia they elected the candidate of the ruling city council, including five new deputies. Only two candidates of the Georgian opposition were elected to these two curia (Bendianishvili 1982, 34). At the assembly for the election of the third curia, which included the small homeowners or 94% of the city's electorate, where typically only Armenians participated, on that Sunday, December 2, 1890, a majority of Georgian voters showed up. They voted in the first ten rounds of elections against all candidates of the City Council and for the Georgian candidates.<sup>21</sup> The election administrators fell into confusion. Their plans for the composition of the deputies of the third curia, and thus the composition of the City Duma overall, was at risk and they postponed the election by one week.

However, this led to a further deterioration of the situation, because at this meeting more Georgians appeared. At the end, 18 new candidates were able to succeed in this curia; 13 were Georgians, 7 Russians and only 4 Armenians. The old proportional representation was abolished completely with 11 Russian, 22 Georgian and 1 German against only 38 Armenian deputies. In its exuberance, the liberal newspaper *Novoe obozrenie* mistakenly announced the victory of the *intelligentsia* that possessed 45 votes and now could improve the urban economy and the situation of the city population.<sup>22</sup> This was a euphoric exaggeration that sheds light on the drive for change of the educated circles. But at least, for the first time, there was a strong opposition in the City Duma. In the national-minded Georgian newspaper, *Iveria*, a "voter" commented that earlier "our higher nobility" had been preoccupied with "military affairs" and the poor Georgians had to fight to make their livelihood, which is why the public affairs and social development have been forgotten. Now the

times have changed, and finally the “logic of life” has been discerned. “Civil relations have become the main axis of life.”<sup>23</sup>

Since the core of the new and strong opposition in the third Curia was formed by Georgian princes, and the core of the city administration by Armenian merchants, the power struggle could easily be reduced to national stereotypes.<sup>24</sup> In fact, it had grown into a confrontation between two groups of national elites. Although there were hardly any ideological differences between the City Council and the opposition, it was for the first time that in a heated election campaign a politicization of ethnicity occurred. Both camps were roughly equal in strength. With its fierce criticism of the past and present activities of the City Council, the opposition undermined its own authority in the autonomous regulation of urban affairs. After not being able to nominate Prince N.V. Argutinskii-Dolgorukov as a common candidate for the new mayor, the former mayor Matinov finally succeeded with a seven vote majority against the Georgian challenger Nik. D. Zubalov.<sup>25</sup> Five weeks later, he lost his majority again, because his faction completely ignored a third of new deputies. The liberal newspaper, *Novoe obozrenie*, lamented about the arrogance of the previously ruling Matinov-Izmailov party, supported by the entrepreneurs A.I. Mantashev and Pitoev. They eschewed cooperation with the new deputies to consolidate the city finances and develop the urban economy (Nachalo kontsa 1891). When during the elections on March 5, 1891, P.A. Izmailov did not prevail, finally on March 25, 1891, the Armenian Prince Nikoloz Vas. Argutinskii-Dolgorukov was elected to his post (Vybory golovy 1891). Thus, the opposition scored a first success.<sup>26</sup> However, the city administration and the majority in the City Duma (38 out of 72 seats) remained in the hands of Armenian business elite (Suny 1986, 270-271; Obshchee obozrenie 1890; Khoneli 1890; Nikoladze 1893a; Nikoladze 1893b; Nikoladze 1893c).

### **The new city charter of Alexander III and the City Duma elections of 1893**

In the tension between the efficiency of these self-governing bodies, which in the course of two decades concentrated all vital city functions in their hands, and their limited responsibilities and meagre financial resources, there often occurred conflicts between the City Duma and the Tsarist bureaucracy. Even if they could not relinquish the self-government, the Tsarist bureaucracy tried at least to restrict further the autonomy of the City Duma and to subordinate it to the Tsarist administration. For this the ethnic differences in Tbilisi could be particularly well exploited.

As part of the counter-reforms in 1892, Tsar Alexander III enacted a new city charter that further increased the property census that allowed only the supposedly loyal segments of the city population, namely the wealthiest, and therefore Armenian merchants, to participate in the elections.<sup>27</sup> The new census required ownership of property worth at least 1,500 Rubles. Since a majority of voters from the third curia were disenfranchised, all City Duma deputies were elected only in a single election meeting on May 30, 1893. Among the 77 candidates for the City Council, in 1893, 10 Russians, 7 Georgians and 2 Germans were nominated (Bendianishvili 1982, 39). The opposition, even if it was disorganized and made only cautious use of national issues, was supported by the liberal newspaper *Novoe obozrenie*. But the opposition was easily defeated by the dominant Matinov-Izmailov City Council Party and the *dvorcovye nomery*. In September 1893, Izmajlov was elected by 62 votes to 8 as mayor, to become the first representative of the “third element”, i.e. from the ranks of the professionals. The change in the voting rights, thus, destroyed all hopes of the Georgian opposition to win the elections, who as the experience of 1890-91 showed, had a real chance (Suny 1986, 271; Nikoladze 1893d). In protest of the low representation of the Georgian element, almost all (seven out of eight) Georgians renounced their membership as City Duma deputies. Fierce polemics were directed against the Armenian “plutocrats” and “moneybags from Sololaki.” After the disappointing defeat, *Novoe obozrenie* recommended to the opposition not to provoke the forces of the victorious City Duma faction, but to inflict them a “moral defeat” in the public sphere (Tiflis, 8-go iunია 1893). One reason for the harsh reaction might have been the fact that leading Georgian figures (possibly Niko Tskhvedadze), who dominated their ethnic organizations, were not elected and thereby felt themselves personally humiliated. The Georgian journalist Levanidze complained, on the other hand, about the lack of interest among the Georgians for the City Duma and its elections. Of the 600 Georgians among the approximately 3,000 registered voters only 120 had cast their votes in 1893; the participation in elections to the board of the Nobles’ Land Bank was significantly higher (Levanidze 1897; Tumanov 1900, 55-56). Here again, the Armenians seemed to be less interested, even though quite a few of them were also members. The Russians also had little interest in the City Duma, since they pursued broader imperial rather than local urban interests. They were also no permanent residents in the cities of the South Caucasus. One might ask if this already indicated an ethnic division of the *demos*.

If for Tumanov, the majorities in the City Duma were caused by the electoral system, then the liberal Georgian Niko Nikoladze’s demand for an ethnic proportional representation was the only logical consequence. This

would have allowed the various ethnic groups to select their best representatives themselves. However, at the same time it would have completed the separation of the *demos* and maybe also the already mentioned co-existence of different ethnic groups.<sup>28</sup>

Tumanov criticized that such a proportional system of representation – besides the fact that it would not comply with the election laws – would not diminish, but exacerbate national tensions. The measure of representation should be the interest in civic affairs, certain plans and objectives, and not random ethnic belonging; otherwise, the already limited self-government would come to a complete stop. Ethnic conflicts could be provoked artificially and be detrimental to the general welfare of the urban population. Thus, he pleaded for an ethnically indivisible *demos* and appealed to the “Georgian society” not to incite the cultured masses with the explosive force of the national question. Finally, he added that, unlike in Austro-Hungary, in the Russian Empire there would exist only one dominant nationality and only one state language: Russian. Such a blow against the Armenians was thus also a blow against all small nations in the Tsarist Empire, including the Georgians themselves (Tumanov 1900, 17-23).

Since 1893, the city council avoided ethnic considerations due to these tensions in its daily practice, e.g. in filling posts. As a result of the cholera epidemic of 1892-93 sanitary and medical issues of urban healthcare came to the foreground. Also, new schools and a public library were founded and the establishment of a polytechnic school planned (Tumanov 1902, 37-38).

### **The City Duma elections of 1897**

In December 1896, a new Governor-General for the South Caucasus was appointed: Prince Grigori S. Golitsyn. He installed the Russian chauvinist Vasilii L. Velichko (1860-1904) as the editor of the semi-official Russian newspaper “*Kavkaz*” (1897-1899). After the assassination of Alexander II, these two further increased the predominant armenophobia under the former Governor General Dondukov-Korsakov by making it an integral part of the administration of the Caucasus. This also had an impact on the city Duma (Suny 1993, 43-51; Hovannisian 1971, 40ff.). Furthermore, the huge influx of Armenian refugees from the Ottoman Empire after the massacres of 1894-1896 and from smaller towns of the Southern Caucasus intensified the tensions in the city. Between 1897 and 1910, the number of Armenians in Tbilisi almost tripled and increased by 78,200 from 46,700 up to 124,900 (Ochiauri 1988, 28).

The *ethnic framing* of politics reached a new peak in the City Duma elections of 1897. With the rising importance of the self-government of Tbilisi, the tensions and conflicts among different social classes and ethnic groups came to a head in the city. The wholesale merchants and entrepreneurs (i.e. the Armenians) were trying to defend their dominant position in the City Duma. Georgian nobles, Armenian intelligentsia and petty bourgeoisie, however, sought to break their dominance. In the municipal elections of 1897 from approximately 160,000 inhabitants, only 2,770 men or 1.7% of the population were entitled to vote. Of these, 1,301 (47%) were Armenians, 682 (24.6%) Russians and 512 (18.5%) Georgians. 275 or 9.9% of the voters belonged to other ethnic groups. However, on May 18, and June 1, 1893 only 1,070 people or 38.6% actually cast their vote.<sup>29</sup> According to Giorgi Laskhishvili, no Georgian organization really cared for creating a better turnout of their fellow countrymen, so this time only 39% (200) of the Georgian voters, but 50% of the Armenian voters (about 650) participated in the municipal elections.<sup>30</sup>

The absolute majority of the Armenian votes was tactically split into two competing Armenian “parties”. Firstly, there was the party of “Palace Rooms” (*dvorcovye nomery*) forming the majority in the City Duma and controlling the City Council. They were supported by the Armenian businessmen and merchants from the Sololaki district. Secondly, there was the oppositional “Group of Armenian Youth,” which recruited its supporters from the intelligentsia, shop and bank clerks and the petty bourgeoisie. This group proposed to the Georgians to “tip the scales” by creating a joint list of candidates against the dominant “Palace Rooms” from Sololaki.<sup>31</sup> However, this offer was rejected by the Georgians. Instead Nikoloz Tskhvedadze, a former city councillor, established together with the above-mentioned editor, Velichko, a “Russian-Georgian Party”. This disregard for the real political situation was further incited by a polarizing and aggressive campaign against the Armenians. The fight did not seem to be waged against the ruling City Duma party, but against all Armenians. This drove the various camps of the Armenian groups together. In this way, the Georgians squandered away the potentially possible victory through their own fanaticism. The ruling *dvorcovye nomery*-Party (370-400 votes) could have easily been overruled by a majority of the “Russian-Georgian Party” (max. 350 votes) and the Armenian opposition with 270-300 votes. In the end, the latter were not able to push one single of their Georgian candidates through into the City Duma. The lack of willingness to cooperate with the Armenian opposition also abetted the rumour among the Armenians that the Georgian voters did not want to vote for any single Armenian candidate. Many responded accordingly, by not voting even

for the most famous Georgian representatives. In reality, a lot of Armenian candidates were elected by Russian and Georgian voters. The future mayor, A. Evangulov (1897, 3), lamented in an article, that due to these circumstances, after the first ballot, the Georgians and the Russians were underrepresented with seven deputies each.<sup>32</sup> Since many Russians and Georgians boycotted the second ballot as a sign of protest, the chances of their more adequate representation were not improved. In the end, 54 out of 83 City Duma deputies were Armenians, 9 Georgians, 16 Russians and 4 representatives of other nationalities (*Tiflisskie gorodskie dela* 1897).

Because of the distrust of the Georgian voters against the Armenians they had ultimately lost in the municipal elections.<sup>33</sup> In protest about the low representation of Georgians, the successful Georgian candidates again waived their mandates. The nine Georgian City Duma deputies left the municipal self-government. Velichko, who failed with his anti-Armenian campaign, now opened, side by side with Georgian nationalists, sustained journalistic fire against the “plutocrats” in the City Duma. They accused the city council of accepting bribes, corruption and much more. Thus, they promoted a political climate in the Tsarist Empire, which saw the Armenians as a whole (and not only its radical groups) as a subversive and revolutionary threat to the Russian hegemony over the Caucasus. Thus, the ground was prepared for a special law that was decreed in May 1899, which concerned only the Caucasian cities (PSZR 1902; Ismail-Zade 1991, 196). It authorized Governor General Golitsyn to dismiss deputies of the City Duma and employees of the City Council from their posts. He did not hesitate too long and dismissed the entire City Council for alleged corruption offenses.

After the turn of the century, when the Armenian Publication Society was closed, the Tsarist anti-Armenian campaign culminated with the nationalization of the Armenian Church property on June 12, 1903. With this attack on the core of the Armenian nation, the autocracy drove their formerly loyal supporters in the South Caucasian cities into the arms of radical groups, especially the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaks), which were founded in 1890 in Tbilisi.<sup>34</sup> The conversation of the German scholar, C.F. Lehmann-Haupt with a “simple Armenian craftsman” of Tbilisi, in the summer of 1899, is telling in this regard. To the advice to stay in Russia after the Armenian massacres in the Ottoman Empire, the Armenian artisan replied: “In Russia it is even worse than in Turkey. Our schools have been closed. There used to be an Armenian history, an Armenian geography – this should not exist now any longer. The children should grow up without knowing something about their homeland...” (Lehmann-Haupt 1910, 64). The Russian representatives of the autocracy in the South Caucasus saw



themselves ultimately isolated. They could sustain their hegemony only by military means. In the end, they only possessed a “de jure” and not “de facto” control of the region.<sup>35</sup>

For the liberal advocate of urban self-government, Giorgi Tumanov, remained only the seemingly helpless hope that the court would prove the groundlessness of the accusations and provide for the necessary transparency (*glasnost*) in urban affairs. Only in this way, could the lost trust of the local population in the performance of the municipality finally be restored. Tumanov pleaded in principle for an ethnically indivisible *demos* securing the interests of the self-government and widening their competences when he warned: “The municipality does not solve national or religious, but economic issues.” (Tumanov 1900, 19-58)

### *The consequences of the ethnic framing of the demos in Tbilisi since 1900*

After the turn of the century, with the formation of national parties, the dilemma of the liberals worsened. The tendency of closing themselves towards other ethnic groups, as it was done in their own ethnically-dominated associations and clubs, found its continuation into the political sphere. An ethnically undivided *demos* had been overrun by “big politics,” in the interest of an effective municipal self-government. Under the given conditions of the Tsarist Empire an *ethnic framing* of politics did not widen the democratic principles of self-government. Rather, reactionary and radical groups were able to identify the City Duma with the dominant Armenian business class and thus undermined this form of self-government. Just as the Georgian nationalists could not put aside their aristocratic class interests to cooperate with the Armenian opposition, the liberal, Armenian elite of the city did not manage to integrate the “dark mass” of small shopkeepers and homeowners in the administration of Tbilisi. Even the improved representation, which resulted from a new system in which elections were conducted by district, starting in 1901, could not change this problem substantially. As a result, Tumanov demanded a kind of qualitative mandate for an elite minority of the affluent and educated. The Armenian entrepreneurs, however, remained without wider political support.

The political consequences of this ethnic separation of the two elite groups manifested after the large “solidarity” (*ertoba*) in the revolutionary spring of 1905. The Tsar’s newly appointed governor, Vorontsov-Dashkov, needed the Georgian nobility and the Armenian-dominated City Duma as

supporters of the imperial rule and to stabilize the situation. Therefore, he signalled willingness to make concessions.<sup>36</sup> But neither group was prepared for collaboration and, thus, to enforce their demands for greater internal self-determination. The ethnic demarcation dominated their political demands. In 1910, the Georgian *privatdotsent* at Petersburg University, Zurab Avalov, summed the situation up nicely when he noted that "...in Tbilisi two societies, two *intelligentsia* groups – an Armenian and a Georgian – were living side by side, without the slightest sign of mutually influencing each other or knowing about each other, from which of course both sides only have to lose."<sup>37</sup>

As a result of the bloody dissolution of a workers' meeting in the building of the City Duma in August 1905, the City Duma deputies were accused of "cowardice". In protest against the declaration of martial law, the brutality of the Cossacks and the denial of civil liberties, these deputies finally resigned. Thus, 1905 became the year of the Georgian Social-Democracy.<sup>38</sup>

The old aristocratic elite with their national ideology was in the end successfully challenged by the Socialist Mensheviks in their fight for leadership among the Georgians. Stemming from the dispossessed gentry, their intellectuals advocated for the interests of the general population, by interpreting Marxism as liberation from exploitation by Georgian landowners, Armenian merchants and Russian civil servants. On the one hand, their paradigm of suppression helped to transgress ethnic and social boundaries. On the other hand, their pragmatic, political legal work, in addition to the illegal revolutionary work, enabled, for example, the two Menshevik City Duma deputies ("new voter group") to collaborate with the Liberal Constitutional Democrats ("cadets") in electing the Armenian Alexander Khatsov as mayor in 1910. He represented the "lesser evil" compared to the "extreme nationalists", even though he was a representative of the Armenian liberal bourgeoisie from Sololaki and could not redeem the hopes for an improvement of the situation of the urban underclasses ascribed to him.<sup>39</sup>

The Georgian Mensheviks had learned their lesson from the mistakes of their Georgian-nationalist predecessors and managed to mobilize the urban petty owners to participate in the elections. Maybe the Russian ethnographer P.I. Kovalevskii had the Social Democrats from Western Georgia in mind, when he wrote, in 1914: "Today the Imeretians completely and successfully fill this Georgian deficiency (a lack of "bourgeoisie") and displace the Armenians in Tbilisi both in the field of home ownership, as well as in the field of trade, industry and construction. After a few more moments of such a struggle and Tbilisi will also become a Georgian-Imeretian city."<sup>40</sup> The Georgian Mensheviks as a mass-based party representing the interests of Georgian workers and peasants, who later dominated the Soviets, would realize this emphatic

assertion in an independent Democratic Republic of Georgia with Tbilisi as their capital, at least politically (Suny 1994, 178; Surguladze 1986).

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## Notes

1. An earlier version of this paper was published in German in Hausmann 2002, 301-329. I would like to thank Alisa Datunashvili and the two anonymous reviewers for their comments on the English version.
2. On the relationship between democracy and nationalism in Georgia: Nodia 1992, comments by Fukuyama 1992, 23-28 and Avineri 1992, 28-31; for the German case: Immerfall 1989, 35.
3. Between 1897 and 1902 about 55,000 Armenians fled from the repressions in the Ottoman Empire to the Christian Tsarist Southern Caucasus and settled there, especially in Tbilisi, Batumi, Sukhumi and Gori. In Tbilisi alone, the number of Armenians increased from about 46,700 to 124,900 between 1897 and 1910, of which about 68,000 were new arrivals from the Ottoman Empire (Argutinskii 1916, 163; quoted in Jaoshvili 1984, 228). For Georgian titles I used a slightly modified scientific transcription of the Library of Congress here. The English translations of quotations, unless otherwise stated, are from the author of this essay.
4. Anchabadze and Volkova 1990, 29; on ethno-demographic developments see in Volkova 1969 on urban areas (12-15), Armenian refugee movements from the Ottoman Empire (9-10), on the immigration from other towns of the Southern Caucasus to Tbilisi (37); see also Stadelbauer 1995, 13-41.
5. Cf. Reisner 2004. On the productivity of social “marginality” for the formation of the Georgian *intelligentsia* and the ideological-cultural form of the “nation” see Reisner 2009; Natsvlishvili 1984.
6. About the change of the socio-economic situation of this privileged layer of Tbilisi see Beriashvili 1964. On the dominant role of Armenian merchants in the trade of the Southern Caucasus see Gugushvili 1979, 333-361.
7. Already in 1840 the *mokalakeebi* were entitled to appoint six city councillors, see Beriashvili 1964, 7-8; cf. Suny 1993, 36-40; on the development of the Armenian intelligentsia in the first half of the 19th c.: Suny 1993, 57-62.

8. See the cursory overview in Hovannisian 1971, 37-48; Armiane 1910, 510-514; Karapetyan 2003.
9. So far there is little research on the Tsarist administrators in Caucasia with the well-known exception of Rhineland 1990. Cf. for Ukraine: Velychenko 1995.
10. Kreckel 1983, 8-12; Milton Gordon's concept is also presented in Heckmann 1992, 93.
11. On the conviviality of ethnic groups in Tbilisi Ochiauri 1988.
12. On the rebellion of the *amkrebi*: Pirtskhalayshvili 1940. On the order of the reorganisation of the *amkrebi* in: *Polozhenie o remeslennykh amkarakh (tsekhakh) v g. Tiflise i ob ikh upravlenii*, Tiflis 1867, 1914. Reprinted in K'utsia 1984, 165-180. K'utsia mainly publishes Georgian and Armenian sources on the crafts guilds of the 17th and 18th centuries. In general on the guilds in Georgia in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries: Abesadze 1986; Edzveradze 1978.
13. On early forms of urban self-government in Tiflis in the 19th century see the overview by the secretary of the city council Chrelaev 1903, 56f; on self-government of the *amkrebi* before 1865: Pirtskhalayshvili 1940, 213-216; Bendianishvili 1982, 3-13.
14. O poriadke vvedeniia v gorodakh Zakavkazskogo kraia gorodskogo polozheniia 16 iunია 1870 goda, in: *Polnoe sobranie zakonov*, t. XIX, otd. vtoroe, st. 53996. Vysochaishe utverzhdennoe 28 oktiabria 1874. SPb. General on developments of the reform of urban administration in the Tsarist Empire Nardova 1984 and Nardova 1994 on the city regulations of 1870 and 1892; see also Hanchett 1976.
15. On the city administration in the South Caucasus: Ismail-Zade 1991, 191-198; esp. on cities in the Guberniia Tiflis and Kutaisi: Chrelaev 1903 and Bendianishvili 1982.
16. In addition, those people belonged to it who lived not less than two years in the city and paid certain trade or operating fees. Only men who were older than 25 years old could vote. Women or younger men who met the census could transmit their vote (Nardova 1994, 3-17).
17. Reisner 1999. In Chkhetiia 1950 you can find almost 450 pages of mainly Russian sources on this issue.
18. At the tenth anniversary of the Georgian newspaper *droeba* (Times) 1876 there were not only representatives of the Georgian intelligentsia among the 70 guests, but also the famous Armenian journalists Grigol Artsruni and Abghar Ioanesian. Berdznishvili 1980, 11f; the report in *droeba* No. 24, 7 March 1876, p. 2. On the formation of political groups in Tbilisi see Suny 1986, 266.

19. Werner v. Siemens stated in his "Memoirs" on his third trip to the Caucasus in 1890: „Tiflis was once not only great princely residence, but also the seat of the native nobility, who especially in the winter seasons dominated the Tbilisi society. This has now changed. There is no Grand Duke residing in Tbilisi and also the elegant Georgians have almost completely disappeared from it. A quarter of a century ago the city was still Georgian, the better land plots as well as the city council were in Georgian hands. But even then the Armenian community began to spread and gradually the land passed into Armenian hands. In previous times of war the brave and strong Georgians maintained their property and social status against the sly and entrepreneurial Armenians. But that stopped when lasting peace and proper administration of states under Russian rule occurred. From that time the Armenian element rose inexorably and the Georgian had to give way. Now pretty much the whole city is owned by Armenians, gone are the proud, weapon staring Georgian figures from the Tbilisi streets. Today, the Armenian is inhabiting their palaces and ruling the city.” Quote from Lehmann-Haupt 1910, 84-85.
20. Gr. [pseud.] 1890, 3: “It is for example true that our neighbors, the Armenians, have a gifted ability for community (building) and initiative, but it is regrettable that we have also descended in this and in this too stay dependent on others. [...] Why are the Armenians obliged to urban affairs, there where we also live, they worry alone, they work alone, and why do we remain outside spectators? In my opinion, there is no shame for us, if we follow them and learn from their good qualities.” See also Sergi Meskhi’s (1845-1883) article, “kalakis akhali gamgeoba” [The new city administration], in: *nats’erebi sergi meskhisa* [Sergi Meskhi’s Works], vol. 1, p. 222f.; quote in Parsons 1987, 277: “It should be a source of great shame for real Georgians (if “real Georgians” exist in our country today) ... that what was once the Georgians’ capital city, T’p’ilisi, is now the property of Armenians. Half the inhabitants of contemporary T’p’ilisi are Armenian; commerce and barter are controlled by them; the city’s land is theirs; the buildings constructed on the land are nearly all theirs... In short, Armenians hold the city in their powerful claws and for the moment dominate and organise all its affairs.”
21. The elections to the third curia were conducted in the theatre of the Nobles’ Land Bank. 578 voters were able to choose among 145 candidates (out of 182 nominated). The 10 elected deputies were: 1. Prince M.V. Machabeli, 2. K.M. Kolubanskii, 3. Prince Z.A. Jorjadze, 4. Prince E.G. Machabeli, 5. G.N. Sunduk’ianc, 6. N.L. Kaitmazov, 7. A.I. Shah-Aziziants, 8. Prince N.D. Andronik’ashvili, 9. V.G. Kanduralovi, 10. G.G. Kartvelishvili. An-

- other 27 candidates were short listed, but not elected due to the interruption of the final round of elections. Among them were 17 Georgians, 6 Russians, 3 Armenians and the German pharmacist F.K. Wetzel. See: axali ambavi [News], in: *iveria*, No. 258, 4 December 1890, p. 1.
22. Chrelaev 1903, 61-62; "Obnovlenie tiffisskoi dumy", in *Novoe Obozrenie*, No. 2401, 11 Dec. 1890, p. 1. In professional representation there were 9 large merchants or entrepreneurs, 8 doctors, 8 bankers or bank employees, 8 rentiers, 7 engineers, 6 officers, 5 state servants, 5 factory owner, 4 writers, 3 teachers, 3 judges or former judges, 3 agronomists or foresters and this time only 2 lawyers. Overall, the influence of finance magnates has declined in favor of representatives of the *intelligentsia*.
  23. mek'enc'e [Der Wähler, pseud.], „kalakis arčevnebi [Stadtratswahlen].“ *iveria*, No. 20, 26.1.1891, 2; No. 18, 24.1.1891, 3; No. 24, 31.1.1891.
  24. According to Bendianishvili 1982, 34. P. Izmailov from the ruling party of the city council started to appeal to the interests of the Armenian nation to get votes. The opposition would have adopted this method for the Georgian voters afterwards.
  25. The meeting for the elections of the head of the city achieved significant attention. However, the newspaper report does not indicate any figures on the people present. In the Elective Assembly 35 people voted for and 29 against A.S. Matinov, but only 28 for and 35 against challenger Zubalov 1891.
  26. Novyj golova, *Novoe obozrenie*, No. 2498, 27 March 1891, p. 1. He was elected with 42 to 21 votes. The newspaper brings his short biography. See also the report "Tiffisskaja gorodskaja дума", *Novoe obozrenie*, No. 2498, 27 March 1891, p. 2f.
  27. Thus, the legislator tried to eliminate the influence of petty owners. Government agencies, charity societies as well as educational and scientific institutions continued to have the right to vote, as well as companies, cooperatives and companies of the city providing evidence of the 1st and 2nd guild (in capitals only the 1st guild). The property census varied depending on the category of a town: Capitals – properties worth at least 3,000 Rubles, regional administrative district cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants – 1,500 R., for all other regional, district and regional towns – 1,000 R., for simple towns and urban settlements – 300 R. for settlements – 100 R. This increased property census did not require any division into three separate voters' curiae. See on the city charter of 1892 in detail Nardova 1994, 12-18.
  28. Tumanov 1900, 56: „In any election system for the City Duma there will be as many representatives of just that nationality, to which the majority

- of voters belongs.” The question is, how far this conclusion had been conditioned by factors external to the city duma elections. See for example Tsereteli 1893, here No. 15: “But as we know, for everything good something bad is sure to follow. The Armenian clerical movement has erected a barrier around Armenian society and closed the door to the Armenian nation having contacts with us. It has alienated Armenian society from Georgian society.” (Parsons 1987, 283).
29. *Novoe obozrenie* (1897), No. 4607 (quoted by Bendianishvili 1960, 37). This liberal newspaper, edited by Prince Giorgi Tumanov, reported extensively on urban issues and the City Duma. In professional terms 10 City Duma deputies were bankers or bank employees, 11 traders and merchants, 6 rentiers, 8 doctors, 7 engineers, 8 judicial or court clerks, two teachers and the professions of the remaining 25 out of 77 deputies could not be tracked. Bendianishvili (1982, 45) identified the social origin of the majority of City Duma deputies from the upper bourgeoisie and the civil service.
  30. Laskhishvili 1934/1992, 102. Another editor regreted that the issue of the monthly magazine *Moambe* dedicated to the municipal elections that the Georgian nobility did not unite for joint political action to prevent their decay, but only reacted when the mortgages led to foreclosures on their lands. He also criticized the property tax census, which excluded the mass of the urban population from the negotiation of urban affairs. His comment culminates in the statement: “We do not want anyone else, the city is ours and shall be ours alone!” In: “chvensa da skhvagan” [About us and the others], in: *moambe*, No. 5 (May 1897), pp. 95-104, here p. 101.
  31. The list of candidates as the face of the three “parties” was examined by Evangulov 1897, 3. Interestingly the *dvorcovye nomery* nominated Ilia Chavchavadze, but not the head of the “Russian-Georgian Party”, Nikoloz Z. Tskhvedadze. To have a realistic chance to succeed in the elections for the City Duma, candidates had to be nominated by at least two “parties”.
  32. Evangulov 1897, 3; Tumanov (1900, 44-50) counted 450-480 votes for *dvorcovoe nomery*, nearly 400 for the “Russian-Georgian Party” and the remaining approximately 200 votes for the “young Armenians”.
  33. Vladimer Mikeladze on Giorgi Laskhishvili’s question for the reasons of rejecting the proposal: “A merger is impossible, because the Armenians deceive us anyway, there were examples for this in the past, and also the relations between us are very tense, and it is better to fight against all Armenians.” This error was also repeated in the next elections, in 1901/02, where a collaboration with the party of reformist young Ar-

- menians against the urban oligarchy was again discarded. Laskhishvili 1934/1992, 102, 134-5.
34. Suny 1993, 89, 92-93.; Armjane 1910, 515-525. The unknown author noted that “here the purely social relations have adopted an outward national form; the struggle against feudalism was given the fairly bright painting of a supposed struggle of the Armenians against the Georgians and Tatars” (p. 518).
  35. Cf. on the perception of „powerlessness” of Tsarist rule in the South Caucasus: Lur’e 1994.
  36. Hovannisian 1971, 38, 42-43. However, he rejected the proposal of the State Duma, to elect in two curia: one for representatives of Russian origin and the other for the locals. This could be interpreted as distrust of the government and the Russian people against them and thus rekindle national conflicts between Russians and locals. In addition, “the introduction of the new principle of nationality in city affairs can even worsen the relationship among the indigenous groups by introducing the idea of a false factual distribution of city deputies by their indigenous nationalities in the various cities of the region.” (Ismail-Zade 1991, 197)
  37. Avalov 1910, 476. Thus, the “simplified reasoning figure” for the German Reich seems to be confirmed: “The deeper in a society the divisions between socio-cultural communities are and the more concise these take shape in the structure of the political elites, the lower will be the chance to reach a consensus sufficient for the establishment and preservation of representative institutions and the granting of general civil rights within the elites.” Best 1989, 3-18, esp. 17.
  38. Jones 2005, 159-196; Jones 1989. Sources to the events of January 1905 to February 1907 in Tbilisi (especially Tsarist management reports and pamphlets of RSDRP) were published by Murvanidze 1985.
  39. See the quote from the Social-Democratic newspaper *sakme* (Nr. 16, 1910) in Bendianishvili 1982, 52-53. The same way they have outpaced the Dashnaks with the support of Armenian Marxists and the Armenian candidate Arshak Zurabov [i.e. Zohrabian] in the elections to the Second State Duma for the deputy from Tiflis gubernia. Hovannisian 1971, 47.
  40. Kovalevskii 1914, 236, quoted by Alasania, 1997, 20f. More detailed research on home ownership and economic power among the various ethnic groups in Tbilisi at the beginning of the 20th century does not yet exist. Demographically, until 1926 the Georgians should ascend to the relative and only after 1959 to the absolute largest population group in Tbilisi. Totadze 1993, 276; about the difficulties of a clear ethnic identification of the city population see Totadze 1993, 46-54.



41. Ananoo 1922, 111; quoted by Der Megrian 1968, 25. For the election period from 1887 to 1890 there were four deputies fewer indicated and the elections of 1878 have been forgotten. For the years 1891-1893: *Obnovlenie tiflisskoi dumy, Novoe obozrenie*, No. 2401, 11 December 1890, 1.

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