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# Tourism Discourses, Stakeholder Perceptions and Expectations towards Tourism Development in Stephantsminda, Georgia

# Tourism Discourses, Stakeholder Perceptions and Expectations towards Tourism Development in Stephantsminda, Georgia

**MSc Thesis**

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# *Abstract*

Tourism development in Stephantsminda, (Georgia) is main strategy of Georgian Government, although all this process of development do not goes smoothly and tension arises between local people, Georgian tourism department and national tour companies. In this research were conducted qualitative interviews and utilized critical discourse and path dependence theories to demonstrate the multiplicity of problems which occur during the tourism development. It seems that, tourism as economic development can be seen as a tourism discourse for all three of the stakeholder groups although, to achieve economic development through tourism, each stakeholder group has different approaches which finally lengthens the time of tourism development and requires social transformation too. The most important barrier in tourism development can be the lack of the trust among one to another, different perception and expectations toward tourism development and soviet legacy. The soviet legacy may be one of the main causes of the power struggle and resistance toward development, which occurs in Georgia.

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## *Introduction*

Nowadays, travel and tourism is considered one of the largest industries in the world. By 2010, tourism and travel business is expected to produce approximately 330 million jobs across the globe. The gross economic benefits this industry brings are evident, for example, international tourism generated €642 billion in 2008, which is 30% of the world's exports of services. Every year the quantity of tourists and travelers is increasing and 1.6 billion international tourists are forecasted to exist by 2020 (WTO).

Technological development is one main factor that accounts for the financial increase in the travel and tourism industry. Cheaper and more efficient transportation, growing wealth, development of the hotel business and information technology enabled the expansion of and demand for tourism. Tourism, especially mass tourism, is often criticized for disrupting local economies, creating seasonal unemployment and degradation of the natural and cultural environment. Over the last few decades, however, more sustainable forms of tourism have been emerging. For instance, new flexible, unpackaged tours are supposed to be more environmentally friendly, concentrating on improvement of the livelihoods of local peoples and tourist recreation. Indeed, tourism development can play a great role in poverty alleviation and bring better living conditions to rural and mountain villages too (Ashley, Roe & Goodwin, 2001).

Tourism is crucial for many countries such as Greece, Egypt, Brazil, Thailand and many others, due to increased opportunities for employment and large monetary gains for local businesses. Different countries have various strategies and approaches toward tourism development, some approaches are propelled by poverty alleviation. Pro poor tourism (PPT) is one tourism development approach that increases tourism's input toward poverty reduction, facilitating participation of poor people in effective product development (Ashley, Roe & Goodwin, 2001; Spenceley & Seif, 2003).

Recently, the Georgian government started promoting mountain and rural villages for tourism development, influencing local populations to improve their livelihoods through tourism development. One of the Georgian mountain regions where tourism development began is Stephantsminda. Stephantsminda is a small mountain town in northeastern Georgia, 157 kilometers to north of Tbilisi (capital of Georgia), at an elevation of 1,740

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meters above sea level. Stephantsminda is located on the northern slope of the Caucasus range and includes the Tergi, Truso and Sno river valleys. Natural landscapes vary from deep gorges and canyons with fast streams and sub–alpine vegetation to high mountain peaks (the highest is 5047m) with glaciers. The Caucasus Mountains are one of the few global biodiversity hotspots that comprise only 1.4% of the land surface of the earth, but contain 60% of global species diversity. Although the Stephantsminda region occupies a small part of the Caucasus Mountains, the region hosts three endemic bird species, two endemic mammals, approximately one hundred species of reptile and more than three hundred endemic plants. In 1970, an area around Stephantsminda was officially designated a national park, although governmental and non-governmental organizations only recently began working on management and tourism development strategies for this national park.

Moreover, Stephantsminda was mass tourism destination during the Soviet Union, but since Soviet Union collapsed mass tourism was broken down too. The Georgian government is promoting tourism in the Stephantsminda region and this area has potential for future tourism development. However, tourism development processes thus far have led to some problems among the local people, Georgian tourism department and nation tour companies.

Since a new government was elected in Georgia in 2003 it has become apparent that changing values and visions of the Georgian government including their adoption of Western ideology, requires social transition amongst the Georgian people as well. Furthermore, I have worked since 2003 in the region and was giving tours through this region; I have a good relationship with local people, even good friendships with some of them. So it can be stated that I have a clear picture from the local and national tour company's and from the local peoples point of the view.

From my observation, in places such as Stephantsminda, people seem not yet ready to change their values and life styles they acquired during the Soviet Union. The seventy years spent living under Soviet rule changed people, causing them to fully depend on the government. Being excluded from the ability and perception of ownership eventually led to the decline of the private sector in Georgia. Contrary to the past, today the Georgian government has a liberal economic approach, concentrating on investors and on development of the private sector. In general, local people from Stephantsminda are quite pragmatic and open for novelties, but are still struggling and resist changes concerning modern ideas of tourism development. There is an overall lack of trust from the local population toward the government and government projects.

The importance of this thesis is to introduce multiplicity of problems in tourism development in Stephantsminda, moreover, to look for discourses and compare perceptions, behavior, roles, expectations and power relationships between stakeholder groups. While completing the thesis, critical discourse analysis and Foucault's power/knowledge theory will be employed, this involves qualitative research and assists the researcher in using interpretative abilities.

In addition, Path dependence theory is employed to investigate the past for a further explanation of the social phenomenon inhibiting tourism development. Finally, I am arguing that discourse theory and path dependence theory can be linked, which further explains the social phenomenon mentioned earlier, which can be seen in Georgia, mainly in rural mountain villages.

# *Chapter 1 - Problem and Research Questions*

## *1.1 Problem Statement*

Tourist diversity and multiplicity of tourism activities shifted old mass tourism in to new unpackaged/flexible tourism.  Nowadays, it is apparent that almost hundred of large and small tour companies are using the Stephantsminda region for tourist activities. However, a lack of infrastructure and disorganized tourist movement hinders the benefits that were apparent with mass tourism. While the quantity of activities increased the quantity of tourists decreased, leaving local people with insufficient economic gain and other benefits.

Tourism development is one of the main strategies of the Georgian government, but the government concentrates more on investors and less on local resident participation in tourism development plans.

From my point of the view; as a person who used to work in region last seven years, first as a tour leader and than as a manager one of the tour company. There is a lack of information and knowledge among local people toward tourism project development plans. In many cases, local residents feel excluded from these plans or do not know how to cope with tourists. Furthermore, there is a lack of communication and cooperation between stakeholders. While everyone has plans and ideas, there is little sharing of ideas amongst one another.

New research is required for a clearer picture of current stakeholder perceptions and behavior toward tourism development. This research will address new issues not yet explored. For example, it appears that local stakeholders do not benefit significantly enough to sustain a livelihood from tourism development in the Stephantsminda region. Furthermore, it is unclear what local stakeholders see as their role in providing a tourism industry in Stephantsminda region.

## *1.2 Research Objective*

The aim of this research is to first look at certain discourses in place and time, analyze perceptions and practices, feelings and expectations of various stakeholders toward tourism development. Second, this research will provide a case study of the Stephantsminda region

concerning stakeholder roles and benefits perceived by different stakeholders (economic, social etc.), which in turn creates a picture of the relationship between different stakeholders and their individual role in the tourism industry. Thirdly, it is interesting to observe the power struggle between stakeholder groups in tourism development and determine which stakeholder group is the most powerful player among them. Fourthly, this research through path dependence theory provides brief but explicit information about the Soviet legacy in Georgia which might be cause of struggle and resistance among the local population of Stephantsminda, Georgian tourism department and national tour companies. Finally, this research might be useful for future tourism development plans in Georgia because if the causes of tension between different stakeholders become clear, such knowledge may be taken into consideration while planning and implementing new projects.

## 1.3 Research questions

1.      Which tourism discourses can be distinguished in Stephantsminda region?

2.      What do different stakeholders see, as their own and other stakeholders' role in tourism development of the Stephantsminda region?

3.      What are different stakeholders expecting from tourism development?

4.      Who is involved and who isn't involve in tourism development? Which stakeholder group is the most powerful player?

Since I am going to illustrate multiplicity of problems through tourism development in Stephantsminda and research questions are various too, have developed sub questions which might be helpful to obtain comprehensive explanation of research questions.

## 1.4 Sub questions

•       How do different stakeholders perceive changes from mass tourism to more diverse/flexible tourism?

- How do different stakeholders perceive tourists in general?

- How do different stakeholders perceive tourism development?

- What kind of knowledge or information do different stakeholders have to tourism development?

- What kind of benefits (social, economic. etc.) do different stakeholders have or perceive to have from tourism development?

- How do different stakeholders see the future of tourism, and what should be improved?

- Can tourism lead local communities toward greater economic and social benefits*?*

- Who do different stakeholders see as responsible for the tourism development?

- What kind of relationships do stakeholders have toward one other?

# Chapter 2 - Theoretical Framework

## 2.1 Introduction

This section of the report introduces the theoretical concepts used in this study and explains how they relate to the goal of this study, which is to analyze the perceptions, expectations, behavior and roles of different stakeholders toward tourism development in the Stephantsminda region. First I will provide a brief definition of stakeholders and some concepts regarding their role in tourism development. Then I will move on to argue why the theoretical concepts of discourse, power and resistance are relevant for this study of stakeholders in tourism development. Finally I will argue that Critical Discourse Analysis ( Wodak & Meyer 2009) is an appropriate research methodology for this study.

A very commonly used research method in the field of social studies is discourse analysis, which involves qualitative research and interpretation abilities of the researchers. In my case I followed the methodology of the Critical Discourse Analysis by Wodak and Meyer (2009) and Foucauldian observations, mainly because this theory fits well with my research questions.

Critical Discourse Analysis is mostly based on Michel Foucault's theoretical insights and discourse theories. Many scholars have employed Foucault's concepts in the study of tourism, some of which focused on aspects of resistance (Wearing 1995), some of them aspects of gaze ( Labone 1996; Rojek 1992; Urry 1990) and some on body (Veijola and Jokinen 1994). In this paper I am going to employ some concepts from Michel Foucault (discourse, knowledge and power) and also some aspects of resistance. I choose CDA because it allows researchers to build up a well incorporated set of concepts that provide a theoretical explanation of social phenomena under the study.

## 2.2 Stakeholder-Stakeholder groups

Stakeholders based on Freemen (1984) can be defined as "*any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives*" (p46).  To put it more precisely, to be identified as a stakeholder an individual or a group must have a valid interest and touching ground toward the organization or ongoing development.

Various scholars have researched stakeholder groups and the meaning of their interests (Allen et al., 1993; Andereck & Vogt, 2000; Davis & Morais, 2004; De Lopez, 2001; Gunn,

1994; Markwick, 2000; Murphy, 1983; Ryan, 2002; Vincent & Thompson, 2002 and etc.). Nowadays, theoretical approaches regarding stakeholders and their role in tourism development identify four major tourism stakeholder perspectives; tourists, residents, tourism entrepreneurs and local or national government officials. In this research only three stakeholder groups (residents, tourism entrepreneurs and local or national government officials) will be compared, since my thesis is concerned only with the supply side of tourism.

## 2.3 Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

Critical discourse analysis was built on theoretical insights of Michel Foucault, mainly on discourse theory. Discourse as Foucault argues " *is so much more than mere words; words are not 'wind, an external whisper, a beating of wings that one has difficulty in hearing in the serious matter of history"(1972. 209).*  To put more precisely discourse is much more than words, discourses exercise power in a society, they institutionalize and regulate manners of talking, thinking and acting.

Moreover, as Michel Foucault stated that discourses effect on subjects, the entire world how we see it is by discourses and through discourse and knowledge we are created too(1972). For instance in an isolated family a child's knowledge depends on just a few people, those few people create the child's identity. The child cannot know anything but what is communicated by them.  Subsequently it seems that those who control our early life experiences have enormous power. Discourse is created and achieved by those who have the power and resources of communication. Those who are in control decide who we are by deciding what we discuss, all discourse acts this way. For instance, the government can inundate us through media images of terrorism or revolutions in foreign countries and at the same time not allow us to see what happens in a corner of our own country.

According to Foucault power and knowledge are thoroughly linked together through a multiplicity of discursive elements and eventually tie in the formation of discourse. Discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power; discourse conveys and produces power, supports it, but at the same time undermines and exposes it. Thus, discourse while producing power is also produced by it, as valid discourses produce counter discourses attacking the same validation (1972).

Moreover, as Wodak stated, we can be distinguished between the power of discourse and the power over discourse (2009).

With regard to power of discourse; discourses establish the method through which a society interprets reality and manages more discourses and non discursive practices as well, such as (thinking, acting and further talking). When analyzing the power effects of discourse one should take into consideration effects of the text and effects of the discourse. It is hardly visible and almost impossible to proof a minimal effect of the text when in contrast, a discourse through signs, approach and frequent contents guides toward construction of 'knowledge' which as a result has constant effects (Wodak. 2009). However, CDA when dealing with cognitive and social dimension of discourse can account for some of the detailed structures or strategies of the text. It might include; grammatical, stylistic, rhetorical pragmatic narrative and other forms of verbal and multimodal configuration of communication actions. In this research there will be no (or less) attention given to linguistic aspects or text and will be concentrate on the participants communicative situation and effects of the discourse (Wodak. 2009. 66).

With regard to power over discourse; everyone can be co-producer of discourse although no one can control discourse or propos accurate final result.  Discourses ship more knowledge than a single subject is conscious of it (Wodak. 2009).  As Foucault puts; *'People know what they do; they frequently know why they do; but what they do not know is what what they do does.'* (1965.187). Although powerful politicians or some groups who have great finances and privileged right to use the media can achieve transformation in discourse.

While talking about connections between discourses and power it is necessary to look at how discourse and reality are connected to each other. As Wodak stated, discourses do not only mirror reality but shape and enable social reality too ( 2009). *"They are not a second-class material reality, not a less material than 'real' reality, not passive media into which reality is imprinted. Discourses are fully valid material realities among others"* (Wodak, 2009. 37).

Finally, discourses exercise power by shipping the knowledge and through this knowledge nourishes the individual or collective consciousness. Such knowledge plays a fundamental role for the individual or for the collective, in discursive or in non-discursive movement, which consequently shapes reality (Foucault 1980).


Furthermore, Michel Foucault's discourse theory centres on the following questions (Wodak. 2009. 34 );

- *What is valid knowledge at a certain place and certain time? What can be spoken about and what cannot be spoken about?*
- *How does this knowledge arise and how is it passed on?*
- *What functions does it have for constituting subjects?*
- *What consequences does it have for the overall shaping and knowledge of society?*

This knowledge refers to all kind of senses, material that formulates human awareness. Moreover, knowledge's legality depends on people's position in history, geography, gender, class and so on. Arguably one can say that how you see the world affects your reality.

Foucault's ideas may lead to the conclusion that knowledge in tourism is produced by challenging discourses. Discourse, therefore, is a useful concept in emphasising how a certain subject or topic is talked and thought about and how it is represented to others (Mowforth 2003).

Consequently, critical discourse analysis aims to find out knowledge enclosed by discourses, and how this knowledge is related to power in power/knowledge compounds. All types of knowledge can be subject for analysis, for instance; scientific or natural knowledge, common knowledge, which passes through everyday communication, knowledge produced by schools, knowledge produced by the media and so on (Wodak. 2009). Moreover, CDA aims to not only analyze, but to donate to the understanding and explanation of serious social problems particularly those caused by public talk or text, such as the range of forms of social power abuse or domination, which might cause social inequity. The analysis specially concentrates on the interests, the expertise and the resistance of those groups that might be victims of discursive inequality and its consequences (Wodak. 2009).

To get the descriptive, explanatory and critical sufficiency through the study of social problems by the CDA, is crucial detailed cognitive and social analysis and vice versa. Moreover, through theoretical framework or the discourse-cognition-society triangle, 'society' is understood as a multifaceted creation "*participants and their identities, roles and relationships engaging in spatiotemporally and institutionally situated goal-direction interaction*" and social structures such as; organisations, classes or groups with their properties and power relationships. Moreover, the above mentioned triangle also contains the cultural and historical scope of communication and social formation like cultural diversity and their historical specificity (Wodak. 2009. 66. ).

Finally, critical discourse analysis questions and criticizes discourses. First of all, CDA finds out the contradiction among and inside discourses. Afterwards CDA confines what can be said and done, through which discourse builds specific statements and makes them doubtful.

While doing CDA one should bear in mind that it is essential to be clear about the fact that researcher's criticism isn't located outside the discourse, because it would disagree with the fundamental statements of discourse analysis. One can employ values, norms, lows and rights but when doing so must bear in mind that these values, norms or universal human rights are discursively created as well. Furthermore, for the critical discourse analyst is crucial to know that his/her position is also the consequence of the discourse (Wodak. 2009). CDA doesn't provide one single or specific theory or specific methodology in CDA. On the contrary, studies in CDA are from different theoretical backgrounds and are oriented toward different data and methodology (Wodak. 2009).

## *2.4 Power in Tourism*

Even in the age of designed new tourism, problems still arise such as unequal balance of power between rich and poor, society and environment as well as one-sided flow of power (Mowforth and Munt 2009). Other researchers (Cameron 1997; Milne 1998; Shaw and Williams 1998) claim the contrary however, that poor people are not always passive during economic and social change. Instead, they accept their dilemma and can be active and resistant as they continuously negotiate and challenge the route of development while pursuing their rights and interests.

Power for Foucault is a multifaceted strategic situation containing a, "multiple and mobile field of force relations" that are never completely constant. He views power as a relationship rather than an entity, and sees power as flowing in multiple directions (Choeng. 2000).

Power exists, "*between every point of a social body, between a man a woman, between the members of a family, between a master and a pupil"* (Foucault. 1980 d: 187). Power is omnipresent in human affairs and tourism is no exception, although power relationships are easily masked in everyday discourse by facts and statistics. Thus, power is invisible in tourism when it is visualized after the rules and politicians (Choeng. 2000).

Moreover, Foucault sees in power a multiplicity of power relationships involving targets and agents in every social situation. As Foucault argues, the first task is to identify the targets and agents; "What is needed is a study of power in its external visage, at the point where it is in direct and immediate relationship with that which we can provisionally call its object, its target, its field of application" (1980b:97). The target is the secondary actor in a power relationship and exists in relation to the agents (Choeng. 2000). In Foucault's diverse works, targets have included the prisoner, child in prison, and the mental institution, and

home/school institutions (1978, 1977, 1975). For Foucault, agents can be family, educators, doctors, guards and psychiatrists in these institutions etc. Agents usually contain/make the child's sexuality, imprison the criminal and detain the insane for economic or political gain (Choeng. 2000).

Based on Foucault targets are identified through their insecure positions, in tourism sector usually tourists qualify as Foucauldian targets, because all touristic decisions can not be made without consultation or advice. Indeed during tours, particularly packaged tours, tourists are getting treatment from guides, hotel owners and other agents who are part of the organized tour. Even the self-guided tours are limited and structured by the guide books or signposts.

As Foucault's agents in tourism sector qualifies; public privet sector brokers, academics, travel writers and locals, government officials, guides, guide books and etc. They discuss how far development should carry on, what type of development is best or who should enter as tourists and etc. For example, guides can teach and educate tourists on how to act properly in specific areas or situations and present interpretations of culture, customs or historic places. As Foucault's agents qualifies Brokers, who in a diversity of 'masks' limit their movements, behaviors and act as a powerful strength in the system (Choeng. 2000). Tourists can be qualified as agents at some point because they expect to have services for what they have paid. Tourists from more developed countries than the host society can also bring new values and can be a catalyst of culture co-modification.

Based on Choeng's identification of targets and agents, locals have much less power compared to other agents like national tour companies and tourism departments. Although they exert the least control over what takes place in the touristic region. For example, they can block the entry of tourists into regions or sabotage the industry by rejecting to be "tourism objects" (2000).

This is a clear demonstration of power relations in tourism systems that are dynamic and continuously changing; there is no one-way fixed flow of power from one individual to another. Another example of dynamic change is tourists becoming brokers by starting their own companies or taking government positions as consultants. Tourists can also become locals by getting permanent residency at given destinations. At the same time, locals can become brokers by engaging in the business or tourism planning. Likewise, brokers can change their identity to tourists or become uninvolved in tourism related jobs and become locals. Finally, locals can become tourists and begin traveling to other countries. The varying identity of tourists, locals and brokers depends a great deal on eventuality, time and place.

In my case, locals qualified as targets because of their insecure positions, depending solely on tourism and have to follow tourism development plans made by the Georgian tourism department or national tour companies. While tourists are paying money for services they must be satisfied too. As tourism agents, qualifies, tourism department, national tour companies and indirectly tourists. Because the Georgian tourism department insists on developing tourism for economic development of the region, at the same time it attempts to offer better infrastructure and services for the tourists.

## 2.5. Path Dependence Theory

After elaboration on the Critical Discourse Analysis, I realized that it is crucial to bear in mind that discourses do not disappear, but rather change throughout history. Shifting from one regime to another and pleasing new values and norms can be the cause of discourse changes as well. Furthermore, it can be crucial to have a look at the past; in this case, I found it useful to employ path dependency theory to arrive at a richer explanation of different stakeholders' perceptions and behavior toward tourism development in Stephantsminda.

At the same time, a link can be seen between discourse theory and path dependence theory; discourse theory looks at the occurrence and spread of valid knowledge at a certain time and place. Discourse theory then explains consequences that discourses can have for shaping knowledge and reality of society. Evidently discourse analysis requires having a look in the past to see how this knowledge arose. Path dependence theory looks at events that had a place in the past, which influence present decisions and define alternatives for the future. It is possible that decisions that were made in the past or events that already had a place in history can have effects on raising and spreading valid knowledge at a certain place and time.

## 2.6 Path Dependence

In recent years, path dependence theory has become an important tool for social research. Various researchers (Larry Griffin (1993), Larry Isaac (1997), William Sewell (1994), and

Charles Tilly (1994)) stated that only through path dependence theory can many crucial social phenomenons be explained. Furthermore, path dependence theory was utilized to explain how the position of decisions one faces for any given circumstance is restricted by the decisions one has made in the past, even though past conditions may no longer be appropriate. For some authors path dependence means 'history matters' or 'the past influences *the* future' although there are other researchers like James Mahoney, who stated that this definition is a vague notion without clear explanation of 'path dependency' and why it's sequences merit special attention (2000).

Furthermore, Terry Karl (1997) in her study of oil-producing nations *explains* path dependence *by stating that* "the impact of decisions made in the past persists into the present and defines the alternatives for the future ". Though during the path dependent analysis one should bear in mind that it involves the study of underlying processes that are very sensitive to events that happened in the early stages of the whole historical sequence, "in a path-dependent pattern earlier parts of a sequence matter *much more than later parts."* (Mahoney 2000. 510). Consequently, events that happen in late stages may have little effect.

Contrary to social researchers, economists who employ path dependence theory for their research utilize quantitative methods. An obvious example of this phenomenon is Brian Arthur's discussion of a Polya urn experiment, with the urn being filled with colored balls added one at a time. When the first color is randomly drawn out of the urn, the probability of all the following colors that will be selected varies according to the proportion of the remaining colors in the urn. Consequently, the colors selected in the first few rounds are really significant for the final composition of the urn because mathematical probabilities guarantee that the proportions of colors will soon become stable around a fixed point. This example leads to the conclusion that "the order of events makes a difference" and "when things happen within a sequence, it affects how they happen" (Mahoney 2000). Finally, while contingent historical events take place or processes are placed into action and start producing a particular outcome, these processes are likely to stay in action and carry on this track toward the outcome.

Through the framework of path dependence, scholars point out two types of sequences; self-reinforcing sequences and reactive sequences. The first one ('increasing returns' as economists call it) in*volves an institutional pattern* that*,* once adopted, distributes rising benefits *through* its' constant adoption, and over time it becomes more and more difficult to transform the pattern or select earlier available options, even if these different options would

have been more efficient.  Some historical sociologists identified extra mechanisms that can support reproductive processes including functional, power and legitimating mechanisms

The second type of path dependence is called reactive sequence, in that the sequences are reactive when each event through the sequence is in part a reaction to temporally ancestor events. In addition each step in *a* chain is "de-pendent" on previous steps. With reactive sequences, the final event in the sequence is typically the outcome under study, and the whole chain of events can be seen as a path leading up to this outcome (Mahoney 2000).

Finally, the importance of employing path dependence theory is to find out what was the cause of the social transformation that created *a* social phenomenon and still has an effect on tourism development in Stephantsminda.  Applying path dependence theory, I am searching for decisions and circumstances that had a major role in the past, and may therefore explain how and why the past limits present decisions and defines future decisions.

## 2.7 Mass and flexible "new type" of tourism

Before moving further on to the conducted research and subsequent data, some terms mentioned above should be briefly explained such as mass tourism, new flexible tourism and pro- poor tourism.

### Mass tourism

Mass tourism can be defined as highly organized travel, minimum contact with the destination culture, travel in large groups, a reliance on tour operators to arrange flights and accommodations. Mass tourists enjoy an element of liberty, but will still tend to stay on the 'beaten' track. In addition, mass tourism, which is sometimes called package tours, can be associated with thoughts like; Search for the sun, follow the masses, eat in a hotel dining room, looking for homogeneous countries and cultures (Mowforth & Munt, 2003).

The growth of mass tourism has led to a variety of problems, which have become more and more evident over recent years. Such problems include environmental, social and cultural humiliation, unequal sharing of financial benefits, the promotion of paternalistic attitudes and the spread of disease (Mowforth & Munt, 2003). Some of these problems have become the subject of global concern and in part, propel the development of alternative forms of tourism.

### *New, flexible type of tourism*

New type of tourism can also called; eco, sustainable, community based ethical and pro poor tourism, etc. There should be a shared concern for development that takes into account environmental, economic and socio-cultural impacts. The goal of new type tourism is stated to be a greater understanding of the natural and human environment. This understanding should involve both the education of tourists and the host community. The host community will, therefore, be able to better understand the tourist and cater to them.

Flexible, new type tourism is often associated with notions of wanting to experience something new, wanting to be in charge, appreciating, but not destroying or overusing for pleasure, understanding, adventure and a willingness to try local fare. Although some scholars like Mowforth and Munt (2003) are critical toward new type tourism as they question whether it is really new or just a discourse and argue that flexible tourism can result in unequal sharing of financial benefits. Moreover, they argue that through sustainable tourism development, conservation bodies still exert pressure on destination governments; still an economic is imperative and gives investment opportunities for the transnational corporations.

# Chapter 3 - S Stephantsminda, Georgia; a brief overview

In this chapter I will provide information about Georgia and the Stephantsminda region in particular, in order to clarify for readers the geographical and historical context of Stephantsminda. Moreover, I would like to provide important and relevant information concerning Georgian culture, people and identity.

## 3.1 Georgia, Saqartvelo



Based on old Georgian legend, God was dividing land for different nationalities around the world. The Georgians were late for the occasion and when they finally appeared to god, all the land was gone. Georgians felt so miserable and disappointed that the Lord gave them the small piece of land that he had kept for himself, the hills and valleys that lie to the south of great Caucasus Mountains now known as Georgia.

Georgians call themselves Kartvelebi and their land Sakartvelo, meaning a place of the Kartvels and to language Kartuli. Georgian language (Kartuli) is not a derivative of the Altaic, Indo-European, Slavic or Finno-Ugric languages. It is rather a south Caucasian language group known as Kartveluri, which emerged around four thousand years ago from an original, proto-Georgian language (McGovern 2003).

The first Georgian tribes as well as the rise of the first Georgian states of Colchis and Iberia appear in written history in the 12th century BC. Archeological evidence shows early political and state developments in the advanced metallurgy and goldsmith techniques that date back to the 7th century BC and earlier. Moreover, in Greek mythology one of the Georgian state Colchis was the location of the Golden Fleece hunted by Jason and the Argonauts. The myth of the Golden Fleece may have stemmed from the local practice of using sheep fleeces to filter gold dust from the rivers. In addition, this myth describes the Georgian state's advanced civilization and development for that time (Suny 1993-94).

Georgians are proud that Georgia is the oldest wine producing country and one of the first Christian countries in the Caucasus region. It is archaeologically proven that Georgian winemaking began between 8000 and 5000 BC. During this time people of South Caucasus discovered how wild grape juice turned into wine while keeping it through winter in a shallow pit. By 4000 BC people were already cultivating grapes and burying clay vessels (Qvevri in Georgian) in which they would keep wine at a perfect temperature. The Qvevris are topped with a wooden cap and then sealed with earth, to ensure the wine may be kept entombed for up to 50 years (McGovern 2003).

Christianity was declared the official Georgian religion in 327 AD by king Mirian III. At the same time in Georgian history the first Georgian books were being written as well as other developments in literature and art that helped fuse the country together (Metreveli 1996).

Although Christianity destroyed old Georgian literature and began to create a literature of its own, most of this was translated from Greek and Syrian originals. The oldest books translated at that time were the Gospels and the Old Testament. Soon after the translations of text came the writing of original works, mostly hagiographies, such as the Old Georgian text, "Passion of Shushanik"written in the fifth century. Another similar work by an anonymous author called, "The Martyrdom of Evstate Mtsketeli", was passed down from the sixth century.

The territory of modern day Georgia is situated between the Black and Caspian seas. To the west is the Black sea, to the north Russia, to the south Armenia and Turkey and to the east Azerbaijan. Georgia covers 69,700 km$^2$ with a population around 4,5 million people. The Republic of Georgia is comprised of the Abkhazian Autonomous Republic and the Ajarian Autonomous Republic. Georgia is subdivided into 65 districts and rural areas, which are controlled by rural councils. There are 37 minor towns, 61 rural settlements and about 450 villages in Georgia (Georgian State department for statistics).

Georgia is a small country although it aggregates nearly every kind of habitat and biome found in the region. The country's species diversity far surpasses two-thirds of the species found throughout the entire Caucasus, comprising nearly 1% of the planet's animal and plant species. Georgians are one of the most ancient peoples in the world. They have traversed a difficult path of historical development in order to maintain a rich culture and invaluable independence within the borders of their beautiful land (Metreveli 1996).

## 3.2 Stephantsminda region

### 3.2.1 Historical background

Stephantsminda is located on the northern slopes of the Caucasian mountains, in an area known as Khevi (meaning gorge) and the people living there are called Mokheve, or gorgers, a word for word translation for the people living in the gorge (Qiqodze 2003). The name Stephantsminda (literally Saint Stephan) comes from the Georgian Orthodox monk Stephan who constructed a place of religious retreat at this location, which later became a small settlement and later a Georgian Military Highway. The area was controlled by a local feudal Chopikashvili clan, who were in charge of collecting tolls from travelers in the area. In the 19th century, after the expansion of the Russian empire into Georgian territories, the local people revolted against Russian rule. Nevertheless, a local lord named Gabriel Chobikashvili, the son of the Kazi-Beg, become loyal to Russia and helped them in suppressing the revolt. Furthermore, Chobikashvili then became a Russian officer, adopted the surname of Kazbegi and the village under his control was then referred to as Kazbegi The name of the village was officially changed to Kazbegi under Soviet Union rule in 1925. In 2006, the town reverted to its original name of Stephantsminda.

The Stephantsminda people are the only Georgians who live solely in the Northern Caucasus. This geographical area and frontiers have played an enormous role in the formation of this Georgian 'tribe'. The Darialy gorge, a deep and beautiful canyon created by the Tergi River to the north of Stephantsminda, connects Georgia with other Caucasian people and Russia. This narrow gorge is the 'entrance of Caucasus', which alongside runs the so called Georgian military highway. The entrance is significant in its' strategic place allowing locals to defend and fortify it. The local people were free highlanders who referred to God as "sheep creator" and had been fighting with their northern neighbors for years over land used for pasturing sheep. Moreover, through the centuries Pagan and Christian

traditions and values have been mixed up in the Stephantsminda population's perceptions (Qiqodze 2003). They usually surrendered to charismatic religious leaders, who during times of war became warlords. These same leaders often performed the role of judge, looked after the tribe's high morality and carefully tried to avoid domination by a particular family or clan. All these rules, customs and superstitions of locals were prevalent in their society up until the 19th century when Russians invaded Georgia. After the occupation of Georgia by Russia,

many changed took place compared to other highland Georgian areas. Locals managed to keep their dialect rich with archaic words and their culture alive with local festivals. The festivals were Christian festivals mixed with Pagan religious rituals such as the sacrifice of animals in the church courtyards.



Pagan holy places in Stepantsminda region

Prior to 1921, most of Georgia was under rule of a feudal system, the Kazbegi region being one of the few exceptions. Here the land was equally distributed amongst all families and all land use issues were settled democratically by village elders. Villagers enjoyed communal use of designated cow pastures mainly located close to communities and along the lower foothills of the settled mountain valleys. Free range access characterized the slopes and upper reaches of the extensive mountain grasslands of the High Caucasus used as sheep pasture.

Post 1921, all land was converted to state land. Officially, private ownership of livestock ceased to exist, although families in the Kazbegi region continued to own sheep and cow stocks for personal use, sharing traditional pasture with state-owned herds.

## 3.2.2 Economical situation

Traditionally, locals from the Stephantsminda region were based on livestock and agricultural activities. During the rule of the Soviet Union many people of the region abandoned traditional agricultural activities and joined the state infrastructure. Working as a customer on

the Georgian-Russian border was considered the most prestigious and profitable job, mainly because the soviet system facilitated corrupt arrangements.

Furthermore, Stephantsminda is geographically closer to Vladikavkaz (Russian) than to the Georgian capital of Tbilisi. While driving to Tbilisi requires crossing a mountainous pass 2400m above sea level, driving to Vladikavkaz is closer and easier. Consequently, Stephantsminda was more tied economically to Russia than Georgia. Before the closing Georgian-Russian border (in 2005), thousands of cars were using this road between Stephantsminda and Vladikavkaz, which helped local residents to engage in different small businesses and also provided opportunities for travel and trading. Furthermore, local residents had additional income from green houses acquired from living in a harsh climate. Gas is free for the local residents and they employed it for the green houses. However, the new government brought a liberal economic approach, discontinuing the use of free gas in the green houses and gave lonely subsidies to green house owners to begin small businesses.



Abandoned Soviet hotel 'Turbaza'

During the Soviet Union Stephantsminda was a mass tourist destination and people were occupied and employed by the tourism sector. The town had developed infrastructure for tourism such as the tourist camp "Turbaza", museums, shops, restaurants, an open market and etc. where residents of Stephantsminda were occupied. Packaged tours were sold during the Soviet Union and thousands of tourists from various parts of the Soviet Union visited Stephantsminda. Moreover, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the tourism sector was diminished, only developing again in the last five to six years.

Nowadays, tourism development is one of the main strategies of the Georgian government. Tourist diversity and multiplicity of tourism activities shifted old mass tourism in to new unpackaged/flexible tourism, while tourists and companies are looking for quality and diversification of tours, high skilled guides, luxury accommodations and natural food is obligatory. Tour companies now offer tourists activities such as hiking, mountain biking, nature watching, birdwatching, botanical interpretation, rafting, mountaineering/climbing and cultural heritage tours.

The local population of Stephantsminda is struggling with a high level of unemployment, causing them to migrate elsewhere for work or to find some solutions for improving their livelihoods in the area. Nowadays, few people have job opportunities in governmental organizations while others work in the agriculture and tourism sectors.

Given the social and economic difficulties facing the people of Stepantsminda, the population is decreasing. In 2005 for example, there were 47 settlements in the region (2981 households with 6254 inhabitants). After closing the border with Russia in 2005, most inhabitants left the region leaving a current 1,400 permanent households with 3,000 inhabitants in the region. Of the remaining inhabitants, 45% of individuals make up the available work force, of which 37% are pensioners and 18% school-children (Georgian State department for statistics).

According to the Georgian State Department for Statistics the average monthly income per capita for rural dwellers in 2007 was 105.1 GEL. The monthly income can be split according to sources of income with salaries from wages(15%) and revenues from the sales of agricultural products (10%) were more significant than revenues from self-employment (6%). Local people rely on income from a combination of various agricultural goods, predominantly cheese and potatoes, supplemented by the sale of hay and meat. The sale of milk contributes very little to their income (TJS 2010).

Today, most families of the Stephantsminda region are engaged in animal farming. Apart from sheep, there are 5000 heads of cattle. Most of the shepherds (80%) are itinerant as are 40% of cattle owners. At the end of October, sheep and cattle are taken to winter pastures of the Kakheti and Kartli regions. A few cattle-breeders own pastures on the Lagluja field in the Kvemo Kartli region. Others keep their livestock close to their winter homes in the suburbs of Dusheti, Tbilisi and Rustavi. In May the animals return to the Kazbegi summer range.

 Before independence from Soviet rule, the region sustained approximately 400 000 sheep, of which half belonged to private farmers. Overgrazing was a common threat to the entire Stephantsminda region. With the break-up of the Soviet Union the economic crisis and the loss of the (now Russian federation territory), sheep winter pastures the number of sheep decreased to roughly 20 000 head of sheep. The agricultural land in the Stephantsminda region in general is miserable for the agriculture; there are only small territories of arable land, mostly located in the river valleys. Potato farming is common to among all villages. However, they are rarely grown as a cash crop, basically providing sustenance for local consumption. There is no formal marketing channel for selling potatoes (TJS 2010).

### 3.2.3 Tourism development, income from tourism

Prior to the Second World War, much attention and military interest was focused on development of mountaineering sport activities in South Caucasus and mainly in the Stephantsminda area. From the 1930s to the collapse of the Soviet Union several climbing and mountaineering bases were built in the region. In the 1960s, the 'Intourist' and 'Turbaza' buildings were built, the former intended for foreign tourists (Soviet citizens traveling in Georgia were not considered foreign tourists). According to statistics from the late 1980s tourist traffic in Georgia was 6-7 million/year and Stephantsminda was one of the most frequented tourist destinations. Although, one should bear in mind that travel costs in Soviet Georgia were subsidized by the state, which was a probable reason for such large amounts of tourists. For example, in the 1980s the official daily rate of service, (accommodation in twin rooms, 3 meals, transportation and guiding) was less than 10 USD (Georgian tourism department 2009).

Accordingly to local and regional administration, community members are considering tourism as a major income generator needed to stabilize their livelihood. Nowadays, 30 000 domestic and approximately 10 000 international visitors visit Stephantsminda every year. In economic terms, most of the domestic visitors are mainly low-budget, overnight visitors (students, schools, etc.) with an average daily expenditure of 20 GEL. per person (including accommodation, meals and transportation). Consequently, the gross total local expenditure (only day visits) is about 600 000 GEL. International visitors usually use local family guesthouses especially small and medium-size groups) and hotels for larger groups. Local expenditure full board (in guesthouse) per night is approximately50 GEL, which in total reaches approximately 500 000 GEL (assuming one overnight only). Thus far, the financial income generated for thelocal population did not lead to sufficient incomes (Georgian tourism department 2009).

Moreover, tourist department officials have claimed that the local population did not depend on tourism in Soviet times. After the collapse of the Soviet Union locals were still connected to greenhouses for income and various forms of employment in Russia. After the Russian-Georgian border was closed many more people had to engage in tourism. Consequently, family guesthouses were expanded ,some reaching a capacity of 600 beds and in 1999 the first hotel "Stephantsminda" was built in center with a capacity of twenty rooms.

# Chapter 4 - Research design and data analysis

*"If you want an image, think of a network of scaffolding that functions as a point of relay between a project being concluded and a new one. Thus I don't want construct a general method of definitive value for myself or for others. What I write does not prescribe anything, neither to myself nor to others. At most, its character is instrumental and visionary or dream-like"*

Michel Foucault

## 4.1 Methodology

This chapter presents an analysis of data acquired during field research in Stephantsminda in December, 2009. It gives insight on the present situation of tourism development in Stephantsminda as well as the issues and barriers concerning the development of tourism. The analysis also shows different stakeholders perceptions, expectations, roles and discourses toward tourism development in the area.

The stakeholder groups incorporated in the case study included residents, tourism business entrepreneurs and local and national authority officials. The first stakeholder group includes local residents who are not engaged in tourism business and also people who have connection to tourism businesses such as tour guides, guest house owners, shop keepers, taxi drivers, workers in hotels and museums and etc. The second stakeholder group includes tour companies and tourism entrepreneurs on a local and national level. The third stakeholder group includes local and national government officials and the Georgian National Tourism Department.

In this particular case, a qualitative-interpretative approach fits well to study the social phenomenon of interest. The results in this qualitative research are based on in-depth (semi-structured) interviews with different stakeholder groups. As Punch stated, an in-depth interview is one of the major data collection tool within qualitative research. It is a powerful tool to find out people's perception, interpretation and creation of reality (2009). In-depth interviews, the traditional unstructured interviews sometimes labeled as ethnographic interviews, are utilized to recognize the multifaceted attitude and behavior of people without imposing any prior classification which might impose boundaries to the field of inquiry. Moreover, an in-depth interview is capable of creating rich and important data and that is

why they are extensively employed in social science research and in other fields as well. Although one should bare in mind that an in-depth interview is not extended and intimate conversation, which is a tiring and time consuming process.

The qualitative interviews were based on a semi-structured composition, meaning there were some fixed questions, but there was space for probing and going more in-depth at times(Finn, Elliott-White & Walton, 2000; Babbie, 2001). The topic list of these interviews can be found in the *Appendix* of this text.

During the interview sessions individuals sometimes found it difficult to follow fixed questions, therefore, some of the interviews took longer than expected. Locals were mainly interested in talking about politics and complaining about the government. Some individuals were more willing to answer directly since they already knew me from past years as a travel guide in the area. In December 2009, I stayed two weeks in the Stephantsminda region. After a few days most of the population knew why I was there and most of the people were willing to participate in my research, mainly people already engaged in the tourism business.


## *4.2 Local people from Stephantsminda*

First of all I would like to mention that the local population of Stephantsminda is very proud that they live in the mountains and thrive in such harsh climate conditions. That they are people who have maintained traditions and surroundings through the centuries, with old churches, towers and untouchable flora and fauna. They see themselves as a tougher, superior Georgian compared to other Georgians.

From the conducted interviews in Stephantsminda it is possible to see what local people expect and how they perceive tourism development. In total, forty one interviews were conducted; seventeen male and twenty-four female interviewees, aged twenty-four to sixty-nine.


### *4.2.1 Perceptions toward tourism development, economic gain*

From the forty-one respondents, thirty-nine stated that tourism development can bring sufficient income for the local population and they supported this idea, only two were suspicious toward tourism development. One female (69 years old) stated that it would be

better if they could work outside of the tourism industry, tourism being an extreme alternative. She thinks that people are forced to deal with tourists because of their low income; otherwise, cooking washing and cleaning up for some strangers is not ideal. She thinks that tourism makes local people servants of foreign tourists. She continued to reveal the idea that the government should provide job opportunities for locals as it was in the past.

There was another twenty-four year old young woman who was not positive toward tourism development either; she also thought however, that tourism can bring sufficient income to the local population. She works for a handicraft exhibition (mainly for tourists) and her family runs a guest house and small hotel. She was disturbed a great deal by tourists during tourist season when noise and crowds are everywhere. There was another female respondent (forty-nine year old), who thought differently than of the majority of the respondents. She was positive toward tourism development in Stephantsminda, although she refused to host the tourists because she thought it was shameful behavior. She stated that she obtained a university degree in the past and used to work in high and responsible positions during the Soviet Union. Moreover, she maintained she comes from a good and strong family and does not deserve to cook or clean for the tourists. This woman is currently a shopkeeper at one of the small 'Kiosks' and was ashamed to be a shopkeeper. She revealed she was doing this only because of the lack of job opportunities and terrible economic situation in the region.

Most of the population seems positive toward tourism development, although they see it only as an alternative form of opportunity and economic gain. Local populations abandoned their traditional agricultural activities during the Soviet Union and were engaged in different business activities. Moreover, quantity of sheep which brought main economic benefits decreased due to losing winter pastures ten years ago. The local population still blames the government who sold this territory and didn't bare in mind the population of Stephantsminda who relied on this land to keep their livestock during the winter. Consequently, the number of sheep decreased from 100 000 to 15 000. Later, when Russian Georgian border was closed due to tense political situation and the government stopped providing free gas for the green houses, the local economy suffered. Places to work disappeared and only approximately fifty people have jobs with governmental organizations and with the police. Young generations leave Stephantsminda to study, but usually never return. It was visually evident during my interviews with most of the respondents being in their forties or fifties.

Consequently, they see tourism as only alternative way to survive in the harsh living conditions of the mountainous region. They think that tourism can bring sufficient income for local population but tourism should be managed well.

### 4.2.2 Expectations; recommended changes in future tourism development

The local population expects to have more economic gain from tourism development, hoping it will be sufficient and enable them to improve life conditions. It was apparent that most of my respondents want to have a guest house or be engaged somehow in the tourism business.  There are already many more guest houses than there were even two years ago.

Others who do not have guest houses yet, are trying to take bank loans for repairing their houses and host tourists. Most of the respondents who do not host tourists, complained about the government, wanting greater government role in tourism development and wanting long-term low percentage loans from government banks. The only ideas locals have thus far is to earn money from tourism through guesthouse operations. People who already have rooms for hosting tourists want to build more rooms. People who do not host tourists want to engage in tourism hospitality in the future.

Most of the guest house owners think they do not need any training in terms of hospitality management and that they have enough experience to deal with tourists. Their only desire is that more tourists come to their guest houses. Local guides have a different opinion, however, in terms of training. Guides think that it is necessary to train locals who want to work with tourists. Local guides think that training will be good for the local population and for tourism development as well, admitting that in the last few years there is a lack of professional mountain guides.  My research found there has only been one, one-day training workshop on hospitality management for guest houses owners, which was provided by one of the Georgian NGO's.

 Moreover, they provided some brochures about tourism and hospitality, but it seems that information about training was not spread in town and only a few of bigger guest house owners participated in the training.

In the future, the local population wishes to see more help from the Georgian government in area such as improved roads and other infrastructure, long-term loans from the banks to start their businesses and creation of working places.

### 4.2.3 Responsibility and trust toward tourism development

From my interviews it is clear that the local population perceives the Georgian government to be obliged to commit to tourism development in the Stephantsminda region. It was visual as

well that almost all the respondents were complaining about the Georgian government, and on one hand want to have some help from government, but on the other hand they are suspicious of governmental or foreign projects. Locals think that they are forgotten by government and by God too. From my interviews, I got the feeling that local populations do not perceive themselves as responsible for the tourism development in the region. Rather, they will sit and wait for the government to bring tourism development to them. Consequently, one might feel a lack of motivation from the local people's side. With no unity between local populations, they are always waiting for each other to make the first step. While they know that tourism brings some income and want to engage in tourism, at the same time they do not feel any responsibility toward tourism development even such basic action to keep area clean or to attract tourists somehow.

### 4.2.4 Participation in tourism development

It appears that locals were not informed about tourism development plans or any activities intended by the Georgian Tourism Department. For example, from my respondents, only one had knowledge of a governmental official working in Stephantsminda for the promotion and development of tourism in the region. Their office is located in a municipal building, but somehow locals were not aware of this.

At the same time I had one guesthouse owner respondent who has participated in a tourism fair in Tbilisi organized by the Georgian Tourism Department. The guest house owner was interested in promoting his guesthouse and was given the opportunity to have space at the tourism fair where he provided some pictures of his guesthouse. Given the example above, it is easy to assume that the local population did not participate in trainings or in other tourism promotion related events provided by the Georgian Tourism Department. Many did not take the promotions seriously or thought it was a waste of money and time even though participation in the tourism fair was free for participants.

It appears that on the one hand the local population feels excluded from governmental projects and on the other hand they seem passive or unmotivated towards any projects designed by the Georgian government. Moreover, most of the time locals are suspicious of development plans and perceive such plans as alien.

### 4.2.5 Problems, issues

The recently designated national park in Stephantsminda is currently being promoted by the Georgian government and international non-governmental organizations to promote the area and engage the local population in tourism. Locals perceive the park and its' promotion negatively, verbalizing their discontent by stating; "the government sold our land to foreigners, they will fence this area and take from us the land which belongs to us." One respondent told me, "What can be expected from foreigners? I have seen a tourist couple here who were wanted separate bills and didn't even want to pay for her husband or for his wife. They just want our land that's all."

During interviews with locals one more issue became apparent from peoples' increased interest in hosting visitors. Problems arise when backpackers and other tourists arrive in town on their own. While some of them have a predetermined place to stay, others do not. A small amount of local guesthouse owners harass these kinds of tourists, sometimes even forcing them to follow them and stay at their place. There were stories that tourists who had a arranged a place where he/she was going to stay, but other guesthouse owners forced them to accept their guesthouse by lying to them that the original address was old and the guesthouse owner was already dead. One of the shopkeepers told me that sometimes local guesthouse owners fought over tourists to the point where the police had to be called. As this shopkeeper told me, "they are predators, kidnapping the tourists."

## 4.3 National tour companies

Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, interest in Georgia from international tourists has grown and in 2007 the quantity of tourists reached one million (Georgian Tourism Department). If in 1994 there were only two national tour companies, by 2008 there were 300. In actuality, there are no clear numbers of existing tour companies in Georgia. Some companies do not officially exist, but have web pages and promote their business on the internet. I had the opportunity to interview three of the largest tour companies, eight middle-sized companies and six small companies in Georgia (seventeen tour companies in total).

### 4.3.1 Perception toward tourism development, economic gain

It appears that the tour companies mentioned above had very similar ideas about tourism development in the Stephantsminda region. One should bear in mind that they are private oriented companies and concentrate on income generated, not on the locals' well being. From these companies I found out that Stephantsminda is the main destination for all the tour companies, although most of the time the tour companies stay in Gudauri which is a nearby ski resort with better developed accommodation and facilities.

Tour companies are offering various packaged and unpackaged tours in Stephantsminda such as cultural tours, hiking, mountain-biking, botanical interpretation, birdwatching, rafting, mountaineering, climbing, etc. There are no exact statistics on tours through Stephantsminda or of the economic gain these tours bring to the tour companies. All of the tour companies have a positive perception toward tourism development in the Stephantsminda region.

### 4.3.2 Expectations; recommended changes in future tourism development

Tour company officials think that Stephantsminda has great potential in terms of tourism development, and they expect a growth in visitor numbers and more income generated from tourism. In terms of tourism development they propose crucial training of the local people who want to engage in tourism and hospitality management. Furthermore, roads should be renovated, there should be a better food supply, more café's and restaurants and even one public toilet in the center of town.

It seems that tour companies are motivated about tourism development in the Stephantsminda region, they are sure that in future tourism will be major income source for the local people, although there should be peace and stability in the country. They are willing to actively participate in any training or tourism development plans. In future they want to see creative and active local population who will be engaged in tourism easily, which will give a diversity of choice for the tour companies in terms of accommodations and local transportation.

### 4.3.3 Responsibility and trust toward Tourism Development

Georgian national tour companies see the Georgian Tourism Department and themselves as well, as responsible for tourism development in Stephantsminda, although they want to see more input and willingness from the local side. From their point of view tour companies usually play a role in promotion of places like Stephantsminda, which finally brings visitors to a place. Most of my respondents claimed that if locals would be more creative they could easily be engaged the tourism sector. The tour companies suggest that the locals should make handicrafts and hold traditional festivals or feasts to get more income from tourists. The tour companies actually think that there is a lack of responsibility taken on the local peoples' side. For example, many companies have had bad experiences with local drivers and guides because of carelessness, which causes problems for the tour company's image and reputation. However, tour companies think that the Georgian Tourism Department has given less attention to this region lately and there should be more projects or training in Stephantsminda.

### 4.3.4 Participation in tourism development

All of the large and medium-size national tour companies have run tourism activities in Stephantsminda for several years. Moreover, tour companies have a good connection to the Georgian Tourism Department. Therefore, the tour companies are often informed of plans or involved in training organized and given by the tourism department. National tour companies participate in tourism fairs throughout the world and bring tourists to the region. They feel that they are actively involved in tourism development in the Stephantsminda region. However, it seems that the Tourism Department and national tour companies do not act in synchronicity often, with any clear information as to who does what and why.  Anyway, national tour companies do not feel excluded from tourism development plans or projects like the local population of Stephantsminda.

### 4.3.5 Problems, issues

Stephantsminda is often the national tour company's main destination, but they think that there is a lack of infrastructure, given only one hotel that is quite expensive and given their dislike of local people's guesthouses. In some cases however, some companies have connections with local guesthouse owners, having provided training in hospitality

management for guesthouse owners, the facilities seem sufficient for these companies. Almost every company had this kind of connection with locals, but most of the time the companies have large groups or groups that prefer comfortable hotels, which is why tour companies have to stay in other places like Gudauri ski resort. National tour companies see lack of professionalism amongst local people, which is why they do not employ local guides or use local transportation. Another issue for tour companies is the lack of restaurants and café's in Stephantsminda. There are also problems in terms of bathrooms since there is no public bathroom in the town. There are very small kinds of café's in town, but they are not always open and do not have toilets as well. Tour companies think that tourism can bring sufficient income for the locals if tourism is managed well, if infrastructure is developed and finally, if locals work hard.

## 4.4 Georgian tourism department

The Georgian tourism department is located in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, in the new building of the economic ministry. Up until 2007 the Georgian Tourism Department was an independent government organization, but now it is under the Ministry of Economic Development. Since 2007 there have been four or five different heads of the Tourism Department for different and sometimes unknown reasons. It was very common that officials from Tourism Department were engaged in national tour companies or even owned one, using their position to develop or promote the company for their economic gain.

Today there are working young and motivated people who seem active and nice in conversation. Furthermore, every time there were changes in the leadership of the Tourism Department, new directors fired old staff and brought new workers (sometimes friends or relatives) or changed approach to the work, meaning projects which were going to be implemented were canceled. During my interview I was told that the new staff often began doing things again, but did not use any old information or knowledge acquired previously.

I had the opportunity to interview two officials from the Tourism Department, one being the executive director. We had some common friends and that is why he was more open and easy to approach for me.

### 4.4.1 Perception toward tourism development, economic gain

In interviews, the Tourism Department officials showed that they are aware of the fact that the local population in Stephantsminda is economically dependent on cash flow from tourism. Moreover they are sure that tourism can bring sufficient income and can satisfy the local's livelihoods in the Stephantsminda region, given the area's important attraction elements such as high mountains, glaciers, waterfalls, bio-diversity and endemic species of flora and fauna. Moreover, tourism department officials think that there should be imported new products in tourism such as; hospitality of the local people and traditional lifestyle, traditional Georgian cuisine of the mountains, Georgian interpretation of the ancient Prometheus mythos and the parallels between the cultures and so on. They also think that to increase tourism generated income for the local population there needs to be more tourists, but first of all, further training for the local people, cooperation between local people and local and national NGO's and international donors.

### 4.4.2 Expectations; recommended changes in future tourism development

To achieve tourism development in Stephantsminda, the Georgian Tourism Department sees some "challenges", which reduce the quality of tourist's experience such as low local quality of service, poor waste management at every historical or natural sight, unprotected sanitary norms in local restaurants and lack of public toilets and garbage collection areas. Often guesthouses are inadequate for foreign groups or visitors. They think that minor upgrades can bring up to the international standard (one of the problem is shower-toilet combination in almost every guesthouse).

In the future they are planning on opening a tourist center in Stephantsminda where information about tourism activities and accommodations, free maps and guide books will be kept. The Tourism Department plans to encourage local communities to participate and cooperation between NGOs and private enterprises. The idea is to develop community based mountain tourism for sustainable development of the region. The Tourism Department sees five main segments of services as crucial for improvement. The five areas of service are; accommodations, catering, transport, guiding and entertainment. Finally, the Tourism Department plans to establish mountain rescue and guide service, which will be useful for the locals in terms of job opportunities and it is required for tourism development as well.

### 4.4.3 Responsibility and trust toward tourism development

Georgian Tourism Department officials claim that for tourism development in Stephantsminda, all stakeholders are responsible and all of them should put effort into it. Tourism Department officials think that they are playing a major role in tourism development, though tour companies put greater emphasis on promotion. They feel local people should be more responsible toward tourism development as well. They think that the Tourism Department is able to develop tourism in Stephantsminda region, and that they have enough strength to train local people who want to be engaged in tourism. But at the same time they perceive locals as careless and suspicious toward new projects.

### 4.4.4 Participation in Tourism Development

At first glance, the Georgian Tourism Department seems to be one of the main players in tourism development, planning and implementation. Moreover, officials from the Tourism Department admitted that national tour companies are playing a great role in tourism development too. The main work of tour companies is marketing and promoting Stephantsminda as one of the major destinations in Georgia.

From interviews I found out that they want to see more participation and willingness from the local community. They want to see the strong, independent and creative players from the side of the local community. Tourism Department officials are sure that tourism can bring sufficient income and better life conditions for the local communities, but must find an adequate and friendly approach to locals for better communication and cooperation. Tourism Department officials claim that they are quite open toward local population's participation in tourism development, although it is clear that not on all levels.

Basically, they do not want to involve the local population in planning due to time constraints, but would like to see open and active people working on their projects. From my interviews it was clear that Tourism Department officials do not think that they exclude the local population from tourism development plans.

### 4.4.5 Problems issues

One of the largest problem as tourism officials point out, is the lack of local knowledge of tourism development and promotion. It is hard and almost impossible to find any information about local products and offers. Almost all the websites about Stephantsminda available on the internet need synchronization or they do not work at all. There is a lack of understanding about what tourists expect as minimum standards in accommodations, service and sanitation.

Tourism Department officials stated that they are willing to give training in terms of hospitality management, but implementation is hard because of the local population's attitudes and behavior. As one official pointed out, "It didn't work in the past. If you tell them that you are going to teach them something they become mad and immediately leave any meetings or trainings, ' We need to find a more friendly approach to convince them of their need for training'.

They see that sometimes locals are suspicious toward government projects, often perceiving their passive role as laziness. Furthermore, officials see trainings in hospitality management as crucial, trust building toward other stakeholders and capacity building for the local population.

# Chapter 5: Critical Discourse Analysis - Findings and Discussion

## 5.1 Tourist discourses

Firstly there is a state discourse on tourism development as the means to achieve economic development in Stephantsminda. While national tour companies discourse on tourism development represents economic gain by itself and less attention on economic development of Stephantsminda with its population. At the same time, local stakeholders discourse on tourism development indicates economic gain for them as individuals.

Secondly it is possible to see some similarities and differences in perceptions of different stockholder groups. A similarity is that all stakeholder groups know that tourism development in Stephantsminda region is crucial for the local population although, to achieve this development different stakeholder groups see it in their own way. For example, for the Georgian government it is 'challenging' to implement training and raise awareness in tourism and hospitality in the Stephantsminda region. Furthermore, national tour companies see training as crucial for the local population as well. Contrary to this belief, local stakeholder groups think that they do not need any training.

Thirdly, it can be called rural traditionalist discourse when local people (especially older people) negatively perceive some changes such as growth of the private sector, a liberal economic approach and other development plans. It is clear that people negatively perceive when they see foreign or even Georgian investors who invest money and own lands or buildings, which belonged to the government in the past. They think that most of the agricultural land or factories must be owned by the government and that the government is responsible for providing work places for people.

Finally, tourism as a source of income for the local population and lack of government help toward locals seems valid knowledge in the Stephantsminda region. It is apparent that local stakeholders are not satisfied with the Georgian government, but do not always talk openly about this. One of the factors that helps bring up this valid knowledge and pass it on can be discursive practice. For example, when one local stakeholder sees that his/her neighbor hosts tourists or guides them, and through such practices gains income, then they want to do the same. Consequently, more and more local stakeholders want to engage in tourism development as they hear from others of the economic gain that tourism can bring. Another

example is that the local population does not trust the government and they would rather believe rumors and gossip, which mainly involves the sold mountains and rivers which they cannot use anymore. Society interprets reality, sometimes even exaggerates it, and in so doing, constantly produces more discursive practices such as thinking, acting and further talking). Furthermore, this passing on of knowledge nourishes individual or collective consciousness and therefore shapes reality (Wodak 2009).

## 5.2 Power relationships, involvement in tourism development

From tourism development plans, the Georgian Tourism Department seems to have power and knowledge to force people directly or indirectly to follow their plans. In addition, lack of job opportunities plays a big role in local's lives, forcing them to follow the rules announced by the Georgian government. In this way it leads toward the local's social transition, although the local's resistance creates a tense situation, which finally lengthens the time of tourism development. For example, the Tourism Department officials stated that they are willing to do some training in terms of hospitality management, but implementation is difficult because of the local population's attitudes and behavior. As mentioned earlier, the officials' attitude toward training local people is revealed in the following statement; 'It didn't work in the past. If you tell them that you are going to teach them something they become mad and immediately leave any meetings or training'.

Moreover, there can be seen power relationships between locals and national tour companies. National tour companies do not use local transportation because of safety issues and they do not always use local guesthouses due to lack of facilities and services. By choosing to not use local's services, they are pushing locals to improve facilities and obey training given to them. At the same time, locals' resistance to change and their general lack of comfortable accommodations in the region also puts pressure on national companies to take offers of insufficient, but non alternative local services.

The Georgian Tourism Department seems a powerful player and sometimes excludes local people from tourism development plans. For example, out of my forty one respondent's only one had information that a government official was based in Stephantsminda and working for the promotion and development of tourism. The office was located in a municipal building, but somehow locals did not know about this. It appeared that locals were not informed about tourism development plans or any activities intended by the Georgian Tourism Department. Arguably, can be stated that so far there is no local participation in tourism development

plans or in implementation, simply tourism department remembers about local participation when they are facing problems during the project implementation.

As a result one should bear in mind that locals have power over the Tourism Department and national tour companies as well, it can be mistaken to put local stakeholders in targets group as Choeng spots target and agent groups (2000).Local people not only can block the entry of tourists into the region or sabotage the industry by rejecting to be "tourism objects", but without their willingness it seems almost impossible to achieve tourism development in Stephantsminda.

Finally, all this fits to Foucauldian power of flow in multiple directions, and power as a relationship rather than entity. There is no power flow from one way to other, it is more flux way of flow in many directions. Thus, these power relationships can be changed; a local stakeholder can become a tour company owner or engage in governmental work. Also, officials from government and tour companies can finish being involved in tourism related jobs and become locals. There is not a one-way flow of power; it is more complex power flow from every direction, not only from side of government to locals but vice versa.

## *5.3 Summary*

In summary, tourism as economic development can be seen as a tourism discourse for all three of the stakeholder groups although, to achieve economic development through tourism, each stakeholder group has different approaches. However, from the state side tourism can be seen as a tool of reformation and social transformation, and the segments or dimensions which seem crucial for the Georgian Tourism Department to be translated into policies.

Through the tourism discourses and power relationships the Georgian government desires to succeed in some segments such as training/education, infrastructure/better facilities and promotion/marketing. To put it more precisely by developing these segments through the tourism discourses, development strategies and social transformation can be seen as well.

Basically, tour companies through tourism discourses push the local population to improve services and infrastructure if they want to be involved in tourism business. At the same time tourism development leads them toward economic gain. Through the invisible power relationships and through competition, national tour companies force the local population to change their approach toward tourism development and be fully involved or be excluded.

Indeed it can be called rural traditionalist discourse when local people have negative perception toward any novelties and development. On the one hand they are waiting for the government to facilitate, but on other hand do not trust in following directions that come from the government. At one point local stakeholders want to develop tourism in the region for economic gain, but they seem passive, possibly because of a lack of knowledge and experience toward tourism management. Some part of the population still seems shy toward hosting tourists and providing services for them.

Because of the power relationship struggles between different stakeholder groups the time it takes for tourism development in the Stephantsminda region lengthens. Through the tourism discourses local stakeholders have resisted tourism development, but at the same time these discourses are shipping knowledge by exercising power toward shaping individual or collective consciousness. Sooner or later this knowledge and peoples' consciousness will be crucial in the shaping of "reality" (Wodak. 2009). To put it more precisely, in a short time locals might change their attitude toward upcoming projects; they might become more pragmatic and easily engage in tourism development, become more creative and improve local infrastructure and services.

Last, but not least, I would like to point out my place as a researcher toward the tourist discourses in the Stephantsminda region. I think that it is crucial to find out my position and my relationship toward these stakeholder groups, which play a major role in tourism development. As Wodak is suggesting, while doing discourse analysis and employing norms, laws and rights, one must bear in mind that these values, norms or universal human rights are discursively created, and my position as a discourse analyst might be the consequence of the discourse too (2009).

 Firstly, I have a good relationship with local stakeholders, even good friendships with some of them; I have worked since 2003 in the region and was giving tours through this region. Secondly, my knowledge, experience and position as a master student and researcher, enables me to judge all three stakeholder groups, but I am not an independent player and I may be influenced by the tourist discourses. From my point of view, local stakeholder groups must be harder workers, more creative and less suspicious toward tourism development. The Georgian Tourism Department should somehow involve local stakeholders in tourism development plans. In addition, power relationships between the Georgian government, national tour companies and locals requires negotiations, a more friendly approach and equal acceptance toward tourism development.

# Chapter 6:  A historical analysis-Soviet Legacy

## 6.1 Soviet legacy

In this chapter I am going through the accumulated data once more to analyze it based on path dependence theory. For this analysis, it is required to travel into the past to have a look at circumstances that had a place and might have helped cause the emergence of the current social phenomenon. One must bear in mind however, that not every social phenomenon can be explained through path dependence theory and not only Soviet rule can create social phenomenon crucial for social transformation.

## 6.2 Historical overview

Before going through historical overview, I would like to mention that I was living in Soviet Union till I was thirteenth, from 1978 when I was born to 1991, when SU was collapsed. Consequently I have experienced the lifestyle of SU, furthermore remember some stories from my parents and relatives too.  Arguably this period might shaped my way of thinking or acting, though in recent years am rethinking and analyzing the knowledge which I acquired during this years and that might have an influence of Soviet propaganda.

One of the major causes of social transformation can be from living in the Soviet Union during 70 years.  It started in 1917, when the Russian revolution destroyed the Tsarist autocracy and lead to the formation of the Soviet Union (Acton 1997). Moreover, soon after the Russian revolution, in 1921, the Soviet Red Army had a military campaign against the democratic and independent Republic of Georgia, which finally ended with the overthrowing of the local social democratic government and installing the Bolshevik regime in the country. The capital of Georgia, Tbilisi, was taken after heavy fighting on the 25th of February 1921, although until September 1924 the Soviet rule was not established in the whole country. Consequently, Georgia became one of the member states in the Soviet Union and had to adopt values and norms that this regime brought.  Untill 1991 Georgia was part of the Soviet

Union. Shortly before the collapse of the USSR, Georgia declared independence on May 26, 1991 (Achkhabadze 2005).

In Georgia, some people still believe that they were not a 'colony' in Soviet times, but that they complied with the 'elder brother's' care. Through, people were coached that they have never preferred independence, but only unity with the 'elder brother', and independence was defined as high treason because it would break the unity with the Russian 'elder brother'. In Soviet times, 99% of businesses and factories were owned by the government. The government provided all the jobs for the people and kept them occupied to have less time for thinking. Everyday needs were sufficiently met for most people, so it was very easy for them to live in Soviet times. Consequently, some people are still nostalgic about Soviet times and are struggling to find their place in the present. Consequently, there is a lack of trust towards modern state institutions, NGO's and international institutions.

Michel Doyle (1986) defined an empire as the "relationship, formal or informal, in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society", which exactly fits the Soviet Union. The empire's center contained elites who ruled in the peripheries, those who were minor to the center. Furthermore, the Soviet empire was based on Marxism-Leninism ideology and governed by the ruling ideology of Russian imperialism. For example, in states that were in the Soviet Union, Russia was defined as the 'elder brother' or 'leading nation,' which enlightened their darkness. In reality, the colonizer afforded to clean historical memory and this process lead to a loss of national identity and formulated an easier assimilation into the empire center (Kuzio 2002). For example, for the first time in Georgia in the 1800s, Russian forces demolished churches and painted icons white to hide that Georgians had an older culture and traditions and were Christians before Russians followed the Christian faith. In the Soviet mentality, these actions were proof that Georgians were 'barbarians' and Russians were defined as a bright window going toward Europe.

All countries that were a part of the Soviet Union had experienced totalitarian rule and even after the repression era (Stalinist era) participation in public affairs remained forced and ritualistic. For example, "Kolxoz," which is translated as collective agriculture, or collectivization, was introduced in the 1930s, and people were forced to be a part of it. The main point of the Soviet Union was to establish collective thinking and destroy individuality and individual thinking. It was much easier to rule people with collective consciousness and exclude or even send people to prison who still had individual or critical thinking, who were seen as "enemy of the state", "enemy of the nation." Collectivization had a place in 1930-1936 and millions of people who had negative ideas about collectivization were killed or sent

to Gulags (special prison in Siberia) from where 80% of people never came back (Nordlander 1998).

Propaganda was aired through radio or through other means to eradicate individuality and establish collective thinking and make people depend on the government. The Soviet Union established the notion in people that they were doing important work for the country, they were working for the great idea of Communism, that one day they will reach this goal and the entire nation will be happy. But before reaching this point they believed they needed to work without questioning the leading Party, needed to challenge hunger and lack of everyday necessities, and follow all instructions which the Communist Party provides.

Through propaganda, the Soviet Union created in peoples' consciousness the idea that capitalism and capitalist countries were an "enemy" of communism and people as well. Images of cruel Capitalist countries were created whereby people were not equal, most of the people were very poor, and no respect was paid toward minorities or other races and colors. Since 1937 the borders of the Soviet Union were closed, therefore, people were given information that the Communist Party wanted them to have. The start of the Second World War helped the Communist Party prove that they had an enemy, thereby creating strong unity among the people. The Second World War was also used by the Communist Parthia to promote more propaganda. Even 40 years after the Second World War Georgian students were taught in schools that the Soviet Union had won the war, never mentioning other countries that were fighting against the German Nazis as well.

Stalin believed, that "*One death is a tragedy, one million is a statistic"* (Hamilton 2009), therefore*,* from 1935 to1954 approximately 40 million people from all Soviet republics (including Georgia) were killed or disappeared. Mostly those people who were against the Communist Party or had different ideas; people with higher education, famous writers, actors and other intelligent individuals. The governmental and other high power positions were filled with people without higher education, but a strong belief in the Communist Party; people who were easy to manipulate.

A new era of communism began in the 1960s. , After so many years of repression, the previous 30 years of communism were seen as a time of development and enjoyment even though lies and corruption were occurring on every social level. This time period is what the Georgian people are nostalgic about, a time when life was easy when production of quantity was important, but quality production was less important and there was an emphasis on earning money without toil. For example, Georgia was a main producer of wine in the Soviet Union, with wine factories receiving orders from Moscow concerning the quantity of wine to

be produced each year. These plans push wine factories to make fake wine by adding water and sugar to it. The quality of wine was low, but no one complained because of the sharing of corrupt money among those who checked the quality of wine in the factories. Subsequently, most of the country was engaged in corruption, only a low percent of people did not engage in it. The time of Soviet rule also brought protectionism, which was found everywhere from universities to the government. To be a professional during this time was not enough to receive a high salary position, patronage was needed to help get such positions. Mostly friends or relatives would pull strings for individuals although in other cases it was necessary to pay money for a high power position or even higher education in universities. Corruption and protectionism became part of everyday life in the Soviet Union, which was seen as brave and proper behavior even following the Soviet Union's collapse.

In Georgia, wine-making is a tradition that has roots in the 7th century B.C. The Soviet rule had so much influence on farmers and on wine factories that up until today there were people who would make false wine not only to sell, but for their families as well. There are people who remember these times nostalgically and remember how they could earn money without labor, and breaking the rules was positively perceived by society. Georgian farmers still have nostalgia about times when selling water and sugar laden wine brought great income, while today if they want to sell their wine they have to compete with European wine markets.

Seventy years of Soviet Union rule demolished the private sector and created a collective mentality in which, people's creativeness was stifled and they became over dependant on the government. Through corruption and protectionism, which enabled people to earn easy money, farmers and others were pushed from the mountains to abandon their traditional agricultural activities and look for different kinds of businesses with greater economic gain. Thus began the notion of a "soviet citizen", whereby people lose ties to their motherland and live comfortably in any place within the Soviet Union.

Later, after the Soviet Union collapsed, people had a tendency to retreat from the public sphere into privacy and comfort of relatives and friends. Therefore, public institutions were then perceived as alien, forced by foreign power (Raiser 2001). As Gati (1996) stated, mistrust in public institutions is one of the most harmful legacies of the Soviet Union. Consequently, developing trust in public institutions is essential in the transition countries like Georgia in order to permit the evolution of a modern and market based dissection of labor (Raiser 1999). Furthermore, transition from authoritarianism, the central planning approach, to the democratic, market economy approach is basically a process of speeding

up institutional transformation. Both formal and informal institutions require settling into the requirements of democracy and market transactions, so consequential uncertainty puts a heavy weight on social arrangements (Wallace, 1998).

In 1990 and 1995, World Values Survey (WVS) conducted a survey in some transition countries including Georgia, to measure trust among anonymous individuals and the degree of participation in civic organizations as their measures of formal social capital. It appeared that participation in transition countries in civic organizations is significantly lower than it is in countries with fully developed market economies. Although in transition countries there was a difference between results in 1990 and 1995, at the start of the transition most organizations still had influence of soviet legacy while in 1995 most of these organizations established their own identity. Consequently, forced membership has more or less become supplanted by voluntary membership. It seems that very slowly, trust toward different institutions is growing (Raiser 2001).

Another interesting observation was that citizens in transition countries were not less interested in politics than citizens of countries with developed market economies. In the transition countries however, political interest does not associate with political participation in a cross-country comparison. Moreover, countries in transition had a greater attachment to friends and relatives, but strong reliance on friends does not lead to higher civic participation – again in contrast to Western countries.

Consequently, these results lead to conclusions in which transition countries that were closest geographically and historically to Western Europe were willing to develop a civil society that could support the transition process. Countries closer to Europe, even during socialism, were influenced by western societies and their political thinking, perhaps keeping alive the hope of "returning to Europe" (Raiser 2001).


## 6.3 Findings and Discussion

Examining the interviews conducted for this research in Stephantsminda, a clear picture of the peoples' dependence on the government is revealed. Throughout the 70 years of Soviet rule people became morally and physically dependant on the government, which inhibited their desire for change and new experiences.

Even though past conditions are no longer appropriate (after collapsing the SU) in Georgia people depend on the government on the one hand and expect help from the government,

but on the other hand there is a lack of trust in and participation with the government or other projects that might help them to improve their life conditions. All the changes or signs of development plans are viewed suspiciously by the people especially in older age, from people who received 'special treatment' from the Soviet Union.

In the Stephantsminda region some people look at government plans as alien, coming from foreign countries that they do not consider acceptable for the Georgian population. At the same time mistakes and wrong approaches by the Georgian government concerning development and their own people are often mentioned. This is the case even though many of the people in question are young and did not live long in the time of the Soviet Union. Even with degrees from "Western" universities, protectionism still occurs among these people. There are still occurrences where governmental officials use their position for their own well being, which sets a poor example for the local population.

As Mahoney stated path dependence takes place when a "contingent *historical event triggers a subsequent sequence that follows a relatively deterministic pattern*" (2000. 535).consequently creation of Soviet Union can be the cause of occurrence path dependence.  In case of a reactive sequence which I think fits well to my case, *the contingent period corresponds with a key breakpoint in history, while the deterministic pattern corresponds with a series of reactions that logically follow from this breakpoint* (2000. 535)*.* It is apparent that local people depend on the government, which can be called a path dependence outcome, a result of living in Soviet times. In addition, collective thinking and lack of new ideas or creativity can be seen as a result of the Soviet "treatment" too.

Arguably, living in the time of the Soviet Union cannot be seen as the only cause of social transformation and creation of the social phenomenon, which can be seen presently in Georgia. Culture and traditions that have shaped Georgia over the centuries also play a role in the social phenomenon being studied.

From my point of view and from my experience acquired living in Georgia as well as my knowledge of history of the country, there is a lack of state thinking on behalf of the people. To put it more precisely, people in general do not feel that they are part of the state and that everyone should follow the rules and values that the state announces.  In other words, Georgians lack consciousness that all people can do small things for the state, that the state is structured by the people who live in it. The state belongs to all of them after all and the people represent their families who, in turn, represent the whole country.

It is difficult to say the exact cause or clear picture as to why or how this social phenomenon was shaped. One factor to consider is the fact that since the 16th century Georgia was

divided mainly into two parts. Each part was sometimes ruled by different states, and values and norms were changing all the time. Sometimes Georgia was under Persian and sometimes under Ottoman Empire rule. Moreover, every strong peasant wanted to become lord, every strong lord wanted to become king. To become king and gain power they were doing everything even going in alliance with enemies of the country.

Only in extreme crucial and terrible times did the Georgian people have unity, coming together and fighting shoulder to shoulder against the enemies. But once again, after winning a battle, unity was lost and fighting for hierarchy began once again. Consequently, I am arguing that the recurring struggle in history created the social phenomenon whereby there is no trust toward the leader. Whether the leader is a king or the government, there seems to be a commonly held belief that the government does not care for you and that people in the government are only there for their own economic gain. Many wondered if the government does not care for the individual and the country, why should the individual care for the government and for the country as a whole? This consciousness makes people morally free from any civil or state rules, and opens opportunities to deplete common goods especially if they are supposed to be owned by the state. For economic gain, many people engaged in corruption, ignored any social moral or state rules, excluded professionals unless they were relatives and friends of certain individuals, and made alliance with enemies etc.

I am arguing that perhaps the Soviet Union did not create the social phenomenon, but it was already created earlier. Perhaps that is why Georgia was one of the member countries of the Soviet Union that was doing well and therefore, it was easy for Georgians to live in this corrupt and violent regime and perhaps that is why so many people have nostalgia about Soviet times.

# *Chapter 7: Overall Conclusion*

In summary, tourism as economic development can be seen as a tourism discourse for all three of the stakeholder groups although, to achieve economic development through tourism, each stakeholder group has different approaches. However, from the state side tourism can be seen as a tool of reformation and social transformation, and the segments or dimensions which seem crucial for the Georgian Tourism Department to be translated into policies.

Basically, tour companies through tourism discourses push the local population to improve services and infrastructure if they want to be involved in tourism business. At the same time tourism development leads them toward economic gain. Through the invisible power relationships and through competition, national tour companies force the local population to change their approach toward tourism development and be fully involved or be excluded.

Indeed it can be called rural traditionalist discourse when local people have negative perception toward any novelties and development. On the one hand they are waiting for the government to facilitate, but on other hand do not trust in following directions that come from the government.

Furthermore, it is crucial to bear in mind that discourses do not disappear, but rather change throughout history. Hence, following path dependence theory and seeking for the events which had a place in the past, continue to have influence on present decisions, and define the alternatives for the future, is actually the same as looking for discourses. I am arguing that discourses can be at the same time a tool or effect of the decisions made in the past or vice versa.

Last, but not last, everyone can be a co-producer of discourse although no one can control discourse or propose an accurate final result. Discourses ship more knowledge than a single subject is conscious of it (Wodak. 2009). However, powerful politicians or some groups who have great finances and privileged rights to use the media can achieve transformation in discourse. To put it more precisely they can produce discourse and more or less predict the overall consequence the discourse.

To conclude, if in the past government discourse (as explained by path dependence theory) created mass consciousness to rule the people easily and to make them reliant on the

government; present governmental discourse through tourism development can be part of Georgian social transformation. For instance, through mass media and different projects like tourism development, the government can try to create independent players in the local economy, who still remain heavily dependent on the government.

I am arguing that through tourism discourses the Georgian government tries to achieve economic development of the rural villages and at the same time wants to demolish soviet legacy. The soviet legacy may be one of the main causes of the power struggle and resistance toward development, which occurs in Georgia; between the government and the Georgian people, between the government and the church, between the church and different institutions and even within government departments and official bodies.


## *7.1 Future Research*

In recent years there was not done any research in Georgia about the tourism development in general and people's perceptions toward tourism development as well. Results from this thesis can be considered the starting point for the future research in to the subject of people's perception toward tourism development and tourism discourses. Furthermore, in future I would like to do research in subjects such as; the Soviet legacy, and social transformation, social responsibility and common goods in the tourism development.

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# *Appendices*

## *Appendix A: Interview questions for local people*

Have you ever worked in tourism sector?

What were you duties?


What do you think about tourists and tourism in general?

What do you think about tourism development in Stephantsmindai?


Can you compare tourism development during the Soviet Union and now? In terms of income, in terms of the situation in tourism sector and working places?


Do you think that benefits (social, economic. Etc.)  from tourism development is sufficient for you? For local people?


Do you have any information regarding tourism development plans in Stephantsminda region?


Is it any office or official in Stephantsminda who is in charge of informing people about tourism development plans?

Do you think that you or other locals can get this information easily?


Who do you think is in charge of the tourism development? Or whom you see responsible for tourism development?


What is your relationship toward national tourism department?

What do you think about the national tourism department?

Have you ever worked for them?

Do you know if any local people are working for them?


What is your relationship toward tour companies?

What do you think about national tour companies?

Have you ever worked for them?

Do you know if any local people are working for them?

Do you think that there are some problems between locals and tour companies or tourism department?

Can you tell me what you expect from tourism development?

What do you think about the tourism development in future? Can you tell me what should be improved?

Do you think that tourism can bring the sufficient income for local population?

Do you think that tourism development can bring better life conditions? Social benefits?

## *Appendix B: Interview questions for national tour companies and tourism department*

What do you think about tourists and tourism in general?

What do you think about tourism development in Kazbegi?

If it isn't secret, can you tell me approximately how many tourist visits Stephantsminda region through your organisation during one season?

Do you think that benefits (social, economic. Etc.)  from tourism development is sufficient for local people?

As a representative of your organisation do you have plans for the tourism development in Stephantsminda region?

Does your organisation have office or official in Stephantsminda who is in charge of informing people about tourism development plans?

Do you provide any training for local people which might help them to raise up their knowledge regarding hospitality management?

Who do you think is in charge of the tourism development? Or whom you see responsible for tourism development?

What is your relationship toward national tourism department?

What do you think about the national tourism department?

Have you ever worked for them?

Do you know if any local people are working for them?

What is your relationship toward tour companies?

What do you think about national tour companies?

Have you ever worked for them?

Do you know if any local people are working for them?

What kind of relationship do you have toward local people from Stephantsminda?
Do you have workers from local population? Guiding, porters? Do you use local guest houses or mostly big hotels?

Do you think that there are some problems between locals and tour companies or tourism department?

Can you tell me what you expect from tourism development?

Can you compare situation in tourism development during the Soviet Union and now? In terms of benefits (economic, social etc.) in terms of the situation in tourism sector and working places?

What do you think about the tourism development in future?  What should be improved?

Do you think that tourism can bring the sufficient income for local population?
Do you think that tourism development can bring better life conditions? Social benefits?