FATALISM – GEORGIAN CULTURAL MODEL

Tamar CHKHAIDZE*

Dimitri CHUBINIDZE, PhD**

Elisabed GEGENAVA***

*Correspondent Author: * Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, tamochkhaide@gmail.com*

*** Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences.*

**** Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences.*

A b s t r a c t

Fatalism—belief that all events are predetermined and therefore inevitable—have been studied by researchers from different disciplines as it is a significant notion to explain various aspects of individual and social life (health behavior, economic capital, political activity, social participation, etc.). However, the weakness of using only etic methods to understand this complex phenomenon is strongly emphasized. We fully share this viewpoint and think that it is far more appropriate to study fatalism with an interdisciplinary approach such as Contemporary Psychological Anthropology. The aim of the present study was to emphasize the theoretical and methodological opportunities of studying fatalism within this field (specifically, within cultural models school) and presenting the results of the empirical study on the Georgian cultural model of fatalism in the light of the opportunities discussed.

The theoretical apparatus of the cultural models' school allowed us to think of culturally shaped fatalism, not only as an element of objective culture beyond the mind but also as a part of the mind, namely, as a cognitive schema formed on the basis of shared experiences. To reveal components of this schema we used the in-depth interview as a data collection method and cultural analysis of discourse (specifically, metaphor analysis) as the data analysis method. Personal control, Deity, Destiny, Luck, and Helplessness emerged as the components of Georgian cultural schema according to this analysis.

Introduction

Fatalism can be defined as "Belief that all events are predetermined and therefore inevitable" [lat. fatalis - fatal, deadly, predestined] ("Fatalism", 2019). Why study fatalism? Research has revealed that fatalism can play an important role in determining a wide range of behaviors such as voting behavior (Goodwin & Allen, 2000), seeking social support (Goodwin, et al., 2002), health behaviors (Straughan & Seow, 1998) and even financial savings decisions (Shapiro & Wu, 2011). In economic science, fatalism is regarded as one of the impeding factors to capital investment (Bernard, Dercon, & Taffesse, 2011). In his book, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (1905),

the sociologist, philosopher, and political economist Max Weber emphasized the role of predestination (one of the basic concepts of Protestant ethics, specifically, Calvinism) beliefs in the formation of modern "economic human". This belief holds that God has preselected some people, who deserved salvation, for heaven. For the believers, the outward sign of election or being chosen for salvation is success achieved through conscientious effort. Accumulating wealth by working conscientiously is no longer considered a sin. Hence, Weber attributes an important role to shifts in worldviews or understandings in causing economic changes. He links the rise of capitalism in Europe with Protestantism, and the failure of the development of capitalism,

for example, in India, with the fatalistic understandings characteristic of Hinduism. However, a question arises as to whether Weber analyzed the understandings from the perspective of a member of the culture or follower of a religion. For example, a German-American economist Kapp (1963) also relates poverty in India to Hinduistic fatalism. However, his works got criticized by Indian scientists. They think Kapp's (1963) analysis relies on superficial interpretations of some theological texts, which link beliefs in fate with passivity (Young, Morris, Burrus, Krishnan, & Regmi, 2011).

With regard to this, Barrett and Keil's (1996) study results are interesting as well; the authors point out that everyday thoughts about the supreme power determining human life reflect folk beliefs, not abstract theology. Analyzing only theological texts can be a source of misunderstandings in this sense too. For quite a long time it was considered wrong to think that we can read people's minds from such texts. To understand how people's beliefs — with which they operate in everyday life — are formed through interacting with theological or cultural texts, a proper approach is necessary.

It's also an important challenge to analyze the following issue: while all religious or cultural traditions contain a notion of supreme power that determines people's lives, these traditions differ in terms of their conceptions of these powers. According to Norenzayan and Lee (2010), Asian Canadians are more fatalistic than European Canadians. Most importantly, their study has found qualitative differences between the various forms of fatalism: unlike Asian fatalism, Christian fatalism is more associated with devotion to a deity. Considering studies such as the above mentioned, it's not surprising that a number of authors (Acevedo, 2005; D'Orlando, Ferrante, & Ruiu, 2011; Ruiu, 2012) claim that fatalism is partially determined by culture. However, the main challenge is that in order to determine the role of culture in shaping fatalism, we need a definition of culture that will capture the link between culture and fatalistic beliefs (Ruiu, 2012).

We think this is precisely the kind of definition that contemporary psychological anthropology, specifically, the cultural models/schemas[1] school functioning within it, offers.

1. Cultural models

Suppose you have a software that can recognize or identify objects and events based on the particular patterned relations of their components, by simplifying the patterns. Basically, schemas are this sort of computer program: they allow the identification of objects and events on the basis of simplified pattern recognition. Our cultural schemas might vary in terms of their specificity or concreteness, so, we can have highly specific and concrete schemas for identifying material things like chairs or spoons, as well as high-level schemas for understanding love, success, authority and other abstract phenomena, including fatalism (D'Andrade, 1992).

According to cognitive psychology[2], the notion of a schema is most effective in describing the way human cognition operates flexibly. How is all this related to culture? Why did anthropologists, specifically, those in the cultural model school, get interested in the notion of schema? They drew attention to the schema as a mental structure that is shaped by experiences. As they suggest, it is logical to assume that a group of individuals that share similar experiences, must have a shared mental representations or schemas of the experiences too (Quinn, 2011). Using the example of the present study's domain of interest, fatalism, the experience gained through the interaction with so-called objective cultural products (cultural texts, practices, institutions) is represented in the form of cultural schemas in mind. Thus, the cultural model school responds to the above-mentioned problem related to Kapp's (1963) works, that it is not sufficient to focus on objective culture only; studying the interaction between cultural and mental processes is of great importance.

Within the approach of the cultural models school, relationship between culture and fatalistic beliefs is also clear: culture is defined as the collection of taken-for-granted assumptions (including fatalistic beliefs/assumptions) organized in mind in the form of schemas shaped on the basis of shared cultural experiences; people have the schemas shared with others and draw upon them in forming expectations, reasoning, telling stories, and performing other ordinary everyday tasks (Quinn, 2005).

2. Emic Approach

Differences regarding how fatalism is conceived within different cultures and religions, that is, the existence of different cultural models (Young, Morris, Burrus, Krishnan, & Regmi, 2011) should be taken into account when investigating the role of fatalism in different societies (Ruiu, 2013). So, it is relevant not only to study fatalism but also to refine the methodological tools

---

[1] Cultural schema and cultural model are alternative terms. However, some authors prefer to use the notion of cultural model in order to denote the cultural schema of particular size (D'Andrade, 1995:152-153) or complexity (Quinn, 1997:139). In this paper we use them as interchangeable.

[2] It is important to note that cultural model school of contemporary psychological anthropology incorporates insights from cognitive anthropology and cognitive psychology (D'andrade & Strauss, 1992; Shore, 1996, Dressler, 2017).

to achieve it. We have found only a single study related to the issue of fatalism in our country, Georgia. It addresses the influence of fatalism on perceived social support and mental health in post-soviet countries (Russia, Georgia, Ukraine, and Belarus) (Goodwin, et al., 2002). This study showed the highest levels of fatalistic attitudes in Georgia. However, the researchers emphasized the insufficiency of etic approach and the necessity to design a more culturally meaningful instrument.

To do this it is important to understand a culture from the "native's point of view" (Lu, 2012). This approach is referred to as the emic approach (Lu, 2012). Contemporary psychological anthropology stresses the necessity of using emic research instruments in addition to popular etic research methods. Thus, the relevance of this field for studying fatalism emerges not only from the complexity of theoretical approaches but also from its methodology.

3. Research Methods

3.1. Data Collection Method and Sampling

How can emic cultural understandings be reconstructed? According to cultural models school, the most effective way to do it is a cultural analysis of discourse. Cultural analysis requires a reasonably extended sample of rich discourse (Quinn, 2005). To generate such rich talk, taking the experience of cultural models school into consideration, we have used the in-depth interview method as a data collection method. Interviewers used a pre-designed interview guide which underwent expert evaluation by two independent researchers of Georgian culture prior to the study. In order to ensure effective conditions for revealing the taken-for-granted cultural assumptions, the interviews were made maximally similar to ordinary everyday situations, conducted in as informal settings as possible.

After being informed about research objectives all respondents gave their consent and were free to withdraw from an interview process at any time. Interviews were conducted and transcribed in the Georgian language which is native for the respondents. The anonymity and confidentiality of data were guaranteed.

The quota sampling method was used to maximize diversity and to ensure that we had not accidentally captured a variant subculture (Strauss & Quinn, 1997). Study participants were 20 respondents who identified themselves as Georgians. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 60 years. Interviewees were selected with regard to such obvious differences as their places of geographical origin (Interviews were conducted in 5 cities across Georgia: Tbilisi, Telavi, Batumi, Kutaisi, and Poti.), socio-economic status (from people with the status of socially vulnerable to people with high-income), educational attainment (from high school diploma to master's degree) and levels of religiosity (irreligious to highly religious) [3].

3.2. Data Analysis Method

Cultural analysis of discourse was chosen as the data analysis method, which means to reveal shared, stable understandings by analyzing the features of discourse that did occur frequently and are culture-laden (Quinn, 2005). For the present study, we have chosen metaphor[4] which is one of such features (Quinn, 2005). What determines the frequent use of methapors in everyday speech and how can its culture-laden nature be explained? Metaphor (from the Greek: metaphorá – to transfer, carry over) is a figure of speech in which an expression is used to refer to something that it does not literally denote by attributing the properties of one object (referred to as source domain) to another in order to suggest a similarity. These objects are widely acknowledged exemplars (referred to as cultural exemplars) of those aspects of experience they are being made to stand for. Because the speaker and listener intersubjectively share an exemplar, both knowing what it exemplifies, the chosen metaphor ensures clarifying the point of the speaker for the listener, and consequently propels the tendency using it regularly (Strauss & Quinn, 1997).

The method of looking at metaphors as indicators of schemas was first developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980), however, according to these authors, metaphors create cultural schemas whereas contemporary psychological anthropologist think metaphors don't create but only reflect underlying cultural schemas (Strauss & Quinn, 1997). To reveal schemas, they suggest the methods of metaphor categorization. The authors emphasize that it is specifically the revealed categories that the respondents share widely among each other, not the metaphors within each category. In fact, the latter might vary from individual to individual, as well as for the same respondent on different occasions.

Following contemporary psychological anthropologists (Strauss & Quinn, 1997; Quinn, 2005) , we took these categories of metaphors to reflect components of a cultural schema of fatalism that was implicitly used by our interviewees.

4. Results

ethnic Georgians belong to the Orthodox Christian church (Pew Research Center, May 10, 2017)

[3] A 5-point scale was used with 1 meaning "non-religious" and 5 "highly religious". All religious respondents were Orthodox Christians. It is important to note that the majority (89%) of

[4] Metaphor is used in the broad sense of the term, as an equivalent to trope. Trope involves words or phrases used with a figurative meaning.

Data analysis revealed the following components of the Georgian cultural schema of fatalism: Personal Control, Deity, Destiny, Luck and Helplessness.

4.1. Personal Control

One set of shared understandings revealed in the conversations with our respondents were understandings related to personal control. It needs to be emphasized that personal control is represented as a continuum with the lack of personal control at one end[5] and the high level of personal control as the other.

One metaphor within the personal control category is working. The source domain of the metaphor is field of work experience. Considering Georgian history, it is plausible to presume that the characteristic field for Georgian culture is land cultivation/farming[6] .

Metaphorical phrases express the ideas of growth, development, and sophistication through effort, gaining control over events at the expense of changing oneself:

"Very few people are born with inborn talent... If a person doesn't work on himself/herself, he/she might not achieve anything";

"In order to achieve success, you should make some time for it and work on yourself every day."

Interestingly, the same understanding was expressed by another respondent who believed in astrology, which makes it even more reasonable to assume that we're dealing with the shared underlying conception.

> I think astrology helps you to *work* on the given aspects on your birth chart in a way that helps you become a successful person. A person who has harmonious aspects, for example, that he is industrious, diligent... suppose, he was born in a wealthy family, he might be less successful, than a

person who has disharmonious elements in his chart[7] because he has to *work* more, *struggle* more. Those who *struggle* more, achieve more.

The personal control component involves fight-related metaphors which were also shared among the respondents:

> "You shouldn't *surrender* (literally, to put your sword and shield on the ground as a sign of surrender to the enemy to) your destiny; you should *fight* and something will come out of it";

> "If you *surrender* and think, 'everything is destined so I'm not going to do anything', you will *die as a slave*."

These metaphors manifested themselves in the discourse presumably because the field of fight or wars constitutes a Georgian cultural exemplar. Due to its geopolitical location, throughout the history of Georgia, Georgians were often confronted with the necessity of dealing with the attacks of enemies.

Along with the metaphors expressing direct personal control, the interviews also showed shared metaphors indicating indirect personal control. "In indirect personal control, individuals hide or play down their agency by pretending that they are not acting as an agent while they are actually doing so" (Yamaguchi, 2001, p.227).

Such metaphorical expressions were *"intuition"* and *"cunningness"* (craftiness / being devious). The original Georgian word is not exactly intuition but algho/ალღო which stands for a specific aptitude or ability of quickly understanding something, for example, grasping a particular situation and knowing what to do in it, usually based on your feelings rather than examining facts. The second meaning the word carries is for animals – instinct or scent detection skills.

> "[To achieve success] You need *cunningness and intuition/algho*."

---

[5] In certain cases, the respondents highlight the lack of personal control in Georgian people: "Georgians don't *calculate* anything and are surprised at the end of the month (the end of payroll period, usually Georgian payroll is monthly) 'where has all the money gone?'... They don't plan anything ahead of time. You shouldn't live *counting on* your fate only. You shouldn't live only *with the hope* that you will win the lottery tomorrow and so it's okay if you waste all you've got today." "He doesn't try to do something... My neighbors come to my mind now... they *spend all day* playing backgammon."

[6] Materials about the spiritual culture of Georgian tribes can be found in the form of ancient cult items which suggest that mythology and religious beliefs of these tribes correspond to the worldview of land-cultivating tribes. Ancient Georgian myths

involve symbols of seasonal death and revival of nature, land fertility and bumper harvest. Sacral acts of procreation, fertility, and prosperity are depicted in the cult items. Ethnographic works show a diversity of labor management, working tools optimally adjusted to local natural geographical environment, methods of labor production, and cultivated plants in Georgian ethnic groups (ბასილაია, 2006)

[7] [7] Natal chart or the personal astrological chart that can be drawn up for each individual depicting the configuration of planets at his/her birth supposedly determining his/her personality, energy, focus or course of life

"I have a strong *intuition/algho*, it doesn't take me much to know a man, I can tell a trustworthy person from an untrustworthy one easily."

"The product might be of poor quality but you can *wrap* and *present* it in a way that will sell the product."

Revealing this conception in our discourses is consistent with the findings of a recent study of Georgian proverbial expressions and cultural models of adaptive behavior according to which *strategic elasticity* is a culturally specific behavioral strategy (ჭუბინიძე, 2018).

The interviewees have also used metaphorical expressions conveying the concept of proxy control. This means control by someone else for the benefit of the person (Yamaguchi, 2001):

"It's difficult in this country... unless someone gives you a *helping hand*."

High prevalence of indirect and proxy control is characteristic of the cultures where interpersonal harmony is highly valued and direct personal control of the environment is undesirable (Yamaguchi, 2001). These cultural differences are well reflected in the differences between individualistic and collectivistic forms of control. These forms correspond in content with the prominent classifications of agency: individual versus collective agency (Menon, Morris, Chiu, & Hong, 1999) and disjoint versus conjoint agency (Markus & Kitayama, 2003) distinctions.

Explicably, the notion of agency is often identified with Western philosophy. From the western philosophical perspective, behavior doesn't emerge by itself but always implies the existence of an agent or initiation of action by the agent. In this view, the agency is understood as exclusively characteristic of an individual. However, Markus and Kitayama (2003) argue, this understanding fails to capture agency comprehensively enough since it has been created and is maintained in the context of and by the meanings and practices of middle-class European Americans. This is just one of the existing models[8] of the agency; it is referred to as a disjoint agency model.

The experience of agency is present not only in the disjoint agency model but also in the context of conjoint agency, however, in a different form: meeting others' expectations and obligations can be perceived as giving rise to and enhancing one's

motivation, not as pressure. Therefore, as Markus and Kitayama (2003) point out, this is not a low-level agency but just a different model of agency.

In our study, the sense of conjoint/collective agency was conveyed by metaphors expressing connection:

"[Achieving success] requires not only working but also forming some *connections* and creating a proper environment, which in turn, requires a lot of time."

"It's very difficult to be unemployed but it doesn't mean that... you understand, right?... My family members *stand by me*.

„When you are friends with someone... it's not forced. This is something based *on mutual understanding* and something you do for free.“

The agency classification authors point out that conjoint agency is more prevalent in collectivistic cultures (Menon, Morris, Chiu, & Hong, 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 2003). However, it is important to note that these works exclusively[9] separates "individualism" from "collectivism" which, to take into consideration the conceptual and measurement problems of cross-cultural research paradigm, can be considered as theoretically meaningless (Guimarães, 2019; Huang, Bedford, & Zhang, 2018; Omi, 2012; Tripathi & Leviatan, 2003). Unlike Cross-Cultural Psychology, Cultural Psychology, especially Cultural Psychology of Semiotic Mediation emphasizes that it is more meaningful to move from exclusive separation ("individualism OR collectivism") to inclusive separation ("individualism AND collectivism") (Valsiner , 2019). This approach is also confirmed by our data of Georgian respondents in which disjoint and conjoint agencies do not exclude each other but coexist.

The following quotation below shows that together with a metaphor expressing conjoint agency ("stand by someone") stands a metaphor of success achieved through personal effort ("I wouldn't be here").

"My parents *stood by me* when I needed to study, they paid for my education. But if not all those sleepless nights spent working, I *wouldn't be here* " (I wouldn't be able to achieve what I am now)".

The following quotation shows ambivalent feelings about consuming collective resources: on the one hand, feeling

---

[8] It's noteworthy that when using the term model they rely on the theories of cultural models (Holland & Quinn, 1987; Shore, 1996) and social representation (Moscovici, 2001).

[9] There are two possible ways in which phenomena can be separated: mutually exclusively (A is not non-A) and mutually inclusively (A is not non-A but A relates with non-A and vice versa) (Valsiner, 2014)

uncomfortable when getting helped out and on the other hand, when adopting the perspective of a helper who gives, considering such an attitude unacceptable.

> On the inside, I feel stressed thinking of how much he/she put himself/herself out, how much he/she *gave so much* away for me... but at the same time, I don't want to tell them "you shouldn't have bothered doing this much for me" because I would feel offended if someone told me "you didn't have to bother so much" because if I do something like this, I'm completely enthusiastic about it and *I put my whole heart and soul into* doing it.

The next two components might demonstrate the relevance of the approach of mutual inclusivity even better.

4.2. Deity & Destiny

Two types of fatalism can be distinguished: cosmological and structural (Acevedo, 2005). The first comes from Weber, according to whom, fatalism originates from notions of external forces affecting individual, such as laws of karma, diabolical spirits, divine predestination, stellar constellations, cycles of rebirth and so forth (Ruiu, 2012). The differences between various cosmological doctrines are best summarized in the Oedipus principle (or Destiny) versus the Job principle (or Deity) distinction (Young, Morris, Burrus, Krishnan, & Regmi, 2011; Fortes, 2018).

Oedipus is a righteous and noble man who exiles on his own will to get rid of murdering his caring and devoted father, however, he failed to escape predestination (Fortes, 2018). Thus, the Oedipus principle holds that individuals are born with predetermined destinies they cannot escape (Young, Morris, Burrus, Krishnan, & Regmi, 2011). The catastrophe of Oedipus is caused by the reasons that "lie hid deep in the nature of God and man[10]," not by any fault of his (Lucas, 1950, as cited in Fortes, 2018).

A completely different understanding of human nature and morality is suggested by Job's story[11] . It doesn't propose supernatural forces mysteriously determining an individual's life course from birth to death. Instead, the good and evil that one receives in their life, is considered rewards and punishments given by a personified omnipotent god. But god's actions are not arbitrary, impulsive or unpredictable. Instead, they are restricted by the covenant with his creature. Practically, this is a relationship based on a contract in which god is obliged to act justly and man has freedom of choosing between righteousness and sin (Fortes, 2018).

The conceptions of the Job principle were expressed by the respondents using the following metaphors: "punishment", "pass the test", "walk the path" (similar meaning was expressed by "taking a step" – in the right or wrong direction), "human relationships" (relating to a human-like creature), "babysitter" (represents the watchful, responsive deity of the Job principle) (Young, Morris, Burrus, Krishnan, & Regmi, 2011). These metaphors make up the Deity component of the schema.

> "I have committed a big sin, for which I *got punished* with being left without a family".

> "How we *pass the test* or how we *walk the path*, determines our future"

> "[A person's fate is determined] exactly the *way we relate to one another*. For example, I hurt you, but then I helped you a lot and so we ended up with a *great relationship* formed between us."

> "A comedian said Christ is a free (free as not paid) *babysitter:* when someone is told he/she is being watched, he/she won't do bad deeds".

---

[10] The Oedipus principle, the cosmic belief about destiny, is characteristic of Hinduism. At the heart of this model is samsara, the cycle of birth and death, through which souls are reborn with predestined fortunes which are determined, respectively, by positive or negative deeds in their previous lives. Importantly, there is not a universally agreed upon view with regard to the gods' role in determining one's karma in ancient texts. The Brahma Sutras highlight the role of God's in dispensing destined fortunes. According to other Hindu schools, however, even gods can't intervene in predetermined karma. The inability of gods to overpower a person's destiny is illustrated in a folktale: Lakshmi, the wealth goddess, is pleading with Vishnu, her husband, to help a beggar. Vishnu responds that it is pointless because "the beggar has nothing in his karma...He has done nothing virtuous and therefore deserves nothing" (Shweder & Miller, 1991, p. 158). Eventually Vishnu agrees on putting money under a tree, but the beggar failed to see the money right before him. This folktale shows that nothing can overcome a person's destiny (in this case to be poor), even

the intervention of gods (Young, Morris, Burrus, Krishnan, & Regmi, 2011).
[11] The Job's story is one of a suffering righteous man whose friends visit him when they learn about his troubles. They engage in cycles of conversations (Job 3-27), where his friends advice Job to admit his guilt and return his happiness by asking God's forgiveness. Job rejects their advice and arguments. He thinks his afflictions are not related to his sins, because he hasn't committed any. However, eventually he admits having imagined himself as equal to god and entitling himself to judge what constitutes righteous or wicked conduct. This was exactly his sin. Fortes (2018) compares the sufferings of Job to paternal disciplinary punishment of his son's misconduct, and Job's salvation to his acceptance of the supremacy of the father and his filial dependence. This means realization of the benevolence of the father's intentions and the acceptance of the paternal authority with even when it involves severe measures of discipline.

Interestingly, metaphors corresponding to the Oedipus principle have also been revealed in the interviews. They constitute the Destiny component of the fatalism schema. One such metaphor is "being born under a star". According to ethnographic works, one of the most widespread beliefs in Georgia is that at the moment when a person is born a new star named after him/her appears in the sky (აბაკელია, 1997). The respondents have been using this metaphor to convey the idea that a person's life is predetermined at his/her birth:

> "I firmly believe in fate: under what *kind of star you are born*. Some people achieve everything so easily, some with so much difficulty".

In expressing the notion referred to as the *equifinality* principle of fate attributions (Norenzayan & Lee, 2010) that regardless of preceding events, the outcome is overdetermined and fixed in advance, the respondents have been using the expressions of "slave" and "return back":

> "You are a *slave* to your fate".

> "You might get rid of an unfortunate incident but it might *return back* to you after a short time in a different form".

A metaphorical expression "tsera"/წერა (literally can be roughly translated as "writing") is also used within the Destiny component of fatalism schema of the Georgian respondents:

> "No matter where you go, you can't avoid what's *written*/დაწერილია for you anyway".

> "It's like everything is *written*/დაწერილია in advance".

The personification of fate in the Georgian myth-ritual system is represented by bedismtserlebi/ბედისმწერლები (singular bedismtserali, with bedi meaning fate, mtserali – writer) — "writers of fate", "fate-writers" or "fate-authors" who often are portrayed as elderly women dressed in black (აბაკელია, 1997). It's interesting that another word for bedi (fate) in the Georgian language is bedistsera/ბედისწერა. Ethnographic works propose in Georgian tradition bedismtserlebi (writers of fate) are at the same time weavers or knitters too (sporadic hints can be traced in some rituals like tying thread on the wrist, neck, or around the waist, აბაკელია, 1997). On the one hand, such threads or strings might have served a protective function (against evil), but on the other hand, they might have been supposed to tie desirable

qualities (longevity, wisdom, etc.) to a person (აბაკელია, 1997). In our study, we have also seen respondents using metaphorical expressions like „tied fate" ("I don't know what ties my fate") and "untied fate" (In Georgia getting married is considered untying/opening your fate) which, according to the Georgian ethnographic works, also indicate to a link with the thread of fate (აბაკელია, 1997).

As we've seen, our study has revealed the conceptions of both Deity and Destiny. It is also interesting having revealed such a pattern of coexistence of these conceptions in which predetermination, invariability of one's fate independent of their actions (the Oedipal principle) is related to the notion of a personified god (the Job principle):

> "Religion acknowledges fate but the *bedismtserali/ბედისმწერალი* (writer of fate / fate-writer) is god."

> "God came to my mind because everyone thinks that god *writes/წერს* [the fate]."

The phrase cited in the above quotation —"everyone thinks"— might be suggesting perceived sharedness of this conception. The subsequent quotation shows how the inevitable destiny implied by the Oedipus principle might be determined by a god's punishment (the Job principle), not only in a given individual's life but also in his offspring's lives too.

> When he was born, it was with his fate *written* and *assigned* at birth, but you know what I think? ... There used to be a church near here which they destroyed later. I think, when you burn or destroy the house of God it will then result in some consequences. God is *merciful* but I think if one does such deeds, something is bound to go wrong in his life and those of his offspring.

In addition to this, the interviews showed that different strategies for managing future risk corresponding to Deity and Destiny beliefs can also coexist. Young et al. (2011) note, that in the Hindu model of Destiny, since one's fate is predetermined, it is possible to learn (at least to some extent) about the future in advance, however, not for an ordinary layperson, but for psychics, seers or soothsayers only. Because the samsara system is connected with the stars, astrologists can foresee an individual's fortunes too. In contrast, it is impossible to forecast the influences of supernatural powers years in advance in the Christian cosmology of Deity since in this model the fatalistic influences don't stem from predictable cosmic predetermination but from

the changing perceptions, emotions, or intentions of a person-like deity. Accordingly, this leads to the perception of praying to god as an effective strategy. King David, for example, often communicates to god with prayers (Psalms).

As we mentioned above, for managing future risks both strategies were expressed by our respondents:

> "They go to fortune-tellers/soothsayers, they spread the Tarot; my close friends go to them too. They try to persuade me to visit them too."

> "Lots of people around me believe in fortune-tellers / soothsayers."

> "I used to read tarot cards myself."

> "Deep inside my heart, I believe prayer has power."

> "When my mother makes the sign of the cross on me as I'm leaving home, this gives me power".

> "I get distracted but I'm afraid of not praying. It can't be skipped."
> "Astrology is created by god too".

It's interesting that the coexistence of the Oedipus' and Job's principles in West African religion is also emphasized by a South African-born anthropologist, Meyer Fortes (2018). According to him, the Oedipus and Job principles represent two main alternatives for dealing with difficulties and hazards on the way of a person making progress from the state of complete dependence (as a newborn at the mother's breast) to the state of independence (albeit constrained) as an adult or citizen[12] . It's a law of nature that certain people fail at becoming a full-fledged member of society. To interpret, give moral value, and control the problematic situation resulted from such failures in the individual, they use the beliefs and rituals that are focused on the notion of Oedipal destiny. However, most people succeed in the task of becoming social persons as long as they can bear with the unpredictability of dangers and rewards. To give moral value to this latter experience, the religious system of West Africa also involves personified supernatural figures (a simplified version of

Job's god) which are analogous to parents' authority (Fortes, 2018).

4.3. Helplessness

It is impossible to affect life situations in a way that that results in changing the outcomes — is another shared understanding revealed in the discourses of Georgian respondents. This is a case of structural fatalism, not cosmological fatalism discussed above. Acevedo (2008) argues that fatalism is not a direct result of religious denomination, it comes from historical, cultural, economic and sociopolitical processes too, so for fuller understanding of this phenomenon he suggests not to abandon Cosmological for Structural or vice versa, instead, appropriate both formulations in the development of a multidimensional model of fatalism. The definition of structural fatalism is proposed by Durkheim for whom fatalism may stem from structural conditions such as inequality or extreme over-regulation. His idea that a more regulated society tends to be also more fatalistic is supported by research data[13] (Ruiu, 2012; Ruiu, 2013).

It is emphasized that structural fatalism is linked to the sense of powerless/helplessness produced by "over regulation combined with a lack of exit option into the collective body in which the subject lacks the necessary voice and/or exit option to alter their social position, status, rank, or living conditions" (Acevedo 2005a, p. 75 as cited in Esparza, Wiebe, & Quiñones, 2015). In our study too, the helplessness component of the cultural model of fatalism incorporated metaphors expressing the shared conceptions of the impossibility of causing change and lack of mechanisms for having control over the course of events.

> "As the saying goes, money *goes* to money."

> "People are *resigned* to defeat and they don't try... "*Nobody's there for a peasant*", you've heard of it, haven't you[14] …"

It is important to note that Durkheim's (1968:276 as cited in Acevedo, 2005) empirical example of fatalism that is experienced by "very young husbands [and] the married woman who is childless" shows that his structural fatalism concept does not point only the material sources of regulation that impact social actor. Durkheim expands his concept beyond the economic realm

---

[12] He considers all beliefs and concepts found in studying West African religion as magnified and disguised religious extrapolations of the experiences produced by parental relationships with children in kinship and descent based societies.

[13] However, it is possible that higher fatalistic tendencies lead to higher demand of protection and therefore, higher level of regulation or, on the contrary, it may be that regulation itself

generates fatalistic tendencies. So, the possibility of reverse causality is not eliminated (D'Orlando et al., 2011). Ruiu (2012) argues that if institutions are the expression of the preferences of the members of a society (at least in democratic societies), the first explanation seems to be more plausible.

[14] We believe, the phrase *"you've heard of it, haven't you"* said by respondents to interviewers that are representatives of their own, same indigenous culture suggests sharedness of the conception under discussion.

to include more micro-level domains of social life, such as marriage and child bearing (Acevedo, 2005).

This broader understanding of the concept was taken into account in Ruiu's (2013) study also; To measure to what extent a society is regulated, the researchers used not only a country-level indicator[15] that evaluates the extent of state control over travel, choice of residence, employment or institution of higher education, the right of citizens to own property and establish private businesses, the private business' freedom, security forces, political parties or organized crime, but also gender equality, freedom of choice of marriage partners and size of family.

The respondents of our study also discussed social pressures, such as pressure to get married, and having to take other people's opinions into account in choosing a partner and the like.

> My father had two professions: at first, he was a physics teacher and then he became a constructor. We (his children) chose construction faculty and physics — my father's professions. My mother wanted us to become doctors very much but we didn't want to, so, in that, we went in the direction of following our father's advice. On the other hand, we fulfilled her wish to have doctors as daughters-in-law. I pleased my mother.

> "Others think that the time came for me to get married."

> "They forced me to get married."

> If I were born and had lived in another country, I would have achieved a lot. I don't mean career, knowledge and such-like; I would be more grown as a person... [What prevented you from it here?] Clearly social, economic, stereotypical attitudes [prevented me from it here]... But now that I'm getting older, I don't pay attention to some things, I still try to maintain my autonomy, but the social *pressure* is huge. I think it even intervenes in your thinking; when you don't have exposure to anything different for some period of time, you can't hear something different, can't see something different, I think, you're bound to *think inside that box*, independently of your will.

4.4. Luck

The Luck component incorporated shared understanding that in addition to taking rational actions ("use your head", "measure twice, cut once"), one's course of life is governed by something else too. This is what the respondents refer to as luck. With regard to being an individual characteristic as opposed to being an external event not dependent on a person, luck is described equivocally. On the one hand, they describe it as an individual characteristic which is assigned to a person at birth. The metaphorical expression kudbediani/ქუდბედიანი is used to talk about the shared conception of luck ("some people are born with kudbedi"). kudbediani is a compound word consisting of the base-words kud (meaning a hat) and bediani (meaning lucky or literally having bedi; bedi means luck, fortune, fate). It's interesting that kudbedi referred to fetal membrane surrounding a newborn. Children are born with this membrane rarely, so it was an anomalous event which used to create an unusually strong impression even in the recent past, let alone in the far more distant past when unexplained phenomena, as supernatural and mysterious, had been causing fear and terror in people. An extraordinary event for them was a sign portending something, either good or bad. Taking it as a sign of good luck (rather than bad fortune) might be due to the tendency of seeing phenomena in a self-favorable manner (ომიაძე, 2006). And why precisely 'kudi'/hat? A child is born with a head and so it is logical that the first impression is as if she/he is wearing a hat (ომიაძე, 2006).

On the other hand, luck is described not as an individual characteristic but as a sequence of external events, independent of a person, that brings good to him/her.

> "She achieved success, got married, got rich, got a job, everything at the same time. Luck was never on her side before but then suddenly *everything worked out well.*"

> "As I said, 'having a good fortune' means that your *life goes well" / things in your life work out well*."

The revealed distinction between two understandings of luck in our interviews corresponds to an existing classification that categorizes luck beliefs in two types: fleeting luck and stable luck. Fleeting luck belief views luck as a product of situational happenstance, while stable luck belief considers it as a constant trait (Chen & Young, 2018). It is important to note that people

see stable luck as an extra personal asset that they can use anytime they want and this perception makes them more agentic (Young, Chen, & Morris, 2009). However, as we mentioned above, perceptions of agency and practices are culture-specific. For instance, having agency in the American culture usually means that you do not need superstition as a coping strategy to collect good luck, but in Asian cultures, a person's sense of agency is associated with a greater propensity for superstition (Chen & Young, 2018). How it is possible? As we mentioned above, Americans are more likely to have a belief in individual agency, whereas Asians are more likely to support the idea of collective agency (a belief that social collectives can help obtain desired outcomes) (Menon, Morris, Chiu, & Hong, 1999). In these contexts, such collectives may include not only human actors but also non-human actors, such as deities or animals (Morris, Menon, & Ames, 2001) and people often use superstitions to seek the favor of such non-human actors (Thompson, 1978 as cited in Chen & Young, 2018).

The idea of using superstitions for managing one's luck combined with the sense of agency was expressed in our interviews too. The Georgian respondents mentioned that sometimes they perform superstitious rituals in order to obtain desired outcomes.

"I tell them to pour water on the salt thrown."

Salt thrown is perceived as an ominous sign. According to this superstition, if salt is thrown on the floor, it portends a fight/argument. Throwing water on it might be an attempt to avoid predicted negative consequences.

"These clothes bring *luck to me*/kargad makvs datsdili/კარგად მაქვს დაცდილი"

The original Georgian expression kargad/tsudad makvs datsdili/კარგად/ცუდად მაქვს დაცდილი doesn't seem to have an exact English corresponding phrase. kargad/tsudad datsdili (with the base-word tsda/ცდა meaning to try, to experience, to test as a verb or trial, attempt, observation as a noun) roughly means tested and tried, well-tried, probed and refers to generalized superstitious beliefs based on previous experience about something (an action, place, object, person etc.) bringing positive, desirable (კარგად დაცდილი with კარგი meaning good) or negative, undesirable (ცუდად დაცდილი with ცუდი meaning bad) outcomes.

The revealed combination of stable luck, sense of agency and the propensity for superstition demonstrates that the associations among the beliefs may be culture-specific and consequently,

suggests once again the importance of the emic approach to the study of such a multidimensional phenomenon as fatalism.

5. Conclusions

Given its complexity, studying fatalism is relevant to researchers in behavioral or social sciences, as well as researchers interested in cultural, economic or political issues. Studies on fatalism in Georgia are scarce; besides, even for the authors of the studies conducted it is evident that studying fatalism properly is impossible using etic research instruments only.

Taking these difficulties into consideration, the aim of the present study was to emphasize the theoretical and methodological opportunities of studying fatalism within the frames of contemporary psychological anthropology, specifically, cultural models school and presenting the results of the empirical study on Georgian cultural model of fatalism using these opportunities. The theoretical apparatus of the cultural models school allowed us to think of culturally shaped fatalism, not only as an element of objective culture beyond the mind, but also as a part of mind, namely, as a cognitive schema formed on the basis of shared experiences. Discourse cultural analysis —more specifically, metaphor analysis—of the in-depth interview data revealed the following components of the Georgian cultural schema: Personal control, Deity, Destiny, Helplessness and Luck. The disclosure of these components/dimensions shared among the Georgian respondents allowed us to reconstruct emic cultural understanding of fatalism.

The etic instruments—so favored in social and behavioral science disciplines nowadays— are not defined by the terms that respondents themselves use to talk about a particular phenomenon (fatalism, love, happiness, etc.). In other words, they lack the "emic validity" (Dressler & Oths, 2014). The present study was an attempt to deal with this methodological challenge. Revealing emic components/dimensions of fatalism using metaphor analysis was the first step. The aim of the subsequent study will be studying the interrelationships among these dimensions using propositional analysis (Quinn, 2005). The verification of the revealed Georgian cultural model of fatalism by determining consensus levels for each proposition using cultural consensus analysis (Romney, Batchelder, & Weller, 1987) and measuring the level of cultural consonance (the degree to which individuals put cultural models into practice in their own everyday lives, Dressler, 2017) are following important steps to build emically valid instrument for studying fatalism. With this, we would like to stress once again that only instruments created this way—following the basic anthropological directive of the prominent anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski: to see the

world as others see it (Dressler, 2017)—¬provides an opportunity for comprehensive understanding such a complex phenomenon as fatalism.

References

1. Acevado, G. (2008). Islamic fatalism and the clash of civilizations: An appraisal of a contentious and dubious theory. Social Forces, 86(4), pp. 1711-1752. https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.0.0033

2. Acevedo, G. (2005). Turning anomie on its head: fatalism as Durkheim's concealed and multidimensional alienation theory. Sociological Theory, 23(1), pp. 75-85. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0735-2751.2005.00243.x

3. Barrett, J., & Keil, F. (1996). Conceptualizing a nonnatural entity: Anthropomorphism in God concepts. Cognitive Psychology, 31, pp. 219–247. DOI: 10.1006/cogp.1996.0017

4. Bernard, T., Dercon, S., & Taffesse, A. (2011). Beyond fatalism-an empirical exploration of self-efficacy and aspirations failure in Ethiopia.

5. Chen, N., & Young, M. (2018). The Relationship Between Belief in Stable Luck and a Propensity for Superstition: The Influence of Culturally Conferred Agency Beliefs. Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 49(7), pp. 1098-1113. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022118777296

6. D'Orlando, F., Ferrante, F., & Ruiu, G. (2011). Culturally based beliefs and labor market institutions. The Journal of Socio-Economics, 40(2), pp. 150-162. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2010.12.010

7. D'Andrade, R. (1992). Schemas and motivation. In R. D'Andrade, & C. Strauss, Human motives and cultural models (pp. 23–44). Cambridge University Press.

8. D'andrade, R. G., & Strauss, C. (1992). Human motives and cultural models. Cambridge University Press.

9. Dressler, W. (2017). Culture and the individual: Theory and method of cultural consonance. Routledge.

10. Dressler, W. W., & Oths, K. S. (2014). Social survey methods. In H. R. Bernard & C. C. Gravlee (Eds.), Handbook of methods in cultural anthropology (2nd ed., pp. 497–515). Lanham, MD:AltaMira Press.

11.

12. Esparza, O., Wiebe, J., & Quiñones, J. (2015). Simultaneous development of a multidimensional fatalism measure in English and Spanish. Current Psychology 34(4), pp. 597-612. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-014-9272-z

13. Fatalism. (2019). In Lexico dictionary. Retrieved from https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/fatalism

14. Fortes, M. (2018). Oedipus and Job in West African religion: The 1956 Frazer Lecture. HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory, 8(1-2), pp. 394-413. https://doi.org/10.1086/698432

15. Goodwin, R., & Allen, P. (2000). Democracy and Fatalism in the Former Soviet Union 1. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 30(12), pp. 2558-2574. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2000.tb02450.x

16. Goodwin, R., Allen, P., Nizharadze, G., Emelyanova, T., Dedkova, N., Saenko, Y., & Bugrova, I. (2002). Fatalism, social support, and mental health in four former Soviet cultures. Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 28(9), pp. 1166-1171. https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672022812002

17. Guimarães, D. (2019). Towards a cultural revision of psychological concepts. Culture & Psychology 25(2), pp. 135–145. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X18820632

18. Holland, D., & Quinn, N. (1987). Cultural models in language and thought. Cambridge University Press.

19. Huang, Y., Bedford, O., & Zhang, Y. (2018). The relational orientation framework for examining culture in Chinese societies. Culture & Psychology, 24(4), pp. 477–490. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X17729362

20. Kapp, K. (1963). Hindu culture, economic development and social planning in India. Asia Publishing House.

21. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). Metaphors we live by. University of Chicago press. Chicago, IL.

22. Lu, L. (2012). Etic or emic? Measuring culture in international business research. International Business Research, 5(5), p. 109. https://doi:10.5539/ibr.v5n5p109

23. Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (2003). Models of agency: Sociocultural diversity in the construction of action. In V. Murphy-Berman & J. J. Berman (Eds.), Vol. 49 of the Nebraska symposium on motivation. Cross-cultural differences in perspectives on the self (p. 18–74). University of Nebraska Press.

24. Menon, T., Morris, M., Chiu, C., & Hong, Y. (1999). Culture and the construal of agency: Attribution to individual versus group dispositions. Journal of personality and social psychology, 76(5), pp. 701-717. DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.76.5.701

25. Morris, M., Menon, T., & Ames, D. (2001). Culturally conferred conceptions of agency: A key to social perception of persons, groups, and other actors. Personality and Social Psychology Review, 5(2), pp. 169-182. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0502_7

26. Moscovici, S. (2001). Social representations: Essays in social psychology. NYU Press.

27. Norenzayan, A., & Lee, A. (2010). It was meant to happen: explaining cultural variations in fate attributions. Journal of personality and social psychology, 98(5), p. 702. DOI: 10.1037/a0019141

28. Omi, Y. (2012). Collectivistic individualism: Transcending a traditional opposition. Culture & Psychology 18(3), pp. 403–416. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X12446232

29. Pew Research Center (May 10, 2017). Religious Belief and National Belonging in Central and Eastern Europe [Report]. Retrieved from http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2017/05/15120244/CEUP-FULL-REPORT.pdf.

30. Quinn, N. (2005). Finding culture in talk: A collection of methods. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

31. Quinn, N. (2011). The History of the Cultural Models School Reconsidered: A Paradigm Shift in Cognitive Anthropology. In D. B. Kronenfeld, M. Bennardo, V. De Munck, & M. Fischer, A companion to cognitive anthropology (pp. 30-46). Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

32. Romney, A., Batchelder, W., & Weller, S. (1987). Recent applications of cultural consensus theory. American Behavioral Scientist, 31(2), pp. 163-177. https://doi.org/10.1177/000276487031002003

33. Ruiu, G. (2012). Is fatalism a cultural belief? An empirical analysis on the origin of fatalistic tendencies. https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/41705/

34. Ruiu, G. (2013). The origin of fatalistic tendencies: An empirical investigation. Economics & Sociology, 6(2), pp. 103-125. DOI:10.14254/2071-789X.2013/6-2/10

35. Shapiro, J., & Wu, S. (2011). Fatalism and savings. The Journal of Socio-Economics, 40(5), pp. 645-651. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socec.2011.05.003

36. Shore, B. (1996). Culture in Mind: Cognition, Culture, and the. Problem of Meaning. New York: Oxford University Press.

37. Shweder, R., & Miller, J. (1991). The social construction of the person: How is it possible? In R. A. (Ed.), Thinking through cultures: Expeditions in cultural psychology (pp. 156–195). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

38. Strauss, C., & Quinn, N. (1997). A Cognitive Theory of Cultural Meaning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

39. Straughan, P., & Seow, A. (1998). Fatalism reconceptualized: a concept to predict health screening behavior. Journal of Gender, Culture and Health, 3(2), pp. 85-100. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1023278230797

40. Tripathi, R., & Leviatan, U. (2003). Individualism and collectivism: In search of a product or process? Culture & Psychology, 9(1), pp. 79–88. DOI: 10.1177/1354067X03009001005

41. Valsiner, J. (2014). Invitation to Cultural Psychology. Sage.

42. Valsiner, J. (2019). Culture & Psychology: 25 Constructive years. Culture & Psychology, 25(4), pp. 429-469. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X19872358

43. Weber, M. (1905). The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.

44. Yamaguchi, S. (2001). Culture and control orientations. In D. Matsumoto , The handbook of culture and psychology (pp. 223-243).

45. Young, M., Chen, N., & Morris, M. (2009). Belief in stable and fleeting luck and achievement motivation. Personality and Individual Differences, 47(2), pp. 150-154. DOI: 10.1016/j.paid.2009.02.009

46. Young, M., Morris, M., Burrus, J., Krishnan, L., & Regmi, M. (2011). Deity and destiny: Patterns of fatalistic thinking in Christian and Hindu cultures. Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 42(6), pp. 1030-1053. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022110381123

47. აბაკელია, ნ. (1997). სიმბოლო და რიტუალი ქართულ კულტურაში [Symbol and Ritual in Georgian Culture]. ივ. ჯავახიშვილის სახელობის ისტორიისა და ეთნოგრაფიის ინსტიტუტი. თბილისი.

48. ბასილაია, მ. (2008). ეთნოსები საქართველოში [Ethnic groups in Georgia]. საქართველოს სახალხო დამცველთან არსებული ტოლერანტობის ცენტრი. თბილისი.

49. ომიაძე, ს. (2006). ქართული დისკურსის ლინგვოკულტურულ შემადგენელთა სტრუქტურა, სემანტიკა და ფუნქციონირება [The structure, semantics and function of the lingvocultural characteristics of Georgian discourse] (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). არნ. ჩიქობავას ენათმეცნიერების ინსტიტუტი. თბილისი.

50. ჭუბინიძე, დ. (2018). ქართული ანდაზები და ადაპტაციური ქცევის კულტურული მოდელები [Georgian proverbs and cultural models of adaptive behavior] (Unpublished doctoral dissertation).ივანე ჯავახიშვილის სახელობის თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი. თბილისი