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THE ALTERNATIVE ROLE OF NEW TUSHETIAN SONGS IN CONTEMPORARY GEORGIAN MUSICAL CULTURE

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Abstract

This study examined the alternative aspects of the new folk music of the eastern mountain regions in Georgian musical culture. Today, such pop-folk music is popular among the younger generation in Georgia. In particular, the female folk music of the Tusheti region, popularized by Lela Tataraidze, is influential as a countercultural reaction to official polyphonic singing. Tusheti lies on the frontier of the North Caucasus, where the influence of the national culture of male polyphonic singing did not extend during the twentieth century. Therefore, women's musical activities, such playing the garmoni, have prospered among the Tushetian people. Tushetian folk music expresses the melancholy experienced by women living under patriarchy, while male polyphonic singing is characterized by masculinity and lucidity. Moreover, the formation of the Georgian Diaspora community during the post-Soviet period promoted the acceptance of folk music from marginal communities. Tushetian songs describing the landscapes of old mountain villages in the countryside convey nostalgia and imagery of the homeland, thereby promoting the creation of a national consciousness among the Diaspora.

Keywords: *popular music studies, counterculture, gender expression,Tusheti, new folk songs, Diaspora, cultural nationalism*

Introduction

Georgian musical culture is strongly tied to gender expression. This tendency is especially evident in the sphere of traditional music, such as male polyphonic singing, which was registered by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2001. Georgian ethnomusicologist N. Tsitsishvili notes that traditional polyphonic singing was performed by village male singers during the *supra* feast to praise outstanding military service and masculinity (2006:547-548). Tsitsishvili also notes that as a result of Christianization in the fourth century, Georgian men could acquire high social status, and male polyphonic singing played an important role in promoting the community spirit (2010: 49-53).

During traditional Georgian feasts, men would toast, drink, and sing, while women prepared and served meals. According to Tsitsishvili, such gender role patterns are also observed in the performance of traditional folk songs. Tsitsishvili's study revealed the gender differences in the performance of polyphonic songs, in which men prefer improvisation and rousing performances, while women try to sing modestly and coordinate with the other voices (2006:463-439, 2010:229-284).

I found similar gender differences the first time I listened to a CD of Georgian folk songs more than 10 years ago. The CD was produced by Yamashiro Shoji (1933-), a Japanese specialist in Georgian folk songs (ref. 25). This CD includes live recordings from the 1980s of the female chorus of the national music school in Telavi and the male choruses of Mestia and Ozurgeti. The performances of Kakhetian and Kartlian folk songs such as "Orovela (Plowing song)," "Tsintskharo" (a village in Kartli), and "Suliko" (Urban song, written by written by Varinka Tsereteli on Akaki Tsereteli's verse) by the female chorus of Telavi create a very sophisticated and "academic" impression. However, I found the

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male polyphonic singing of the choirs of Mestia and Ozurgeti difficult to understand. The male songs sound abstract compared to the female songs and convey a sense of "oldness." Granted, it is possible that differences exist between the musical sensibilities of the "professional" music school of Telavi and the more "amateur" musicians of the House of Culture in western Georgia. Nevertheless, we sense the gender differences in the performances of Georgian folk songs in these recordings.

Tsitsishvili suggests that in Georgian traditional/national musical culture, with its basis in male polyphonic singing, women exist only as representations in the text of the songs, and they are rendered as the "other" (2010: 300-302). Male polyphonic singing came to occupy the position of authentic national culture in the context of Georgian nationalism under Russian rule after the nineteenth century. Tsitsishvili points out that among Georgian intellectuals, after the modern period authentic cultural value was located in the polyphonic singing style of western Georgia (as in Guria), which had similarities with progressive European musical culture, in contrast to the monophonic singing of Middle Eastern countries (2007:252-255). She also notes that "Oriental" sounds—like those produced by the double reed duduki—which had been prominent in old Tbilisi and other parts of eastern Georgia, were relegated to "otherness," not unlike women (2010:285-296).

Though I think Tsitsishvili is correct about women and "oriental" elements in Georgian traditional musical culture, I argue that a further element has been relegated to "otherness." The musical elements of northeast mountain regions like Tusheti and Khevsureti, where male polyphonic singing did not develop as significantly as in other regions, are represented only in the text of the Kakhetian polyphonic song "Chakrulo (Table song)," with the lyrics "a Tushetian burnished the sword forged in Khevsureti." Moreover, the repertories of the ethnographic choirs of the 1930s, which represented Georgian national culture, did not include folk songs from the eastern mountain areas of Khevsureti, Pshavi, Tusheti, Mtiuleti, and Khevi (Erkomaishvili, 2007:207-214). This tendency is also reflected in a famous collection recorded by the Rustavi Ensemble, which includes 60 Georgian folk songs from the Thaw period (ref. 24). Of course, this record includes some small examples of mountain ballads, but most of the recorded songs are from Guria, Kakheti, and other dialects, in which polyphonic singing is more prosperous.

Interestingly, however, a new pop-folk genre has recently emerged in the eastern mountain regions, which have been "marginalized" in Georgian national culture. This new music is influential among the younger generation and the Diaspora community. Using the example of new Tushetian songs, which are the most influential in this pop-folk genre, this paper considers their "alternative" function in Georgian national culture, which is dominated by male polyphonic singing.

Before examining the role of new Tushetian songs, I will first consider how male polyphonic singing, especially that of the Guria region, came to be regarded as part of the authentic national culture through folk music criticism of the twentieth century of Georgia. Next, based on the activities of ensembles in the Thaw period, the second section focuses on the fact that the male polyphonic singing of the Guria region in western Georgia obtained some degree of political clout in official Georgian music. In the third section, using interviews with the famous Tushetian folk singer Lela Tataraidze, I will consider the alternative role of new Tushetian songs, focusing on their countercultural characteristics in relation to official polyphonic culture. The fourth section will then focus on the popularity of new folk songs from the mountain regions among the younger generation. In conclusion, through a comparison with the popular *enka* genre in Japan, I will consider the nostalgic quality of new Tushetian songs and how they promote national consciousness among the Georgian Diaspora community.

Naturally, my perspective on Georgian culture is that of a Japanese student, and my paper only covers the modern period. As such, I might be unfamiliar with certain Georgian scholars. Nevertheless, I hope this study will provide opportunities to research Georgian musical culture from a new perspective.

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1. How male polyphonic singing became the representation of national musical culture

Among contemporary Georgian people, there is a widespread cultural value that regards male polyphonic singing as part of the authentic national culture. For example, an employee of a music shop on Rustaveli Avenue in Tbilisi told me, with regard to the various genres of Georgian folk music, that male polyphonic singing—such as that of the Rustavi state ensemble—is authentic national music.

How did this cultural value develop and become widespread among the Georgian people? Studies of early twentieth-century folk music can help answer this question. Pioneering Georgian musicologist and composer D. Araqishvili (1873-1953), who collected folk songs from various regions of Georgia, suggested that the counterpoint singing style of three-part polyphony reminds us of the well-known culture of Western music. However, for Aqakishvili, these songs have characteristics that are beyond our understanding, and while they do not completely lack aesthetic value, certain Gurian songs certainly do not possess aesthetic value (1908:15). Thus, on the one hand, Araqishvili found universal meaning in the "counterpoint" of Gurian folk songs, which reminded him of Baroque composer J. S. Bach. On the other hand, based on the standards of Western art music, he also thought male Gurian songs did not entirely possess aesthetic value. Moreover, he suggested that if we consider the aesthetic differences in these songs between women and men, the former is beautiful and more musical while the latter is unique but not beautiful (1908:15-16).

Although Araqishvili found some universal value in Gurian male polyphonic songs, he thought these songs lacked aesthetic and musical value in comparison with female songs. Nevertheless, today Gurian male polyphonic singing is regarded as authentic Georgian culture and is accepted as such throughout Europe, America, and Japan. These songs have been performed as part of the concert program of the International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony.

Why, then, despite the lack of aesthetic value noted by Araqishvili, has Gurian male polyphonic singing attained the status of authentic national culture? To address this question, I investigated cultural policy, folk music studies, and reviews from the Soviet period.

Georgian composers and critics of the 1920s identified "innovative" cultural elements in the performances of Gurian native folk singers, as opposed to the folk song performances of the academic city choirs, which had received a formal European musical education. Georgian ethnomusicologist E. Garaqanidze suggested that such emphasis on authenticity has always existed in the arena of Georgian folk music (2007:151,163).

Among the composers and critics of that time, critical opinion focused on "academism" in the performance of folk songs. For example, the composer K. Meghvinetukhutsesi (1891-1972) commented in the newspaper *Komunisti* that in the performances of Kakhetian folk singers of the 1920s, the intervals of the upper and second voice parts switched to parallel thirds under the influence of the European equal temperament scale (16.02.1928).[1] Garaqanidze also notes this influence of European "academism" in the folk choirs of eastern Georgia as well as the more "pure" quality of western choirs in the early twentieth century (2007: 89-91).

In the 1920s, Araqishvili also held a common aesthetic value about folk polyphony, which was distributed among the coeval Georgian composers. Araqishvili also pointed out the influence of the European parallel third in folk polyphony in his work of 1925, and he expressed the idea that the European third imposed a cruel stigma upon folk music performers and researchers, and usually caused people to puzzle over the matter in an attempt to find the pure source of Georgian harmony (1925: 21-

[1] Although the performance of academic choirs was evaluated in the Olympiada folk song contest, its lack of an ethnographic element was criticized (21.05.1927, 30.06.1929). The criticism of academism was also pointed out in the rehearsal of the ethnography chorus of east Georgia before the *dekada* festival of Georgian national culture in 1937 (CACH,f. 2, op. 2, d. 9.l.14).

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22). In this work, he also located the original cultural value in the polyphonic singing of western Georgia, as in Guria, Samegrelo, and Imereti. Concerning the originality of western Georgia's folk polyphony, he explained that we should not view the music as the counterpoint of Western Europe, which was written by composers of this school (1925: 13). The idea of cultural relativism was quite strong among the Georgian intellects of the twentieth century.

Interestingly, one anonymous critic of the 1920s said in *Komunisti* that the unique character of Gurian male polyphonic singing, in which each independent voice part creates one harmony, is very attractive, and such an eccentric sound transcends newer, more modern musical techniques (24.06.1924).

The attitudes of Araqishvili and other early twentieth-century Georgian intellectuals, who looked for "universal" and "innovative" elements in Gurian folk songs, remind me of the tendency of Modernism to regard the "exotic" elements of folklore as powerful art (Clifford, 1988:190).

Georgian musicologist J. Jordania argued that the complicated style of Gurian male polyphonic singing prevented early twentieth-century Georgian composers such as Araqishvili from using such elements in their works (2006:278).[2] In addition, as mentioned above, I would argue that Georgian composers understood the genuine artistic value of original Gurian folk songs and therefore did not use them in their compositions.

Although Georgian intellectuals understood the value of folk songs, Garaqanidze notes that from the end of the nineteenth century, when staged performances of folk songs became widespread among Georgian intellectuals, folk music was gradually removed from its original context, thus losing its original character (2007:86-137). It is possible that this tendency caused early twentieth-century musicologists and art critics, who were attracted to Gurian polyphonic songs, to be deceived by the notion of "counterpoint."[3] As a result, these songs might have been regarded as "abstract art," thus losing their original social functions (e.g., labor and ritual).

It is possible that in the context of 1930s socialist realism, the Gurian folk song was insufficient for representing socialist national music, which required concepts such as "national in form, socialist in content." During that time, instead of Gurian choirs, the ethnographic choir of Samegrelo, organized by Dz. Lolua (1877-1924), was the worker of oilfield in Batumi, represented the realistic "content" of socialist national culture. In an article in *Komunisti* in the 1920s, this choir is described as "including both sexes of worker and peasant" and was expected to lead the socialist Georgian culture (30.06.1923).

T. Zhvania's biographical studies of folk singers help explain why this choir attained cultural power during the Soviet period. Lolua's choir had played an active role in spreading folk songs from the various regions of western Georgia, including Abkhazia, since the imperial period (2007:27-33). During the Soviet period, this "ethnographic choir" belonged to the enlightenment organization, the People's Commissariat for Education, and played an important propagandistic role in Georgian culture, based on its notions of worker and peasant.

This choir performed the polyphonic music of Guria, Samegrelo, Imereti, Achara, Racha, Svaneti, Kartli, Kakheti, and Abkhazia with choir of eastern Georgia at the *dekada* national art festival in Moscow (08.01 1937). The choir was integrated with the eastern choir after 1939 and became the Georgian State Ensemble (Garaqanidze, 2007: 98). In the ethnographic choirs of east and west Georgia in the 1930s, polyphonic singing was mainly performed by male singers, while female musicians provided marginal instrumental accompaniment. It is possible that such circumstances greatly changed

[2] As is well known, Arakishvili was one of the judges of the Olympiada in 1927. In this folk song contest, the performance of rural choirs, like Guria and Kakheti, was evaluated higher than the academic choir (21.05.1927).
[3] Anthropologist J. Clifford also noted that in most ethnographies, modern arts, and criticism, cultural reality is cut from its original context (1988:145-146).

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the "tolerant" situation in eastern Georgia, where female polyphonic singers—like Maro (1891-1969) and Ekaterine Tarkhinishvili (1879-1956)—played an active role in the 1920s. In addition, according to the abovementioned newspaper article from the 1920s, the choir of Lolua in Samegrelo also included a female member; however, by 1930 all the singers were men.

Why did male singers come to dominate polyphonic singing in several regions in the 1930s? One reason is that in the national form of socialist culture, "authentic" Gurian male polyphonic singing was still influential in the 1930s. For example, during the rehearsals for the *dekada* of 1937, E. Bedia (1901-1937), chairman of the Committee for the Arts, said, "Gurian song, which performed by ethnographic choir of western Georgia,[4] was feeble" (f. 2, op. 2, d. 9,l.16.). Thus, he tried to add "professional" Gurian folk singers—like V. Simonishvili (1884-1950) and A. Erkomaishvili (1887-1967)—to the choir to convey the authentic national culture to Moscow (CACH, f.2, op.2, d.57, l.3)[5]. It is possible, therefore, that with the establishment of ethnographic choirs, folk choirs from other regions, which included female singers, gradually adapted to the standard Gurian model. As noted by anthropologist J. Clifford, modern ethnographic studies[6] reveal many cases in which specific groups or things are oriented toward authentic culture, which represents the collective past (1988:12-13).

Art critic B. Groys suggests that the Georgian case shows the common tendencies of avant-garde and socialist art to pursue innovation and yearn for life (2011:72). Thus, Gurian male polyphonic singing had to retain cultural authenticity in the contexts of both modernism and social realism. In any case, in Georgian national music, Gurian male polyphonic singing continued to have cultural influence after World War II.

2. The influence of Gurian male polyphonic singing in Georgian musical culture

Composer O. Taktakishvili (1924-1989), who became minister of culture in 1965, composed works based on folk songs, including the cantata *Gurian Songs* (1971) and *Megrelian Songs* (1972), and performed these works in Japan. Today, the international activity of old folk singers from these areas of western Georgia is remarkable. With the Voyager Golden Records, Kakhetian polyphonic songs gained worldwide recognition, and today folk singers play an active role in preserving traditional culture. Georgian folk songs from other regions are popular as well among foreigners. However, as I will discuss, I think the Gurian element has exercised the most influence on Georgian musical culture.

In particular, Gurian male polyphonic singing, which had exerted cultural influence since the early twentieth century, was important in the context of the folk revival after the Thaw. The success of the Gurian male polyphonic ensemble Shvidkatsa, organized by conductor J. Kakhidze (1935-2002), at the 1957 World Festival of Youth and Students in Moscow and the Brussels International Exposition of 1958 helped this cultural tendency become more influential.

Japanese ethnomusicologist Morita Minoru (1935-) noted that the performance of *Gurian Songs* by the Rustavi ensemble in Japan in the 1970s gave a strong impression of ethnicity (1986:757). During the same time in Japan, the Gurian male polyphonic song "Khasanbegura" was emulated by the ensemble Yamashirogumi.

L. Ninoshvili notes that Gurian songs employing difficult vocalization, such as *krimanchuli*, have few words and are therefore easily remembered by foreigners (2010:100). She also points out that when Georgian folk singers who are not from Guria go to Europe or America to teach folk songs, they find that foreign fans of Georgian music do not want to learn folk songs from other regions—they want to

[4] The majority of the members were from Samegrelo province.

[5] The Committee for the Arts also tried to add the folk singer R. Shelegia (1883-1955) from Samegrelo to the ethnographic choir of western Georgia.

[6] In the Georgian case, this means the processes of folk music studies, critics, and the establishment of the ethnographic choir in the twentieth century.

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master Gurian songs (Ibid.). As for the reasons why Gurian songs have spread internationally, it is possible that in addition to their unique and accessible qualities, the dynamics, which situate Gurian songs as authentic Georgian culture, have affected singing in the twentieth century.

In the 1960s, under the influence of the Shvidkatsa ensemble, the conductor Anzor Erkomaishvili (1940-), then a student at the Tbilisi State Conservatory, organized the male folk ensemble Gordela. His grandfather was the famous folk singer Artem Erkomaishvili, who played an active role in the Olympiada before World War II. Moreover, at the end of the 1960s, he organized a new folk ensemble called Rustavi at the request of the director of the Rustavi House of Culture. Anzor learned old Gurian folk songs and sacred songs from his grandfather, and his new ensemble Rustavi toured the Soviet Union, Europe, and America. In the 1970s, this ensemble, the boys choir Martve (also organized by Erkomaishvili), and the new male folk ensemble Fazisi played active roles in introducing Georgian national music to the world.

As a result of such activities, a certain nationalistic feeling infiltrated Gurian male folk singing. A. Erkomaishvili notes that folk polyphony is distributed across several provinces in Georgia; however, in some provinces, like the eastern mountain regions in which monophonic singing dominates, it is not an important factor (ref.23). In addition, the activities of Gurian folk singer J. Chkuaseli (1935-)—a leader of the Georgian State Ensemble who now conducts the new ensemble Erisioni—embody the idea of Georgian unification (ref.22). The repertory of his ensemble, which performs internationally, includes Abkhazian and Ossetian folk songs and dances. A tendency toward unifying the Georgian frontier is also quite strong in his ensemble. The famous lawsuit between the Tushetian poet I. Longishvili (1926-2006) and Chkuaseli's ensemble over the copyright of the song "A Girl from Shatili" clearly reveals the concept behind this kind of tendency. "

The privatization of folk songs that occurred during the post-Soviet period created similarly complicated problems regarding copyright. However, it also provided opportunities for folk musicians from the frontier of the eastern mountain regions, who lacked state-sponsored cultural resources, to produce their music on a global scale.

3. Tushetian music as counterculture

As mentioned above, the repertories of the ethnographic choirs of the 1930s, as well as the 60 folk songs performed by the Rustavi ensemble, did not include songs from the eastern mountain regions or the southern regions. It can be said that in these frontier regions, assimilation and differentiation have occurred with regard to national music.

In southern areas such as Meskheti and Javakheti, where most ancient Georgian ethnic groups were concentrated, the reconstruction of polyphonic singing by musicologist V. Maghradze (1923-1988) during the Thaw period was remarkable, as is the activities of the contemporary male polyphonic ensemble Meskheti, which performs Meskhetian folk songs. Mountain ballads and polyphonic singing are also performed in the eastern mountain areas of Khevi and Mtiuleti, influenced by Kartli and Kakheti via the military road. It can be said that these regions have seen an advancement toward partial assimilation into the national culture.

The situation is different, however, in Khevsureti, Pshavi, and Tusheti, where monophonic and two-part polyphonic ritual songs are typical. Recently, folk singers from these regions have become active in more popular musical forms. For example, the new folk-pop group Gogochuri Sisters, who are of Khevsurian origin, has become known for the hit song "Caucasian Ballad." In addition, Giorgi Chitauri, a young folk-pop singer and Labor Party politician of Pshavian origin, is well known for his song "A Snow Rose Has Bloomed by Aragvi River."

In the eastern mountain regions, female folk singers of Tushetian origin have been active since the Soviet period. Traditional Tushetian ritual songs are characterized by monophony or unison. A well-known song of this type is "Dala," a ritual song for ancestors performed by a monophonic male

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chorus during the folk celebration Zezvaoba dedicated to the historical hero Zezva, held in May. Funeral songs sung by women are also performed on that day. This tradition of lamentation is also found among other mountain groups such as Pshavs and Khevsurians.

The song of lamentation has been reincarnated as another contemporary music genre. After the nineteenth century, the *garmoni*, a small diatonic Russian accordion, came to be widely used among Tushetian women, who played the instrument to express grief for their relatives. This musical culture has produced new, influential popular music genres that counter male polyphonic singing. Unlike regions such as Guria, Samegrelo, and Kakheti—where the gendered image of authentic national music was accepted via the ethnographic choirs of the Stalin period—the frontier eastern mountain communities, where this cultural tendency did not have influence, have seen a flourishing of musical activity by women.

Among the female folk singers from these mountain regions, Lela Tataraidze (1949-) has gained national popularity for performing Tusheti folk songs accompanied by the garmoni. She was born in the Tushetian village Zemo-Alvani, and like most Tushetian women she became familiar with the garmoni as a child. She worked at a local cultural center and later found success as a member of the folk orchestra in Tbilisi.

According to Georgian musicologist Sh. Aslanishvili, the garmoni became widespread among Tushetian women in the 1940s (1956: 84-197). Garmoni performers began to attract public attention at the local Olympiada contests in the 1960s, where, according to Tataraidze, a Tushetian woman named Ana Kaadze played the garmoni in public for the first time. It is also possible that the amateur female singer M. Arjevnishvili (1918-1958), who sang mountain melodies accompanied by the folk instrument panduri, influenced public interest in female folk musicians from the mountain regions in the 1960s. In the 1980s, Tataraidze gained widespread fame as a garmoni player and singer, while the female folk ensemble Mzetamze, formed during the Perestroika period, paved the way for female folk singers to play active roles in musical performance.

Tataraidze said that Gurian male singers sometimes tell her they cannot understand the appeal of mountain folk songs, such as those from Tusheti; meanwhile, she cannot understand the appeal of male polyphonic songs, like those from Guria, which do not have lyrical texts or melodies (Interview, 28.12. 2013). Many of Tataraidze's songs, accompanied by the garmoni or panduri, express themes such as remaining proud as a woman under patriarchal repression ("Birth") and a woman's longing for a lover who left her ("I Wish I Were a Silver Cup").

Tataraidze's lyrics and music—which are inspired by the hardship women experience under patriarchal society and often evoke tears—differ completely from the lucid, masculine quality of male polyphonic singing. As such, I argue that Tushetian songs comprise a form of "counterculture" that contrasts with officially sanctioned Georgian national culture. The conventional understanding of "counterculture" is that it resists the dominant culture by way of a different genre, such as rock music to classical music. As such, many people do not view Tushetian folk music as countercultural because, at first glance, it seems to belong to the same genre as other Georgian folk music. However, if we understand counterculture as a protest by a marginalized group against the dominant culture, the musical practices of an artist such as Tataraidze—which are melancholic expressions of women's hardship under patriarchy—do indeed run counter to the male polyphonic singing as the representation national musical culture (Table 1).

Of course, today, the poems and music of Tataraidze are recognized as official Georgian culture, and her musical activity is hailed as a promotion of Georgian culture by state foundation Kartuli Galoba. However, if we consider the global influence of male polyphonic singing in Georgian national culture from the Soviet period, we can see the implications of "counterculture" in her performance and discourse.

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Although new Tushetian music expresses the possibilities for women who adapt to the gender model of the male-dominated society, Tataraidze clearly insists upon the cultural originality of Tushetian women in Georgian national culture, which is traditionally dominated by male Gurian polyphonic singing.

Tataraidze's music mostly consists of melodies played on the garmoni, which she listened to in childhood, with lyrics by local poets. She said it is important for her to like the textual content of the songs. In addition, she leads the female ensemble Kesane, whose name refers to a flower also known as a "forget-me-not." This ensemble, which includes female singers from Samegrelo province, not only plays Tushetian songs but, for Tataraidze, also communicates the idea that the female songs of Tusheti should not be forgotten in Georgian culture.[7]

Tataraidze's work also covers themes characteristic of male polyphonic singing, such as the fate of the Georgian nation. However, as shown by lyrics such as "man doesn't need a sword if his mind is clever" in the song "A Georgian for Georgia," the ideas behind her songs differ from those of men's songs, which praise men's bravery.

Although this genre, rooted in village customs such as "mourning songs," is unpopular among young urban women, songs such as "What a Beauty Tusheti is!" (*Ra lamazia Tusheti*) which express nostalgia for the disappearing countryside, have attracted devoted fans. A music store employee in Tbilisi told me Tataraidze's music is popular among many people regardless of age or gender.

Tataraidze is also popular in Israel and France, where people of the Georgian Diaspora have lived since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Tataraidze told me about a tour in which she performed in Israel, where many audience members, including Georgians, cried, remembering their homeland.[8] The emigration of Georgians to foreign countries has become an important new source for the consumption of the music of marginalized genders and regional communities. Though the new Tushetian music does not rise above the level of counterculture or alternative music in Georgia, when it leaves the homeland it can function as communal music among the Diaspora.

Tataraidze emphasizes that many contemporary folk songs from the mountain regions are based on Tushetian melodies. Indeed, the cultural influence of Tushetian music is extremely strong in mountain folk music. Recently, an album entitled *Tushetian Songs* was released (ref.26). However, this album contains songs that originated in other mountain provinces, such as Mtiuleti, Khevi, and Khevsureti, in addition to Tushetian songs. As the title of this album shows, the toponym "Tusheti" corresponds to the cultural geography of the eastern mountain regions.

Tataraidze also plays the mournful melodies of Chechens, who are compatriots of Caucasian mountain communities. The Gogochuri Sisters, who are of Khevsurian origin, also refer to the Kist people (a subethnic group of Chechens) in the song "Caucasian Ballad." While male polyphonic singing represents Georgian culture, songs of the mountain regions more broadly represent "pan-Caucasian" culture. It would seem, therefore, that the Gogochuri Sisters have aimed for differentiation from the music of Tusheti, which has great influence in the mountain regions.

[7] Regarding the folk songs of western Georgia, Tataraidze mentions that the female songs of Samegrelo province have a lyrical character, like Tushetian.

[8] The report of the 7th International Symposium for Traditional Polyphony by N. Lomidze, "Georgian Jews in Vienna: Their Traditions and Integration" (2014), shows that in Israel, among the Georgian-Jew community, new Tushetian music is also accepted. As she indicated, it is possible to consider that the hybrid character of new folk music, such as *garmoni*, *duduki*, and the new folk song "Suliko," has affinity with Georgian-Jews, who have a multilayered identity.

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4. The popularity of new mountain folk songs among the younger generation

Recently, folk songs from the mountain regions have influenced young Georgian pop-folk singers such as Dato Kenchiashvili. His music—which includes love songs accompanied by the garmoni and panduri—is inspired by the music of the mountain regions. Unlike the male singers of traditional polyphony, his gender image is more unisex. Such a nongendered image is not new in mountain music; it is also reflected in the 60 Georgian folk songs recorded by the Rustavi ensemble in the 1970s. This record includes examples of folk songs from the eastern mountain regions, such as the famous ballad from the Mtiuleti region "Pretty Like the Throat of a Pheasant" (*Khokbis qelivit Lamazo*) sung by legendary folk singer H. Gonashvili (1928-1985). Compared to other male polyphonic singers, his voice sounds delicate.

The presence of a young male pop-folk singer who is not of mountain origin might initially seem to deprive the position of female singers from the mountain regions. However, the performance of elaborately arranged, modern folk songs by a young male singer can also be viewed as increasing the popularity of the genre among younger people, thereby paving the way for female singers to play a more active role.

Georgian musicologist O. Kapanadze notes that folk music has increased in popularity among youths in mountain towns such as Dusheti and Tianeti.[9] This boom in popularity is supported by the Art-Gene festival, which is held every year. Among the young members of the Dusheti new folk ensemble Pkhovi, the emphasis is on traditional ritual songs such as "Jvaris Tsinasa" ("In front of the Shrine"), sung by an antiphon chorus. In Tianeti, singing with instrumental accompaniment, such as panduri, also attracts individuals as well as a mixed-gender choir called Pshavlebi.

In Tianeti, where people of Khevsurian and Pshavian origin live, young female singers are especially active. The folk ensemble Aoni, which sings mountain ballads, was popular here during the Soviet period. This situation affected the younger generation during the post-Soviet period in this region, where participation in folk music festivals such as Art-Gene is high, and hit songs and folk stars can be introduced to the whole country.

Sharing music by uploading videos to video-sharing websites is common among the amateur musicians of this region. This tool is used by amateur musicians who live in remote parts of Georgia to share their performances. They sing cover versions of the songs on the album *Tushetian Songs*. Unlike the abovementioned professional singers, these singers' activities are limited to local spaces; however, their work still promotes Georgian mountain folk music, providing material for global production. One female amateur musician in her twenties who works at the House of Culture in Tianeti told me they like the "melancholy" (*sevda*) quality of mountain folk songs (Interview, 24.12. 2013).

A similar taste for melancholic expression is observed in the middle-aged residents of Tbilisi, who like urban folk music (*bohema*), such as duduki performances.[10] Such tastes among Georgian

[9] The report of the 7th International Symposium for Traditional Polyphony, "Contemporary State of Traditional Polyphony in East Georgian Mountain Regions" (2014), and the expedition report (2012) by O. Kapanadze, show the abundance of folk music in Dusheti and Tianeti, where pop-folk songs are popular among the younger generation; among the older generation, the old song of lament, "Kapia" (competitive performance through improvised poetry), is also performed. It is possible to consider that in these regions, which possessed few cultural resources, they did not give priority to state management, such as male polyphonic singing.

[10] It is possible to say that there are also differences in musical interest between the east and west regions of Georgia. For example, the people of western Georgia are attracted by the "exoticness" of *duduki* music, which is not popular there. In old Tbilisi, I encountered young men who came from Kutaisi to purchase *duduki*, and they were enthusiastic to learn about the performance of that instrument from *duduki* masters.

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audiences support the popularity of "marginal" musical genres, such as the folk music of the eastern mountains and of old Tbilisi.

Conclusion

The melancholic, emotional quality of new Tushetian music clearly expresses the gender image of women, in contrast with the lucid, brave quality of Gurian male polyphonic singing. At first glance, new Tushetian music, which represents submissive women, appears to adapt to the gender model of traditional Georgian society.

However, in Tataraidze's use of Tushetian music, we find a countercultural response to Gurian male polyphonic singing, which has played an important role in the national culture since the Soviet period.

Though my knowledge of Georgian music and the scope of this research are limited, I have sought to explore questions I have about various aspects of Georgian music. To fully clarify the social function of new pop-folk songs of the mountain regions, it will be necessary to investigate female groups such as the Gogochuri Sisters in more detail. I think this matter would be best investigated by a young Georgian musicologist.

Interestingly, in Japan, there is a similarly emotional music genre called *enka* ("performing song"), which derives from traditional folk songs. It is also performed by female and male individual singers from the northeast provinces. Japanese-American ethnomusicologist Christine Yano points out that *enka* evokes the feudal past of the village communities of Japan; therefore, it is regarded as anachronistic and backward among intellectuals (2002:8). Yet, this genre, which is gaining popularity among the working classes, is often removed from official Japanese traditional culture and regarded as a subculture (Ibid).

However, Yano explains that the emotional quality of *enka* promotes the nationalistic feeling among Japanese people by evoking the nostalgic past of their hometown, because *enka*, which represents the rural landscape, exists outside of European and American influence (2002:15). Another reason why this genre evokes such nostalgia, Yano explains, is that it represents women as lonely and longing for old flames, as old-fashioned, and as situated outside of modernization (2002:148-152). Female *enka* singers often wear kimono and perform songs based on their passive gender image in a male-dominated society (Ibid). In contrast with male *enka* songs, female songs are more emotional, often evoke tears, and are based in the minor pentatonic scale, which is characteristic of Japanese folk songs (Ibid). Male singers also tend to express nostalgic feelings through other ways of longing for one's hometown, which relates to the memory of one's mother, often in the northeast regions of Japan, which are far from Tokyo (2002:174-177). More importantly, Yano also notes that when the representation of one's hometown by *enka* prods an individual's nostalgic memory, among the Japanese people it becomes a collective homeland, the center of cultural nationalism (2002: 21,178-179).

We can also find a similar example not only among the current Diaspora community, which finds the representation of "homeland" in the new Tushetian song of the mountain frontier, but also in the tendencies of Georgian intellectuals of the early 20th century, who discovered the representation of national culture in Gurian male polyphonic singing. The folk music of the countryside, like Tusheti, Guria, and other provinces, represents the local landscapes of the mountain or rural area, far from Tbilisi, where traditional lifestyles are maintained—have a special capacity to provoke nostalgia. In particular, the female characters of Tushetian songs also provoke the memory of one's mother's hometown. Perhaps among the Georgian Diaspora, which can easily visualize the imagery of their homeland in any country, Tushetian songs, which evoke nostalgia and tears by expressing the landscape of one's hometown among the Georgian people, assume the role of community songs, expressing their national consciousness.

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The current context of globalization, which promoted the emigration of Georgians, has provided opportunities for folk musicians from several regions to produce their music on a global scale, and has also increased the popularity of Georgian music among foreign music listeners and performers. As a result, any local or marginal folk music, such as Tushetian song, may now be viewed in the context of national culture. Therefore, we need to consider the meaning of the "individual" expression of performers.

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Table 1. Differences between Gurian polyphonic singing and new Tushetian songs

	Gurian polyphonic singing	New Tushetian songs
performers	mainly men, collective	mainly women, individual
performance	a cappella	accompanied by garmoni or panduri
genre images	traditional, authentic, pure Georgian national culture	popular, hybrid, mountain, pan-Caucasian culture
main themes	patriotism, masculinity, heroism, bonds among men	pity for women under patriarchy, unrequited love, mourning, female pride, longing for lost lover
musical characteristics	lucid, sung in major keys, usually based in two-part time, marching rhythms,	emotional, melancholic, lyric, sung in minor keys, melisma, based on VII→ I cadence and 6/8 time of *Lezghinka*,
gender image	meaningless text (glossolalia), "*abadelo nanina*,"	narrative text,
gender image	musical technique of polyphony outweighs text, generally unknown authors, more ancient songs	known authors, new songs
	masculine	feminine

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