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Dialectics of the Global and the Local in Contemporary Neo-Identities

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ABSTRACT:

Today's social reality is shaped by controversial yet simultaneous phenomena of globalization and localization - overwhelming unification and interconnectedness in technology, economy, politics and culture that goes together with intensification of striving for recognition by local communities. The trends of constructing and presenting new, generally more fluid and flexible identities are strong and visible in different parts of the world and on various social levels.

The aim of this research is to analyse contemporary phenomenon of paradoxical and complex interrelation and dialectics of processes of global unification and localization through study of newly constructed identities, articulations of individuality and uniqueness by certain communities. The new understanding of these creatively-constructed identities is coined into a new term of neo-identity, the title notion of this thesis.

Neo-identities are constructed of a peculiar interplay of the global and the local: they emphasize differences and distinctiveness, local in other words, but they also originate to the global processes (global threat or global fashion) and tend to construct themselves in order to find better ways of inclusion into a global societal network, either economic, political or social and ideological.

The practical part of the analysis provides illustrative material to the theoretical description of neo-identities. Two unrelated phenomena of South Ossetian national identity construction and emergence of Internet slang that unexpectedly fast spread offline in Russia are turned into case studies of neo-identities.

KEY WORDS: global, local, globalization, glocalisation, identity, South Ossetia, Russian Internet slang

1. INTRODUCTION

> Abandon the urge to simplify everything, to look for formulas and easy answers, and begin to think multidimensionally, to glory in the mystery and paradoxes of life, not to be dismayed by the multitude of causes and consequences that are inherent in each experience -- to appreciate the fact that life is complex.
>
> M. Scott Peck

Today's world and our lives are truly complex and paradoxical. One might easily go to sleep earlier than one woke up if during the day onee took a transcontinental jet flight. The same Hollywood movies premiers that dictate fashion trends for the following season are demonstrated all over the world on the same date, though they might have different titles. The news become available in seconds on the Internet, sometimes allowing reaching of information to the furthest places first, even before it becomes known on the local level. I personally celebrated two Christmases this year: one I shared with a big noisy family of more than 20 Italians for whom I prepared Japanese sushi and brought Finnish Fazer chocolates for dessert, and on the other one - Russian Orthodox Christmas, that I normally never celebrate, even though I am a Russian, I took a foreigner to the inside of the Russian church and later that day I showed the TV broadcast of the main Russian church ceremony through a webcam to those who I celebrated the Catholic Christmas with. Yes, globalization shrinks the world so that it becomes a single but complex space with a large degree of interconnectedness of people, businesses, communities, governments, cultures and ideologies.

At the same time when people of different nationalities and backgrounds communicate with each other they inevitably position themselves as representatives of their own distinct and unique culture, as if they attach a label of country of origin, ethnic or linguistic group, or subculture to themselves and then act strictly according to it. Each of them stresses how different their experiences, traditions and especially identities are, sometimes without paying attention that the very same people are in fact wearing the same brands of clothes and shoes, using the same Internet portals and eating the same

kinds of food. But then it paradoxically means that people are getting more similar than different, while presenting themselves as more different than similar.

In the socio-political arena the processes follow the same line – countries are engaged in an increasing number of cultural conflicts, based on striving for recognition, while at the same time all the conflicting regions are parts of the same global marketplace with an ideology of consumption. Many social movements take place to fight for their individual rights and for being recognized as equal members of contemporary global politics. This process resulting from intensification of local communities' identity construction and representation has acquired several names, for example "particularism" (Martín-Barbero 2002), "localization" (Robertson 1992), "regionalization" (Leerssen 2006), "differentiation" (Sasao 1997) etc – all of them nevertheless communicating meaning of expressing distinctiveness and uniqueness of their identities. In short, the paradox is that the similarities of societies resulting from globalization turn to divide them instead of uniting. This paradox is coined today in a neologism of "glocalisation" (Robertson 1995).

The topic of my interest and this thesis is concerned with a problem of complexity and paradoxicality of today's life and social order caused by conditions of globalization. While appreciating its present complexity, its multiple causations and consequences, it is still necessary to explore its "mysteries" with a research on what is considered to be the main components of globalization processes – namely forces of the global, as the expression of unification and homogenization, and the local, as expression of distinctiveness and particularity. It seems that better understanding of the processes shaping the contemporary reality will reduce its paradoxicality and therefore will ease dealing with its complexity on both theoretical and practical levels. I personally am very much interested in trying to solve this paradox theoretically because for me, an old-fashioned idealist with a utopian dream of world peace and tolerance between people and peoples, it will reduce anxiety about controversial social processes and changes of the present.

This thesis's hypothesis therefore is based on the dialectics and interconnectedness of the global and the local as components of globalization paradoxes of social reality.

Globalization brings technological, economic, political and cultural unifications in the world which results in social instability. As a protective reaction against this global threat, people tend to recreate and reconstruct their local identities in a creative way. These identities as a rule use local historical and traditional sources as materials for identity construction, but at the same time they tend to be superficial, imagined, not rooted into the past, but oriented towards future global developments. So, in other words, contemporary identities, or localities, cannot be understood any more in the terms of their cultural and historical roots, but in connection with the global world-order and through the lenses of the global. This new understanding of contemporary reconstructed identity in this thesis was given a particular name – neo-identity. Neo-identity is an essential element of contemporary processes of glocalisation and therefore it is a central topic of this thesis.

The main aim of this study consists of two tasks. The first one, theoretical, is to create a logical description of my own synthesis of the existing theories concerning two conflicting yet simultaneous trends of globalization and identity localisation in contemporary reality. The initial proposal for the thesis was focused on a different task, namely the study of emergence of individual's self-identity based on one's nationality in the situation of intercultural interaction. Theoretical study of that matter was, however, always concerned with the dialectics of the global and the local, but in an implicit way, and ultimately the focus shifted from individual psychological to more general socio-political sphere and the present topic of neo-identities.

The theoretical approach to the problem includes a review and analysis of contemporary social theories of globalization and identity, as well as vital complementary sociocultural issues such as universalization/unification, particularization/localization, identity construction, social movements, nationalism, and consumerism. Although the present approach to the problem of globalization, and new forms of social relations of the local and the global is not new – it has been one of the main topics in social sciences for over 20 years staring approximately from the mid-1990 and invention of the word "glocalisation" by Roland Robertson (1995) – its major problem is terminological pluralism. As it was already shown the same phenomena acquired multiple names,

making it difficult to build a single theoretical paradigm around questions of globalization processes and paradoxes. The present research was initially aimed at eliminating terminological discrepancies and for that reason the major concepts of the study of globalization and localization were reduced to two notions – the global and the local. At the same time, the reverse has happened and due to absence of proper unified terminology I had to introduce several terms myself, for instance: identity boom and neo-identity. The first stands for the intensification of identity localization processes, emphasizing its global scale and frequency of occurrence. The latter, as mentioned before, stresses new understanding of contemporary identities as constructs based on dialectics and interconnectedness of the global and the local.

Theoretical background, that had a great impact on the theory synthesis, comprised of articles and monographs by Anthony Giddens (1991), Roland Robertson (1992; 1995), Arjun Appadurai (1999), Thomas Fitzgerald (1993), Brian Longhurst (2004), Joep Leerssen (2006), Jan Nijman (1999), Malcolm Waters (1995) and others. An article "Identities: Traditions and New Communities" by Jesús Martín-Barbero (2002) was an inspiration to turn the direction of the research to the study of the global and the local in contemporary neo-identities. A major authority for this thesis however is Manuel Castells, whose theories of *The Power of Identity* (1997) and *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996) are central in the study and further analysis of neo-identities. Careful review of the main theories and a new synthesis of the topic featuring some new terminology contribute to the research innovation.

The process of theorizing about neo-identities required use of the so-called method of metaphors (Fitzgerald 1993: 207-209; Seelye & Wasilevski 1996: 197-198). It is a useful tool for conceptualizing broad and vague notions like that of identity or globalization. Metaphors offer dynamic, rather than static, labels of phenomena thanks to their creative way of figuratively describing facts and processes. They relax the limits of overly logical thinking and allow to present ideas that may at first appear to be a little bizarre. Metaphors allow us to think by analogy and to find common ground or alikeness of seemingly different and separate things. The method is widely used in

social, cultural and communication studies as a tool for description, comparison, association and generalization.

The second task of the study is practical and concerned with presenting new illustrative material to the presented theory of neo-identities. It is conducted in the manner of a qualitative research: two seemingly unrelated and different cases of contemporary construction and representation of local identities are studied to reveal how dialectics and interconnectedness of the global and the local expresses itself in constructed identities.

Case studies are approached from the position of comparative qualitative methodology. Single case material is used to demonstrate the theory and analyse the common underlying causal factors (Ragin 1989: 34, 45, 47), which are, according to the hypothesis, the global and the local and their interplay. The main sources for analysis are cultural texts: they are studied as collections of social and cultural meanings in the manner of post-structuralists' approach, meaning that analysis of cultural meaning will be done with as much as possible deal of consideration of individual perspective of those who produced the analysed cultural texts.

The first case study is concerned with the problem of contemporary nationalist resurgence in South Ossetia. World attention was attracted to the war of August 8-12 2008 on the territory of the breakaway region of South Ossetia in Georgia, but apart from political tensions over territory, power, and control, this conflict was predetermined on the social level because South Ossetian society was for a long time undergoing the process of cultural and ethno-national revival, active construction of local national identity that naturally searched for recognition. The analysis does not however focus primarily on topics of principal causes of Georgian-Ossetian conflict, or political role in the war of either parties, but instead studies how South Ossetians construct their contemporary collective identity in the course of their nationalist resurgence. Manuel Castells' (1997: 27-52) approach to contemporary nationalism is used in the study as an analytical tool.

The analysis is performed on the basis of cultural texts collection – articles of a web-project www.ossetia.ru, "News of South and North Ossetia", a digest edition of news concerning Ossetian nation of both South and North Ossetia. For the purpose of the study the names of authors of particular articles are eliminated – from perspective of this thesis the author of the articles is single – a web-project "News of South and North Ossetia" that expresses social position of Ossetian nation.

The research on means of constructing national identity by Ossetians on the web-portal www.ossetia.ru has two main stages. The first one is to read through material of two selected sections of the articles and reveal which information is used there to describe and/or construct contemporary collective identity of South Ossetians. After the selection and analysis the relevant material is arranged into tables of appendices 1 and 2. The main topics that constituted headings for the tables include cultural information on symbols, rituals, icons, values and beliefs (cultural onion model by Hofstede (1997) as a methodological tool); as well as nation's historical experiences, progressive innovations and future goals. The second step of the research consists of revealing expressions of the global and the local in the Ossetian's identity representations in the articles of the news web-project, describing their dialectics and interconnectedness in terms of information taken from the texts of the articles, and analysing whether or not this identity can be considered neo-identity.

The second case study concerns a problem of emergence of a language variety on the Russian-speaking Internet blogs, forums and chats. This phenomenon attracted attention because unlike many other Internet language varieties this particular one at some point became so popular that it spread offline into various discourses and real face-to-face communications. This Internet slang is produced on the basis of standard Russian but transforms it into an illiterate-like and obscene way of speaking which in addition expresses pseudo-emotionality. It also has its own symbols and heroes, most important of them - a picture of a bear with paws stretched up that appeared on a picture *Bear's Surprise* by John Lurie which after being transformed by a Russian blogger became overwhelmingly popular on Russian portals of the web. Due to the lack of uniformity in names of this Internet slang this thesis addressed it as *Preved* Internet slang (the word

превед - *preved*, meaning literally hello, has a special meaning for the users of the slang and the effect that this word produced in the beginning of 2006 on the Russian-speaking Internet pages was crucial for its popularity and spread offline). Presumably the slang became so popular as a part of the all-Russia intensification of youth movements and resurgence of patriotic consciousness, and constituted formation of identity of a modern Russian-speaker.

The phenomenon of the slang is studied from two perspectives: linguistic and social. For the study of linguistic characteristics of the slang David Crystal's (2001) five-type method of description of a written language variety is used, as well as his approach to Internet language phenomenon as a result of influence of technical and written constraints to the spoken in nature mode of communication. At the same time, special attention is paid to the fact of global dominance of English on the Internet.

From social perspective the phenomenon of spread of *Preved* Internet slang is treated as a spontaneous social movement, which according to Castells' (1997) framework should be treated neutrally, and in its own terms, which is a vocabulary of the slang in case of this study. In this way the vocabulary of the most used and popular words of the slang is analysed to reveal what is considered to be identity, adversary and ideology (societal goal) of those who speak the slang and find an inclusion into a community of like-minded by doing so. The final step of the analysis is making a summary of local meanings that constructed slang speaker's identity and expressions of the global interconnected with the local, as well testing whether it is possible to speak of neo-identity in terms of *Preved* Internet slang.

The described empirical research is aimed at illustrating the main points of the theory of neo-identity. Its main limitation is that the research does not provide representative examples, just illustrative, and for this reason may be easily criticized. Another detail is that the overall dissimilar cases of South Ossetian nationalist resurgence and emergence and popularity of the *Preved* Internet slang nevertheless have few things in common. Firstly, materials to study both of them are in Russian, and, secondly, they are Internet-based sources. Both of the similarities are mere coincidences and account only for the

fact that it is in general easier to access the research material that is open to public and written in researcher's mother tongue.

According to the main goals of the paper, it is structured as consisting of two main parts – theory and its illustrations; however they are presented in four chapters (excluding the introduction, chapter one, and conclusions, chapter six). Chapter one gives an overview of the topic, its relevance and innovativeness, briefly explains personal motivation for the research, introduces central background assumptions and hypothesis, theoretical background and research method, as well as short review of research stages and contents of the main chapters.

The theoretical part of the thesis is presented in three chapters. First two of them, "Globalization Metaphors" and "Identity and Self-Construction", provide the research with quite general, but essential introduction into the research problems. Each one of them is dedicated to presenting one of the most important operative terms of the thesis.

Chapter two is dedicated to the problem of globalization as a multi-faceted phenomenon of reality. Each section of this chapter includes one approach to understanding globalization - namely globalization as change, erasing of borders, space of flows, and unification. The last section emphasizes the paradoxical nature of globalization that simultaneously causes homogenization and heterogenization trends in societies, a paradox that is coined in a single word - glocalisation.

Chapter three focuses on another important notion of the thesis – identity and its peculiar characteristics. It approaches the explanation of identity from the perspective of social psychology, presents several models of distinguishing between different types of identity (personal, ecological, social, collective, plural, negative etc.), and gives a perspective of ways of constructing identity and its motivations.

In chapter four, titled "Dialectics of the Global and the Local in Contemporary Identities" the main theory on neo-identities is presented. It combines the previous notions of globalization and identity into the single framework and introduces the title notions of the global as expression of unification and homogenization, and the local as – particularity and distinctiveness. It gives a detailed description of mechanisms and

components of globalization paradox, employing such notions as identity crisis, identity boom, individualization, project identity, social movements (urban, religious, feminism etc.), nationalism, consumerism, identity marketing etc. As a result of this analysis a notion and description of phenomenon of neo-identity, built as a peculiar interplay of the local and the global is constructed.

Chapter five is practical and presents analysis of two case studies of contemporary neo-identities. Subchapter 5.1 (accompanied by appendices one and two) focuses on the contemporary phenomenon of national identity construction by South Ossetians in the course of their nationalist resurgence. The following subchapter 5.2 studies identity of *Preved* Internet speaker (with its vocabulary presented in appendix three). Both of them analyse which elements in constructed identities account for the global and which - for the local. By demonstrating the interconnectedness and dialectical relations between these two types of components the illustrations of neo-identities are established.

The conclusions are presented in final chapter six. It recapitulates the research central problem and hypothesis, reviews the main stages of the theoretical and practical research, and summarizes the findings.

2. GLOBALIZATION METAPHORS

Every epoch creates and lives by a phenomenon whose name becomes a peculiar characteristic of that time: Classicism, Enlightenment, the Cold War etc. Representation of contemporary world is based on many phenomena such as free-market economy, information technology, Internet, mobility, internationalization, etc. All of them, however, can be described with just a single word –*globalization*.

Frequently repeating this catchword, and even making an avatar-of-the-Present out of it, we rarely clearly understand it. In fact all we can say is that we are dealing with another "elephant", a symbol of perception biases from a poem by J. G. Saxe (1873: 135-136), where six blind men were approaching an animal from different sides and constructed their own ideas about it. Globalization however has a very distinct difference from that elephant: while there is a sighted person able to see the full picture of the elephant, globalization does not give such an opportunity to any scientist, professional or layman.

The social sciences work on the question of globalization from different angles. They approach globalization, on the one hand, as purely analytical discourse: this way gave birth to the discipline of globalization theory (Robertson 1992; Longhurst 2004). On the other hand, practical aspects of actual social experience under conditions of globalization seem to be important not only in social studies but in the whole range of other disciplines (business, finance, technologies etc.).

In the present thesis globalization is studied not only as a background description of contemporary social situation where the phenomena of study take place, but also as an active agent and focus of study. For this reason, this chapter concentrates on the multiple sides of the phenomenon of globalization through articulating its metaphors. This method is used as a tool for description and generalizations about globalization by conceptualizing certain aspects of this broad and ambiguous category.

2.1 Globalization as Change

Conceptualising globalization as *change* is perhaps the most emotional metaphor and the least specific of them all. The very first descriptions of globalization, its economic, financial and social aspects, were based particularly on this approach. Until now most of the definitions of globalization are expressed with the help of the concepts of "new", "changed", "non-traditional".

Simon During (1999: 23) introduces the notion of globalization as following:

> Globalization is best understood as the development of global markets and capital so as to skew highly capitalized national economies towards service, information, financial instruments, and other high value-added products away from traditional primary commodities and mass-production industries. Globalization also means more organized cross-national or "diasporic" labor force movements, along with the amazing growth of export culture industries, including tourism. And, last, it means the accelerated development of communication technologies like the Internet which escape the tyranny of distance.

This definition concentrates on a whole range of different phenomena from economic and financial sphere to technologies. Nevertheless the key terms used for description of globalization do have a semantics of novelty and change: "to skew", "away from traditional", "amazing growth", "accelerated development", "more organised" etc.

Social scientists do not always agree on the historical timing of globalization. Some of them believe that in most abstract terms globalization dates back to the invention of money or the very first cases of trade between tribes, villages and then nations. In these terms the Middle Ages were just another harbinger of globalization thanks to discovering Arabia, China, India and Americas. In short, any change broadening of market or world could be considered as another milestone of globalization. (Kolodko 2003: 207-209.)

However, what we call globalization today has an absolutely different scale of change. The current acceleration and intensification of global processes change the world situation instantly thanks to new technologies and its rapid transfer. Moreover,

globalization is considered to be not just an outcome of changes occurring in the world, but also a catalyst of transformation as such.

Globalization does not refer only to economics, although the previous examples discussed mostly market-related issues. Globalization has roots in the world of economy, but it has outgrown it and now belongs to the social sphere even more than to the economic one. Ankie Hoogvelt (cited in Rosenberg 2002: 4) believes that the globalization of social space was initially driven by "economic logic of capital accumulation", but now it is this new social order that drives the economic logic further. Cultural globalization is then an autonomous process enabling further economic globalization. So what used to be the primary goal of globalization – the international free market – now has to abide by the rules of a new society produced by the turn to a free-market that also has its own political ideology and world view.

In the social sciences globalization has produced a new discipline – *globalization theory* (Robertson 1992). It emerged from the later 1980s in response to new forms of capitalist hegemony and the weakening power of socialist politics within many capitalist nations (Longhurst 2004: 2). However, in terms of classical social theory, this new discipline conflicts with a traditional spatio-temporal approach. Justin Rosenberg (2002) argues that main-stream sociology bases its ideas on terms of *time* and *space*. Due to globalization processes these notions are extremely difficult to keep as such, which leads to the necessity of reformulating the very basic notions of *nation* and *society*: "Globalization is said to signal not only a truly basic social change – "the supplanting of modernity with globality" – but also, as a result of this change, the redundancy of some of the founding ideas of classical social theory, extending to the very concept of "society" itself" (Rosenberg 2002: 1).

Therefore, conceptualising globalization as change is on one hand too general and abstract because it expresses an attitude towards globalization emotionally. On the other hand, it gives us an understanding why this issue is so important: it is simultaneously an outcome and a process of grand change, as well as a catalyst of changes on a new level.

2.2 Globalization as Erasing of Borders

The metaphor of globalization presented in this subchapter contains a broad semantic category of notions concerned with *space-time dichotomy*. We can substitute "erasing of borders" for the popular "broadening of horizons" or "shrinking world" metaphors which are so widely used as eye-catching newspaper headlines. Nevertheless, they all deal with and single concept of globalization as a phenomenon of widening and deepening interconnections between people and places through a diminishing of political, technical, geographical or sociocultural barriers, whether they are real or virtual.

To start this discussion it is impossible not to concentrate on the economic foundations of globalization again. Thus, from the purely economic perspective, "globalisation is understood as perfect openness of the world market, in which the output sold locally at every place is proportional to the contribution that place makes to world production, while the remaining part of demand is satisfied by supply generated elsewhere" (Kolodko 2003: 221).

To be less economically specific, however, it is enough to mention that the most important motives and pre-conditions for the emergence of today's globalization are the undoubted need of the free-market economy and, as its consequence, foreign direct investment, capital flows, global systems of production and exchange etc. They all became possible thanks to the freedom of traveling, and ease and speed of information and goods exchange. These benefits are also an outcome of technological innovations.

Justin Rosenberg (2002: 2) argues that "The term globalization, after all, is at first sight merely a descriptive category, denoting either the geographical extension of social processes or possibly […] the intensification of worldwide social relations". In fact, either way describes the erasing of borders character of globalization.

Another remarkable feature of the globalization age is the new geographical and social extent or reach of information. It is noteworthy that even information formerly limited to professionals or specialists can no longer be kept as the exclusive preserve of closed

societies, namely, particularistic social strata, professional associations, or members of certain organizations. In this sense, geographical and social boundaries are being broken in numerous ways and places. Information, formerly the preserve of a limited membership of certain closed groups, is now increasingly obtained by outsiders via a variety of means. This trend is visible in academic fields, journalism, enterprise activities, and even national secrets, and the new world of the Internet accelerates the trend. (Inoue 1997.)

In sociocultural terms the erasing of borders has to be understood as a part of a space-time dichotomy, or to be more specific, a destruction of the classic space-time dichotomy as Justin Rosenberg (2002: 1-2) puts it. Manuel Castells follows the same line of argument and states that

> the new communication system radically transforms space and time, the fundamental dimensions of human life. Localities become disembodied from their cultural, historical, geographical meaning, and reintegrated into functional networks, or into image collages […]. Time is erased in the new communication system when past, present, and future can be programmed to interact with each other in the same message. The *space of flows* and *timeless time* are the material foundations of the new culture. (Castells 1996: 375 [original italics])

In other words, while traditional sociology bases its terms on notions of time and space as separating and differentiating forces, globalization shrinks the world to the point where it expands rapidly on totally different principles, different from that of classic time and space. Therefore we are dealing with a true *borderlessness* not only in the practical sense (international markets and trades, European Union free traveling space, Internet access to unlimited resources) but also in terms of mental change in perception of any kinds of boundaries and re-establishing the meaning of frontiers.

The re-establishing of frontiers is likely to be a catalyst to another phenomenon of the globalization era – increased social freedoms (or diminishing of virtual borders of external control). Many people around the globe believe, together with Grzegorz Kolodko (2003: 237) that "[i]solationism and xenophobia, nationalism and protectionism, parochialism and provincialism are out of fashion today". This means that the *ideology* of having and accepting more freedom in religious views, cultural or

ethnical traditions, ways of self-expression, music and clothing preferences, sexual orientation is a norm of today's world (while the actual fact of this acceptance is not necessarily a fact of reality).

All things considered, headlines about a shrinking borderless world are not as exaggerated as we could assume. Free trade, freedom of travelling and communication diminish real borders. At the same time, the freedom to erase other imaginary borders (in communication, self-expression and identification) comes from the assumption that the real frontiers proved to be less stable and eternal than we all used to think.

2.3 Globalization as Space of Flows

Having discussed the way that dimensions of time and space are transformed today because of people, goods and information mobility, we still have a question left: "What dimensions are we living in if 'time' and 'space' do not exist any more?" The problem is not very categorical and fatal. Time and space did not disappear: we still have to be punctual to keep our jobs, and the home we live in does have an actual geographical address. It is the logic and meaning of time and space that has change. To replace them globalization offers another metaphor – *space of flows*.

The classic and highly influential theory of cultural flows was presented by Arjun Appadurai (1999/1990), who claims that the complexity of the current global situation can be understood through analysis of relationship of five dimensions of global cultural flows which constitute multiple imagined worlds people of today are living in:

1. *Ethnoscapes*: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers and other moving groups of people, those, in other words, who constantly change their place of being and constitute shifting world;
2. *Mediascapes*: distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information in form of newspapers, magazines, television broadcasts etc.;

3. *Technoscapes*: high and low, mechanical and information technology that moves at high speed across the world;
4. *Financescapes*: global capital rapidly circulating in the world markets;
5. *Ideoscapes*: political images or ideologies, worldviews. (Appadurai 1999: 221-224.)

The core of his model of flows as an explanation of global order is expressed in this way: "global flows occur […] in and through the growing disjunctures between ethnoscapes, technoscapes, financescapes, mediascapes and ideoscapes" resulting in deterritorialization and heterogenization (ibid. 225).

Manuel Castells (1996: 416) offers another approach to this mobile metaphor of globalization. Analysing the change of the traditional society into the network, he believes that

> a new spatial form characteristic of social practices that dominate and shape the network society is the space of flows, [which are] purposeful, repetitive, programmable sequence of exchange and interaction between physically disjointed positions held by social actors in the economic, political, and symbolic structures of society.

His space of flows can be described as a combination of three layers of material supports: the circuit of electronic impulses (microelectronic, telecommunications, computer processing, broadcasting systems, and high-speed transportation: all technology-based); network's nodes and hubs (directional nodes, production sites and communication hubs; the backbone of the network), and spatial organization of the dominant, managerial elites. (ibid. 410-418.)

"Space of flows" substitutes the traditional notion of space and further dissolves time by disordering the sequence of events and making them simultaneous (ibid. 467). As a result, "timeless time" emerges, totally confusing time and space roles: flows induce timeless time, places are time-bound (ibid. 465).

To sum up, explaining globalization through notions of flows and mobility provides an important concept of non-traditional time and space. Living in the world where the fundamental dimensions simply do not exist any more because of the transformations

brought by globalization can be terrifying. So confusing but yet positive view on the world as space of flows actually produces more possibilities for further analyses and conceptualising.

2.4 Globalization as Unification

A single worldwide market space was initially a primary goal of globalization. In these terms the *unification* was already incorporated in the program of globalization. No wonder it took place not only in the economic and political worlds, but also invaded cultural space.

Cultural globalization is most popularly understood in connection with the idea of dominance of mass consumption culture. On the one hand it is expressed by the use of the same products, like Nokia cell phones, Adidas tennis shoes, Coca-Cola etc. globally. On the other, it is even more important that these consumption practices have the same meaning of life-style and social function of self-expression and source of identity (Waters 1995: 140) all over the globe.

The unification power of globalization on the cultural plane results in 'the culture industry' – a phenomenon described by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1999/1944). Their arguments are based on the opposition of *culture* (traditional high forms of art) and the *cultural industry* (standardized products of the economy for mass entertainment or distraction functions). Uniformity is notably a major characteristic of all forms of contemporary culture industry: "Films, radio and magazines make up a system which is uniform as a whole and in every part", the "culture [industry] now impresses the same stamp on everything", "the whole world is made to pass through the filter of the culture industry" (Adorno & Horkheimer 1999: 32, 35). The explanation for such a "system of non-culture and stylized barbarity" (ibid. 36) is simply the major trend of unification: culture, previously expressed in high, elite art, followed the global direction towards a consumption society and market economy.

Cultural unification refers to two different phenomena: westernization (or internationalisation) and integration (or globalization itself). The former stands for the process of modern homogenisation and universalization of cultures following a sample of the Western ideal, while the latter implies that unification takes a weaker form and integrates and deepens mutual relationships, while some distinctions and differences of particular groups or cultures remain. They are easily confused and therefore are of an interest for social science. As During (1999: 24) writes:

> […] "is globalization the same as Westernization?" – to which it is generally agreed that the answer is "no, not in any simple way" – less because the technologies and capital driving globalization are not wholly owned in the West than because globalization brings benefits and power as well as costs to more localities around the world.

But are these processes really so much different from each other? Let me analyse briefly two reports on the 1997 Conference on *Globalisation and Indigenous Culture* organised by the Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University. The first writes about globalization as internationalization, the second – integration. Both are related to aspects of culture, first – to religion, second – to culture of minorities.

Inoue Nobutaka (1997) dedicates his report to the problem of religion as a product of the unification forces of globalization. Inoue stresses that advanced information technologies change the intellectual conditions of the human relationship to religion. More specifically, the very concept of religion, formerly situated within the context of specific societies and cultures, becomes less attached to the "producer" (religious texts, ideology, church etc.) but increasingly more to the "user", following the pattern of popular culture.

Another aspect of religion in globalization is that the borderline between religious and secular is becoming much fuzzier. Thus, for instance, traditions of religious celebration of the Japanese New Year, or the other Buddhist seasonal holidays of *setsubun* or *higan* is weakening, while Christmas, St. Valentine's Day and Halloween are becoming more popular (and it is not unique to Japan only, but increasingly over the whole world). They are not being considered as religious celebrations, but nevertheless become an

example of special events for the masses which in a way takes the place of religious holidays. (Inoue 1997; Sasao 1997.)

Feng-Fu Tsao (1997) in his turn states two basic arguments. The first is concerned with the destructive character of globalization with respect to minorities. As the global expansion of dominant culture proceeds, the threat of minority culture and language erosion increases. The second argument is basically an active plan against the first. Tsao believes that "it is impossible to expect ethnic languages and cultures to be saved through the efforts of nations and educational systems alone". Instead, the ethnic groups themselves should unite together for the purpose of preserving their common culture and opposing "merciless globalization". Tsao admits that this process is already happening all over the world. The most important conclusion of the emotional appeal of Feng-fu Tsao is that globalization is viewed by him as "a process that exposes the need for mutual recognition of diversity and uniqueness in cultures and values" and "it would seem more appropriate to understand globalization as representing a process of the integration - rather than homogenization - of cultures". (Tsao 1997; Sasao 1997.)

Although in these reports globalization is approached from different perspectives, in fact they describe the same metaphor: globalization as unification. Integration simply means that unification goes on double (or multi) standards, mixing and approximating them, while 'pure' unification has only one example to follow. Contemporary globalization follows both trends: there is undoubtedly a role model of the dominant USA and the West, while there are also multiple cultures that bring more diversity in the single melting pot of global unification.

The world united by globalization was analysed by Manuel Castells as a single organism to find out global similarities. He named his findings 'the Spirit of Informationalism' (Castells 1996: 195), as an echo to Max Weber's classic *Spirit of Capitalism* (1904). So Informationalism is globally characterized by: b*usiness networks* under different forms, in different contexts, and from different cultural expressions; *technological tools* as new communication networks, adaptive, self-evolving software, mobile communication devices; *global competition* forcing constant redefinitions of product processes, markets and economic inputs; *the state* as agent of coordinating

innovations towards new historical course in business practices; *the emergence and consolidation of the network enterprise*; and finally *multifaceted, virtual culture* as ethical foundation of common culture code, a patchwork of experiences and interests rather than a charter of rights and obligations. (Castells 1996: 195-200.)

All-in-all, unification might be one of the strongest metaphors of cultural globalization. However the process of unification is organised - whether there is one or many models and components in the creation of a globalised world - the process in any case follows the global unification trend of creating consumption and market culture.

2.5 Globalization as Paradox: Globalization or Glocalisation?

The paradoxical nature of globalization can be seen from different perspectives. For example, business people believe that its main paradox is the disjuncture between globalization of the market and globalization of industries that have to go together. While the former states that all the customers around the world have to have similar needs for similar products at a similar price, the latter is actually using the competitive advantages of particular industries in different places (e.g. lower production, material and labour costs). One promotes equality, the other – inequality, resulting in paradox.

From the sociocultural perspective the paradox of globalization can be expressed in one single notion – *glocalisation* (Robertson 1995). The term was coined from the combination of globalization and localization and denotes the combination of two opposite processes taking place at the same time. While the world is becoming a global village, many societies paradoxically tend to stress their local differences instead of diminishing them. “Dilution of local cultures” goes at the same time with “deepening of particularity” (Nijman 1999: 150).

According to Brian Longhurst (2004: 3), the aspirations of early globalization theory, which basically introduced the new entity of global awareness, free communication flows and open social relations, were shattered as national and cultural conflicts increased (starting from the 1990s). Despite the hopes that the new global order would

eliminate differences, or at least tensions about those differences, the conflicts between religious blocs and between national and ethnic groups intensified. This reveals that divisions around the globe only become entrenched, and most likely under the direct influence of globalization itself: "The contradictory movement of globalization and the fragmentation of culture simultaneously involves the revitalization and worldwide extension of the local" (Martín-Barbero 2002:634).

Roland Robertson (1992; 1995) is one of the first theorists of glocalisation. Starting from the early 1990s he suggests that comprehension of globalization, its process and outcomes, is possible only through the relations between the universal and the particular. He believes that the worldwide circumstances (the spatial and temporal compression of the world in particular) increasingly constrain multitudes of groups and individuals to approach each other in a classic face-to-face communication situation. This is what gives rise to *the issue* of universalization and also accentuates *the issue* of particularization [original italics] (Robertson 1992: 101).

Out of two large analytical approaches to this globalization paradox, *relativism* ("refusal to make any general, "universalizing" sense of the problems posed by sharp discontinuities between different forms of collective and individual life"), and *worldism,* (a desire "to grasp the world as a whole analytically; to such an extent that virtually everything of sociocultural or political interest which occurs around the globe […] can be explained, or at least interpreted in reference to, the dynamics of the entire "world-system""), Robertson (1992: 99-100) chooses harmony: direct attention both to particularity and difference and to universality and homogeneity.

Making a synthesis of complementary interrelation ("globewide nexus") of universalism and particularism Robertson concludes: "Globalization [is] a form of institutionalization of the two-fold process involving the universalization of particularism and the particularization of universalism" (Robertson 1992: 102).

Robertson's ideas have several similarities with Arjun Appadurai's position on the central problem of today's global interactions: tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization

> Thus the central feature of global culture today is the politics of the mutual effect of sameness and difference […] The critical point is that both sides of the coin of global cultural processes today are products of the infinitely varied mutual contest of sameness and difference on a stage characterized be racial disjunctures between different sorts of global flows and the uncertain landscapes created in and through these disjunctures (Appadurai 1999: 229-230).

The dialectics of the local and the global in glocalisation gets similar treatment in the works by Ulrich Beck (2002) ("Globalisation is a non-linear, dialectic process in which the global and the local do not exist as cultural polarities but as combined and mutually implicating principles"), Michael Smith (2001) ("the global and local are not separate containers but mutually constitutive social processes"), John Urry (2002) ("the global and local are inextricably and irreversibly bound together through a dynamic relationship") and others (cited in Longhurst 2004: 3). In short, they all stress the strong mutual connections between the universalization and particularisation forces of globalization and need to understand the global through the local and vice versa.

The universalization/particularisation paradox of globalization is not a purely theoretical and analytical issue. It is a cultural as well as a political question. Pure universalism leads to blind homogenization. Pure particularism will progressively divide societies, offering no exit from their political and cultural conflicts. However, the situation is not desperate, as both processes take place simultaneously. Moreover, if either of the questions arises: "Is globalization reducing cultural differences?" or "Does globalization intensify fragmentation of societies?" – the answer to both will be "no, not in the simple way."

The dialectics of the global and the local in relation to the two-fold processes of globalization will be discussed further, in chapter four, where the idea of identity (introduced and analysed in details in chapter three) will be incorporated into the analysis of glocalisation.

3. IDENTITY AND SELF-CONSTRUCTION

The present chapter's focus is the "multifaceted construct" of identity (Fitzgerald 1993: 3). The notion is widely used today in a variety of meanings. It is a subject of interest for a wide range of disciplines from the classic sciences of philosophy, psychology and sociology to newly established one, such as cultural studies. The dictionaries traditionally define identity as a notion of close similarity or affinity as it is used in mathematics (it originates to the Latin roots of the word *identitas*/*idem* meaning "same"). Contemporary dictionaries (for example freely available and popular online Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary or Compact Oxford English Dictionary) tend to define the notion in a modern manner as related to the person's understanding of himself/herself and what makes him/her different from others. (Cambridge Online Dictionaries 2008; AskOxford 2008.) It does not only prove that the meaning of the word has changed over time, but also declares the winning popularity of the new understanding over the traditional one.

Identity is indeed a buzzword today: its broad semantics and frequency is being intensified as it converges with other multiple notions of similar nature and meaning. The examples of these words are "self", "ego", "personality", "self-esteem", "individuality", "individuation", "differentiation", "self-actualization", "ego-strength" etc. (Seelye & Wasilewski 1996: 104). In any case the phenomenon of main interest of this chapter can be described as "one's mental representation of oneself" (Kihlstrom & Klein 1997: 5), which at the same time is an "expression of what gives meaning and value to the life of the individual" (Martín-Barbero 2002: 622). Identity will be viewed and analysed from a socio-psychological perspective, with the main focus on its definition, its peculiarities and ways of constructing identities.

3.1 Identity and/or Identities

The topic of this chapter is not singular but plural. Identity is referred to by multiple names and here all of them are used merely as synonyms, or, to be more precise, as

components of the umbrella term of identity. Thomas K. Fitzgerald (1993: 34) believes that "The ego […] is, in reality, a "grammatical illusion." There is no *one self*, only a cluster of *many selves*" [original italics]. Similarly, Johan Fornäs (1995: 222) says that "identities are no simple, singular entities, but always split, fragmented and polydimensional." For this reason the introduction into identity focuses mainly on its peculiarities and distinctive features as a multiple construct.

The most important problem of identity is based on the question of whether it is a purely personal or a social attribute. For example, it is known that Japanese in general believe that the true self is never revealed in society, and therefore to experience your own personality it is necessary to stay alone with oneself, in nature (Seelye & Wasilewski 1996: 109). Others, for example Samoans, do not even have a word for personality and individual character, only words to describe one's position in society (Fitzgerald 1993: 45). The scientific approach shares the same difficulty of trying to place identity within the personality/society dichotomy. As a result, the majority of understandings of identity or its models are concerned with the relations of the individual and others.

The traditional interpretation of identity in social sciences was based on notions of *roles* or *role-sets* as opposed to the *true self*. "Roles (for example, to be a worker, a mother, a socialist militant, a union member, a basketball player, a churchgoer, and a smoker, at the same time) are defined by norms structured by the institutions and organizations of the society" (Castells 1997: 6). Roles organize the functions of individuals as social actors. Nevertheless they are not considered to construct the meaning, "symbolic identification by a social actor of the purpose of her/his action" (ibid. 7). Therefore roles are perceived quite differently from identities: the latter are considered to be authentic, former – socially determined and therefore "artificial". In spite of the simplicity of the division between the true core self and forced role-acting, identity, one's own mental perception, may sometimes be based on the role rather than personality, and, unlike in the theater, role is always dependant on the hidden core personality, and personality is affected by what roles one play. In this way, roles do not adequately describe the social aspects of personality, and other identity interpretations are needed. One possible

alternative is Henri Tajfel's *social identity*: "That part of an individual's self concept which derives from his (or her) knowledge of his (or her) membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (cited in Fail et al. 2004: 325-326).

There are several approaches to social identity. Ulrich Neisser (1997: 19-27), for example, distinguishes between three types of selves: *conceptual*, *ecological*, and *interpersonal*. The conceptual self is understood as one's "look inward" on private experience and mental self-concepts. The other two are the "look outward" on environment, relations with objects of reality ("physical environment") or other people ("social environment") respectively. The important fact is that "these modes are not exclusive" which means that one's perception is always dependant on all three selves.

As there is no actual dividing line between personal and social identities, they are sometimes combined in one single perceptional model. Thomas K. Fitzgerald (1993: 50) believes that identity is more or less a simple mathematical sum of what he calls "*self*" and "*person*": "identity arises from attempts at reconciling these two modes of becoming: the social (person) and the existential (self)". He presents his understanding of identity as shown on figure 1 below.

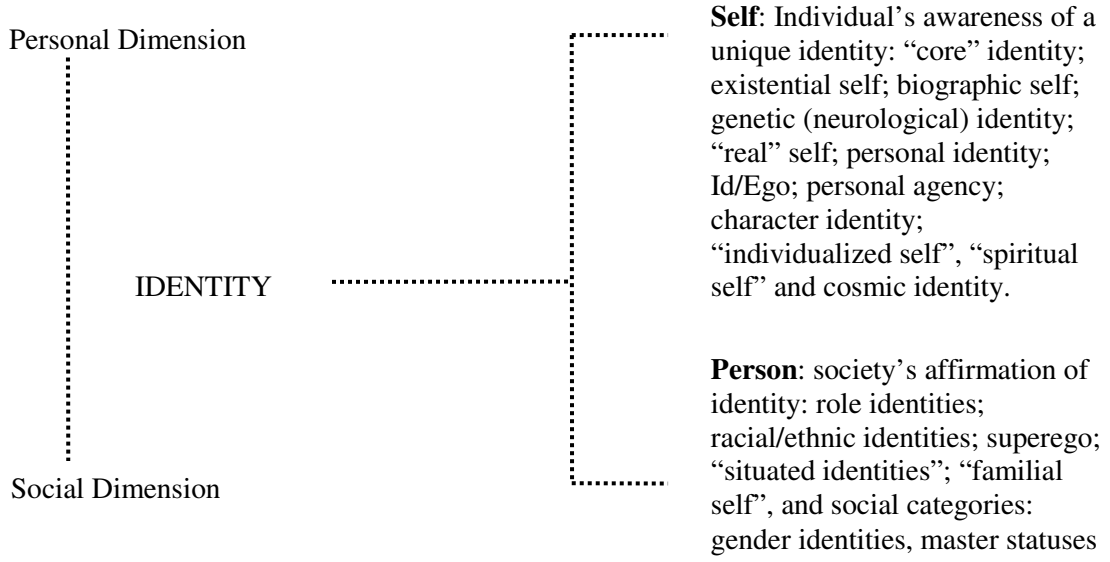

Figure 1. Identity as Person-Self Dialectics (Fitzgerald 1993: 56)

This categorization presents a very clear picture of identity as an umbrella term comprising both personal and social dimensions. At the same time it is too simplified and straightforward to explain the nature of relationships between its components.

Another model, summarized and described by Susan Andersen, Inga Reznik and Serena Chen (1997: 239-241), provides a different interpretation of the relations of personal and social identities. The model is presented graphically in figure 2:

> […] the self may comprise the personal self as well as the numerous social identities, with the personal self depicted at the center of various concentric circles, expanding outward into identities that are increasingly public. In this way, social identities define the self, even though they clearly extend beyond the individualized self, parts of which may remain entirely distinct from the interpersonal self. (Andersen et al. 1997: 239.)

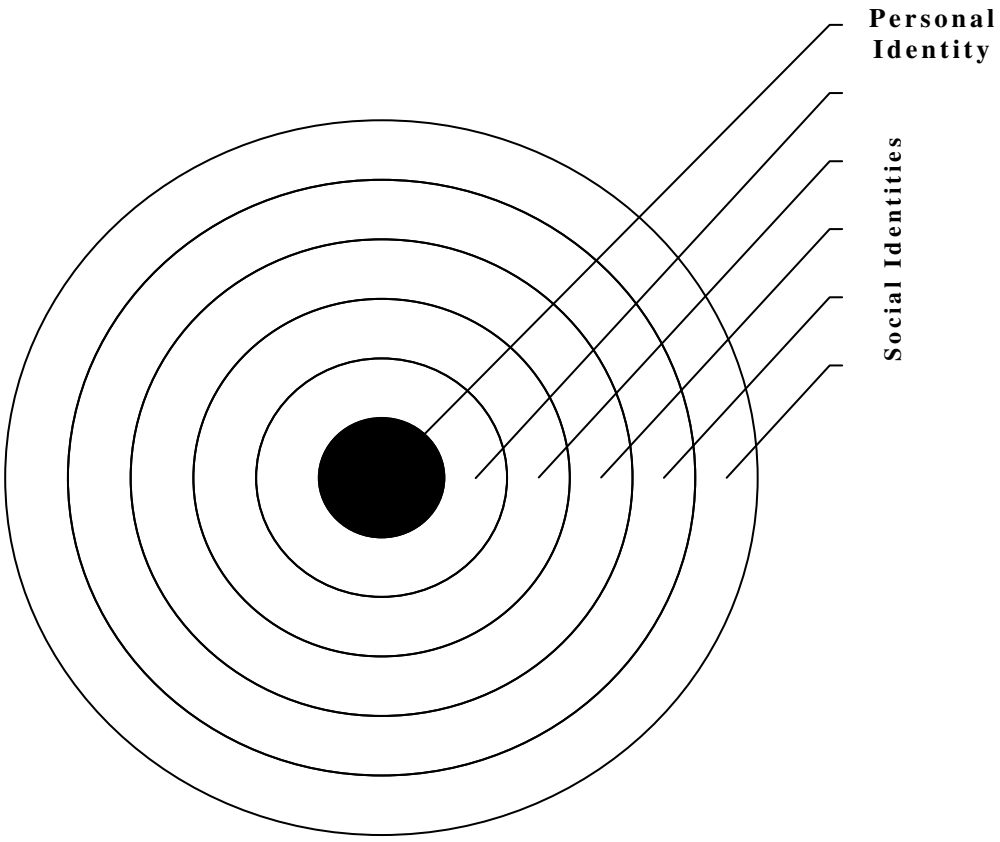

Figure 2. Personal and Social Identities:
Socio-psychological Model of the Self (Andersen et al. 1997: 239).

In short, this interconnectedness brings us to the conclusion that identity is not only a multiple but also "a relational construct" (Martín-Barbero 2002: 627). It is built of a dialogue between an individual and others or so-called significant others or alterity – whichever name is given to the communication (in its most abstract sense) and interaction counterpart in society. In the words of Elli Schachter (2005: 378), "identity's basic structure and its developmental course are contingent on the ongoing interaction between the individual and his or her social context". The dialogical or social nature of identity is not limited to the individual's identity. It can also be applied to any collective social actor from small distinctive interest groups to ethnicities and nations.

> Identity […] is not what is attributed to someone by mere virtue of group membership […] but, rather, it is the expression of what gives meaning and value to the life of individual. It is upon the expressive turn taken by an individual or collective subject that identity depends, drawing life from recognition of others, being constructed through processes of dialogue and exchange, for it is here that individuals and groups feel despised or acknowledged by others. Modern identities - as opposed to those that were ascribed by virtue of a pre-existing structure, such as the nobility or the plebs - are constructed through negotiations for recognition by the others. (Martín-Barbero 2002: 627)

All in all, identity cannot be defined in only one possible way. On the one hand, it is a set of interrelated multiple aspects of individual's perception and actualization of him/herself. It has many different names with their own slight shades of meaning, which, however, make sense only when connected to each other. On the other hand, identity's multiple constructs account for its 'relational' or dialogical or social nature, which is probably the most comprehensive way of understanding the phenomenon of identity.

Finally it is necessary to draw a conclusion about the terminology of identity which will be used in the following parts of this thesis. To reduce confusion from now on, the term *identity* is used as umbrella term covering all types of one's mental understanding and representation of oneself. *Personal identity* is referred strictly to the individual's perception of him/herself. *Social identity* is related to an individual as well and denotes that part of personal identity which comes from knowledge and feeling of being included in a certain social group. *Collective identity* describes the feeling of a group

identity shared by all its members and therefore relates not to a particular individual, but to larger collective bodies. *Identity* and *self* are treated merely as synonyms.

3.2 Performing Identity: Self-Construction, Negative Identity and Motivation for Self-Esteem

The idea of identity as a multiple construct discussed earlier sets another question of how identity is actually built. Is it stable or flexible, permanent or temporary, consistent or contextual? The present paper adopts a standpoint of social psychology that identity consists of "flexible, varying behaviors, context-specific selves" (Kihlstrom & Klein 1997: 6-7). At the same time, identity is understood as being continuously constructed, "emerging" (Bucholtz & Hall 2005: 587) or being metaphorically "performed" in the course of interaction and communication. Or, in the words of Craig Calhoun (cited in Castells 1997: 6) identity as self-knowledge is "always a construction no matter how much it feels like discovery".

The multiple nature of identity suggests that every individual has not just one but many identities. It is natural that one might act differently in various contexts and think, feel and behave according to one or the other concept of self. Or as Johan Fornäs (1995: 233) puts it:

> Each subject elaborates and occupies several different but interlocking identities which are often split and contradictory. […] Identities express subject-positions in relation to the different 'other', created by process of identification and discrimination. […] Neither individuals, nor collectives are homogeneous units. They are split in various aspects of identity, of which some are unconscious. Identities are not only plural, split and fragmented, but also fluid and dynamic, in spite of the constancy that defines them.

"Social identity complexity" (Rocass & Brewer 2002: 88), the subjective representation of multiple social identities, is therefore a natural way of identity construction. The variety and number of social identities, their relations can be at the same time a source of great personal confusion and analytical complexity. Thus, figure 3 presents example of four schematic structures of interrelations between just two social identities:

a) *Intersection*: maintenance of one single social identity which is based on intersection of multiple group identities;

b) *Dominance*: adoption of one primary group identification to which all other group identities are subordinated;

c) *Compartmentalization*: expression of multiple important group identities through a process of differentiation and isolation;

d) *Merger*: recognition of multiple social identities and simultaneous use of them in their most inclusive form. (Rocass & Brewer 2002: 90-91.)

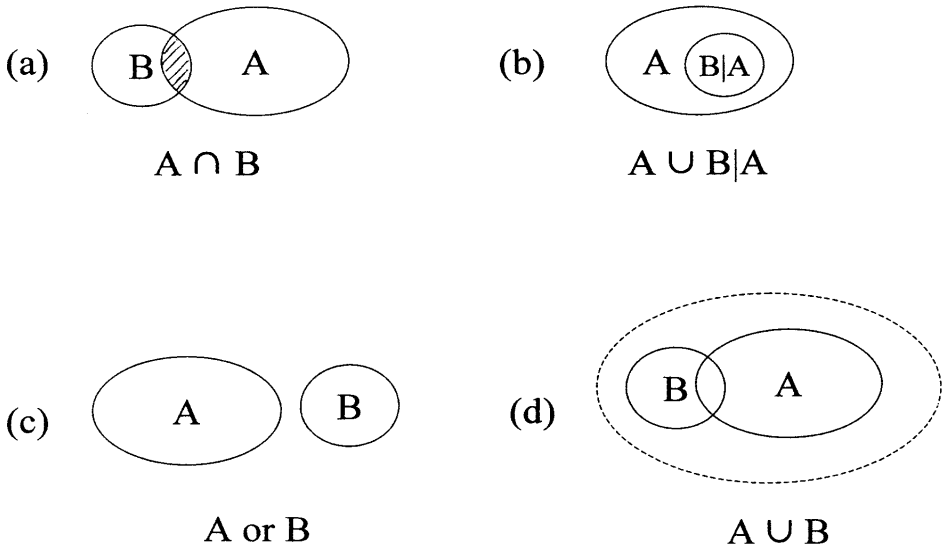

Figure 3. Alternative structures of multiple social identities (Rocass & Brewer 2002: 90).

These models of identity representation are merely different ways of resolving inconsistency between a variety of person's attitudes, beliefs and self-perceptions. Individuals may adopt different modes of identity representation at different times, either during different periods of life or under different conditions or mental or emotional states. A choice of this or that mode can be associated with forms of identity management, and it is not in any way limited only to the described modes of identity representations.

Another interesting aspect of identity construction is concerned with the reason for the choice of the dominant social identity or identities at particular moments and situations of interaction. It is objectively a rhetoric question with no right or wrong answer to it. However, I would like to present a hypothesis that seems to be the most adequate and plausible as well as the most suitable for the framework of this thesis. It is a "negative identity" hypothesis. *Negative identity* denotes an identity constructed as a distinctive opposition to the alterity, otherness, or idea of a stranger.

One of the supporters of negative identity, Julia Kristeva (1991: 41-42, 154) believes that "this position as a *different being* might appear to be the goal of human autonomy", but only if "one acknowledges that such a dignity includes strangeness". In her book *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991) she writes about foreigners among and within us. Concerned with semiotics, linguistics and psychoanalysis, Kristeva not only gives a historical insight into the question of foreignness and strangeness, but draws an ambivalent psychological portrait of quite an abstract Foreigner. Ultimately, he is a distorted person who is happy to be noticed by his distinctiveness but indifferent to this happiness himself. He is welcomed hospitably to be a part of a new whole but is excluded from it by inclusion itself. He is a polyglot condemned to live in silence of the adopted languages. He is completely free, belonging nowhere, and permanently settled (not to say trapped) within himself. In other words, the foreigner is the one who chooses to identify him/herself as a negative, an opposition to the others, which leads to Kristeva's thesis: "the foreigner lives within us: he is the hidden face of our identity" (ibid. 1).

Social psychology shares the same approach to negative identity. McGuire's distinctiveness theory (Walsh & Banaji 1997: 203-204), for example, states that "the features of the self that will be most salient in the self-concept are those that distinguish the self from others". So in a given social context a person tends to identify him/herself with the features that make him/her more salient and special in the particular group or setting. For that reason peculiarity of identity is formed as a denial and an opposition of perceived traits of the other.

Robert and Beverly Cairns (cited in Fitzgerald 1993: 31) believe that "ideas of the self do not need to be true to be functional". In this sense identities can be thought of as "positive illusions" build upon four main "adaptive services" which are valid both for individual and society: 1) promotion of personal integration and well-being; 2) the enhancement of the communication with other people, 3) future goal-planning, and 4) the facilitation and adaptation to the physical world (Fitzgerald 1993: 31).

For that reason, the process of self-identification (or re-identification) can be understood as a means to gain personal comfort and appreciation by others. This idea by Fitzgerald is not unique and most likely derives from an influential and popular social psychology theory known as social identity theory. It was worked out by Henri Tajfel and John Turner as a study of inter-group discrimination. The main hypothesis of social identity theory is widely known as "self-esteem hypothesis": individuals are motivated to achieve, maintain, or enhance the positive distinctiveness of their social identity. Individuals derive meaningful information about the self from the groups to which they belong and, for that reason, favourable evaluations of one's in-group result in a positive self-view, every person's natural desire. (Rubin & Hewstone 1998: 40-42; Walsh & Banaji 1997: 196-197.)

In terms of social identity theory it is easy to clarify the reasons for one of the key processes of constructing identity known as "mimicry" or "performing identity" (Lahiri 2003: 408-409). It is a strategy to gain inclusion in the desired community and raise of personal self-esteem. It can be done using the stereotypes (both about 'self' and 'other') concerning positive-connotation notions such as good, success and well-being.

Although "performing identity" may be sometimes used in a perverse sense, for example as a means of transgression which was widely used by colonial migrants in the first half of the 20th century in Britain (Lahiri 2003: 408-423), it might be as well considered as a natural process of identity-building aimed at enhancement of feelings of self-respect, confidence and dignity, which are so important for every individual. Additionally, performing identity is a very powerful metaphor. It provides a basis to distinguish a multiplicity of identities from a schizophrenic split of identities. It also

harmonises the variety of identities within an individual. And finally it provides an individual with a script of identity construction in situations when it is needed:

> When existing roles do not fit or suit us, when the role pinches our "core self", when we have to put the make-up on too thickly, what can we do? We can change or alter a role though shrinking or expanding the role, adding to or subtracting from the expectations associated with the role. We can refuse a role, or we can work to eliminate certain roles in a given society [and] create new roles (Seelye & Wasilewski 1996: 116).

To sum up, identity is not only a complex multiple, multifaceted phenomenon, but also a flexible and constantly reinvented construct. It is very important that identity is negative in the sense that it is constructed as an opposition to mental representation of the other, alterity. One of the main drives of continuous identity construction is, on the one hand, group-inclusion and, as a result, increase of self-esteem, which also means the comfort and well-being of an individual. As Feldman (1997: 295) says, "Indeed, it could be said that "the self" is made chiefly so that we will have the entry ticket into a certain kind of discourse and connection with others". That is one of the reasons why identity is crucial for today's issues of social and cultural studies in general, and understanding of globalization/particularisation trends in contemporary settings in particular.

Problems of identity were introduced in this chapter from the socio-psychological perspective. However, individual identities perspective provides necessary tools for analysing collective identities as well. According to the reduction principle in science social phenomena should be approached from perspective of both society and an individual, a component of society. In this way different and more complicated phenomena of collective identities can still be studied following the main components and principles (e.g. plurality, construction, dynamism, negativism, motivation for self-esteem etc.) of individual social identities.

4. DIALECTICS OF THE GLOBAL AND THE LOCAL IN CONTEMPORARY IDENTITIES

Globalization paradoxically results in the simultaneous universalization and particularization of the world. Being referred to as glocalisation, this paradox is impossible to explain unless we employ the notion of identity in the discussion. Globalization, as a process characterizing the whole contemporary world, was initially ascribed solely to the market economy, from where it has sprung to the political, cultural and social arenas. Nowadays it is globalization of society, its implicit rules and logic that drives further globalization processes. Naturally it is social and cultural planes that are crucial for understanding glocalisation. This chapter's focus is basically an explanation of the glocalisation paradox through the dialectics of the global and the local in the construction of contemporary collective identities.

The opposition of the global against the local does not express any evaluations. These terms are not used in this work to describe the relation of superior to inferior or general to particular. The opposition is used simply to create the common paradigm for various aspects of contemporary phenomena concerned with globalization and identity. In this way, "theorizing of 'local' and 'global' can be summarized as network and relational conceptions to suggest the need for an account of the local which is not contrasted with the global, but which situates the local against other locals in an environment where comparisons and references are multiple and complex" (Longhurst 2004: 7.)

4.1 Identity Crisis to Identity Boom

The overwhelming interest in identity (and specifically social and collective identity) in the social sciences and real-life experiences accounts not only for the importance of this phenomenon, but its problematic state as well. It is natural that people turn to certain things when they become a big problem issue like it happened with, for example, racism, global warming, or terrorism. I believe identity is another example. Social identity has become so widely discussed not because of the pure theoretical interest in

the matter, but rather to search for an analytic resolution of the contemporary *identity crisis*.

The identity crisis discussed here belongs to the social and cultural realm of life. It may be considered as one of the effects of globalization. As mentioned before, globalization is a complex and multi-sided phenomenon which brings considerable changes to the very notions of space, time and society. A dramatic change in every aspect of social life results from new relations structured as the variation of flows rather than static processes. Anthony Giddens (1991: 2) describes it as such:

> Modern social life is characterized by profound processes of the reorganization of time and space, coupled to the expansion of disembedding mechanisms – mechanisms which praise social relations free from hold of specific locales, recombining them across wide time-space distances. The reorganization of time and space, plus the disembedding mechanisms, radicalise and globalise pre-established institutional traits of modernity; and they act to transform the content and nature of day-to-day social life.

The tangible borders of space and time that kept the structure of the world for a long time diminished. The very idea of inclusion, a basis for person's social identity, presupposes belonging to a certain body established within the borders. For example, one of the most important and deep-routed sources for defining identity – ethnicity – was traditionally believed to be an "embodying genealogy of blood, property and frontiers" and therefore needed to be placed within a "clearly demarcated and spatially bounded cultural world" (Morley 2001: 428). Since old and usual borders fade away (or even "flow" away), a sense of identity has nothing to hold on to. "Totally isolated (as a result of the information society mode of communication and values of sovereignty and self-sufficiency), the self seems irretrievably lost to itself" (Castells 1996: 23-24). Naturally it results in the identity crisis – identities that are blurred, that are becoming an abstraction.

Social psychology sees another reason for the massive identity crisis. It is connected with the multiplicity of identities which was described in the previous chapter. Although having plural identities is psychologically normal, contemporary social psychology argues that postmodern social and economic conditions contribute to the fundamentally

different and new fragmentation of identity and multiplicity of selves. As a result of substantially prolonged adolescence combined with development and re-invention of identity in adolescence a stable identity construction becomes more problematic. Such changes are believed to increase skepticism toward human morality, the validity of reality and face-to-face communication. (Schachter 2005: 380.)

In other words, a fundamental psychic problem in circumstances of identity crisis is "personal meaninglessness – the feeling that life has nothing worthwhile to offer" resulting from "existential isolation", which is "not so much a separation of individuals from others as separation from the moral resources necessary to live a full and satisfying existence" (Giddens 1991: 9).

An identity crisis, as mentioned before, is not limited to personal identity issues. The trend is general and all-embracing. The crisis of social identities leads to a crisis of collective identities as well – and this crisis is crucial for the social and political institutions on all the levels: "social and cultural exclusion", the "majority's ever-decreasing standards of living", the "breaking of the social contract between work, capital and the state", and "destruction of the solidarity that once made social security possible" (Martín-Barbero 2002: 622).

All in all, an identity crisis is a fact of contemporary reality. Its main characteristics are a blurring of traditional identity boundaries, a sense of personal meaninglessness and isolation resulting in critical changes in collective identities as well. One of the outcomes of an identity crisis is surprisingly its own resolution. Detachment and loss of meaning, absence of tangible borders and the appearance of new virtual ones, and the shift in information modes of communication are a result of massive *individualisation* of society. The individualisation in question does not stand for process of acquiring and/or intensification of individualism or narcissism. This contemporary type of individualisation refers to discovering or building within oneself radically and constructively new visions and understandings of the self. In other words, individualisation is a construction of a new self , or a *neo-identity*.

Apparently, individualisation is a form of protection against a crisis of identity. In terminology of Anthony Giddens (1991: 33-34, 3-4, 5), in the "risk society" of modernity, individuals feel "bereft and alone in a world in which she or he lacks the psychological supports and the sense of security provided by more traditional settings". For that reason self-identities search for security and find a "protective cocoon" in a feeling of trust. This trust is obtained as a part of "a reflexively organised endeavour" of a "continuously revised […] reflective project of the self" – in short, construction of a self-identity. Similarly, Thomas Fitzgerald (1993:100) refers to identity reinvention as "type of psychic shelter in times of stress and rapid change," or a "face saving" device".

The massive scale of creating and re-creating identities to fit in the new world order does not limit itself to personal feeling of belonging: "people resist the process of individualization and social atomization, and tend to cluster in community organisations that, over time, generate a feeling of belonging, and ultimately, in many cases, a communal cultural identity" (Castells 1997: 60). Quite naturally it extents to collective identities as well – mobilization of all kinds of minority movements is proof of it. Manuel Castells (ibid. 2) puts it in this way:

> Along with the technological revolution, the transformation of capitalism, and the demise of statism, we have experienced, in the last quarter of the century, the widespread surge of powerful expressions of collective identity that challenge globalization and cosmopolitanism on behalf of cultural singularity and people's control over their lives and environment. […] They include proactive movements, aiming at transforming human relationships at their most fundamental level such as feminism and environmentalism.

The "powerful expression of collective identity" Castells refers to is perhaps the most important characteristic of glocalisation. It can be said that it is the very reason for the globalization paradox. It is through the expression of neo-identity that localisation and particularisation trends take place. Castells calls this phenomenon "power of identity" or just "identity", which I find quite ambiguous and confusing. I believe the term *identity boom* (as compared to modern buzzwords like information boom, or technology boom) can describe the scale of "emergence of identity fundamentalism" (Martín-Barbero 2002: 622) better.

4.2 Neo-Identities

The identity boom, or intensification of identity localization processes, as a response to identity crisis is a major characteristic of glocalisation, or putting it in the words of Manuel Castells (1997: 1) - "our world, and our lives, are being shaped by the conflicting trends of globalization and identity". For that reason it is also important to concentrate on the main features and characteristics of identities created in this identity boom.

Previously these new identities were labeled in this thesis as *neo-identities*. This new term is intended to stress that these identities are different from a traditional understanding of social identities. They are constructs and inventions to a greater extent than the traditional ones. It is believed that traditional social identities were the result of a person's socialization within a certain culture, and therefore an individual's social identities were constructed with a great deal of influence from that culture. Neo-identities, however, are constructed in fundamentally different circumstances where the person him/herself chooses or creates the culture he/she wants to belong to: "Identity, due in part to mediated communication effects, loses its place-defined quality and, in both form and function, begins to act independently of culture per se" (Fitzgerald 1993: 104).

Salman Rushdie (1991: 125) describing a "radically new type of human being" as "people who root themselves in ideas rather than places, in memories as much as in material things", refers in his essay to migrants only, but actually this definition is plausible to neo-identities of contemporary individuals at large as well. After all, in some sense we all are continuously migrating with the flows of globalization.

Neo-identities tend to be constructed from multiple sources. They are creative and flexible: "Identities today appear more a matter of fashion than the colour of your skin. They are interchangeable, chameleon-like, and mix-and-match" (Martín-Barbero 2002: 629). Neo-identities are much less dependent on culture, history and places. Although they normally accentuate all these three as sources of their specificity, in fact neo-

identities are not turned to the past. They create the present to move towards the future and intend to get profit in doing so. Citing Manuel Castells (1997: 7),

> The construction of identities uses building materials from history, from geography, from biology, from productive and reproductive institutions, from collective memory and from personal fantasies, from power apparatuses and religious revelations. But individuals, social groups and societies process all these materials, and rearrange their meaning, according to social determinations and cultural projects that are rooted in their social structure, and their space/time framework.

As a result, according to Jesus Martín-Barbero (2002: 639), "we are witnessing the forging of identities ever less rooted in the past, more precarious and yet also more flexible, capable of amalgamating, of allowing to coexist within a single subject, elements from highly diverse cultural universes".

In general, identities may employ different techniques of construction. Manuel Castells (1997: 8), for example, distinguishes between three forms and origins of identity building:

1. *Legitimizing identity*: introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination vis-à-vis social actors;
2. *Resistance identity*: generated by those actors that are in positions/conditions devaluated and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principals different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society;
3. *Project identity*: when social actors on the basis of whichever cultural materials are available to them, build a new identity that redefines their position on society and, by so doing, seek the transformation of the overall social structure. (Castells 1997: 8.)

Neo-identities tend to be a result of interplay of resistance and project identities. The former is defensive reaction against a hostile world and an identity crisis: the latter is a way to construct new meanings and only then to transform social entity. We shall look at this issue more precisely in the further sections while analysing features of neo-

identities in the examples of contemporary social issues – the rise of social movements, nationalism and identity marketing.

4.2.1 Rise of Social Movements

Social movements are increasingly numerous and versatile nowadays. The most general definition of social movement describes it as a group action of individuals and/or organizations in pursue of certain social and political changes. Manuel Castells (1997), in his study of the power of identity, presents a diverse analysis of variety of different social movements. He claims that most contemporary social movements, "under different forms reflecting their diverse social and cultural roots", are aimed at a refusal of the processes of globalization, which is conducted "on behalf of their constructed identities, in some instances claiming to represent the interests of their country, or of humankind, as well" (Castells 1997: 108).

So contemporary social movements oppose globalization. However, they should not be confused and confined to anti-globalization movements only. These movements are just a part of the diversity of present-day social movements. Anti-globalization movements strive particularly against the elites that are ruling multi-national corporations and do not exercise their power wisely. Their fight is not against any expression of globalization, but for globalization with respect to human rights. This movement, like most of the others fits in the framework created by Manuel Castells in his book *The Power of Identity* (1997).

When Manuel Castells (1997: 68-69) argues that social movements challenge globalization, he actually means that people all over the world, due to the deconstruction processes of globalization flows, "resent loss of control over their lives, over their environment, over their jobs, over their economies, over their governments, over their countries, and, ultimately, over the fate of the Earth". Naturally, the resistance process (which is aimed against a particular social or political phenomenon but can be eventually traced to globalization outcomes) comes into action, however "in unusual

formats and proceed through unexpected ways". The uniqueness of this response is nothing but Castells' "power of identity" – or boom of neo-identities in our terms.

Castells' (1997) own analysis of different types of social movements certainly confirms his hypothesis. He presents case-studies of different variations of social movements from all over the world – from the Zapatistas of Mexico, American Militia Patriots and Japan's Aum Shinrikyo to international feminist and environmental movements. For his analytical perspective all these movements are "meaningful signs of new social conflicts, and embryos of social resistance and, in some cases, social change" (Castells 1997: 70).

Thus, for example, an important subset of social movements consists of so-called *urban movements*, processes of purposive social mobilization organized in a given territory, oriented toward urban-related goals. Urban movements are focused on three main sets of goals: urban demands on living conditions and collective assumptions; the affirmation of local cultural identity; and the conquest of local political autonomy and citizen participation. (ibid. 60-64). In other words – protection of one's own invented identity, its promotion and exploitation to reach goals of social affirmation and social change.

Another important topic in social movements is concerned with religious distinctiveness. *Religious fundamentalism* seems to be no less than a symbol for the postmodern world of a new millennium. Whether Islamic or Christian fundamentalism is in question, Castells (1997: 13-27) argues that neither of the movements is based on traditions of faith. These movements respond to "disruption of traditional societies and failure of the nation-state" by creating a new meaning, new social and collective identities on the basis of tradition in order to survive and fit in the new world order.

Another important set of social movements in Castells' work deals with the *crisis of patriarchalism* (ibid. 134-242), a "founding structure of all contemporary societies". Transformation of patterns of interpersonal communication (from face-to-face to impersonal distant interactions), technology allowing better control over reproduction and childbearing and growing, women's work life and consequently a patriarchal family

structure, and many other changes have really brought familiar patriarchal life order to a crisis. As a result the individuals' consciousness about patriarchalism has undergone a great change and given birth to a variety of anti-patriarchal social movements.

The most influential of them all is *feminism*. Originally it was strongly divided into liberal and radical feminism. The former was seeking primarily to obtain equal rights for women, while the latter was seeking to actively participate in equal rights campaigns and mobilizations to defend women's rights while being also focused on consciousness raising. Presently, however, the distinctions between these two wings of feminism blur. Castells (1997: 184) believes that the core of various movements and expressions of feminism is the struggle against any kinds of oppression, which is a powerful source of forming a distinct neo-identity:

> Thus, through a variety of practices and self-identifications, women from different origins and with different goals, but sharing a common source of oppression that defined women from outside themselves, constructed a new, collective identity: this in fact what made possible the transition from women's struggles to a feminist movement.

In other words, Castells believes that the feminist movement is all about reconstruction of female identity. His position is not unique. Roland Robertson (1992: 105-108) fully supports such an approach. He claims that women, in response to globalization, took as active role as men. Moreover they took an active part in reconstructuring their own image on the basis of that of a man. Naturally, they used the oppositions in that construction. If, on the first appearance of major trends of globalization, women were understood as "natural" in comparison with males who "constructed themselves", then by now after the feminist movement they became "infected" with the same individualism of males that reproduced itself in the reconstruction of identity by women.

Feminism is one of the most powerful movements in the world. It has hundreds and thousands of different local organisations, communities and specific act programmes. Different feminists can fight for either liberal social rights or a spiritual women's way of being, female specific identities or practical matters of women's exploitation; they can come from all over the world, creating a multiplicity of feminist identities -

nevertheless, as Castells (1997: 199) puts it, “this is not a source of weakness but of strength in a society characterized by flexible networks and variable alliances in the dynamics of social conflicts and power struggles”.

Castells' (1997: 69-71) analysis represents the main topics of world social movements. It is full and representative enough, logical and plausible. Its main methodological principles are confined to three:

1. Social movements must be understood in their own terms: they are what they say they are. Their practices (and particularly their discursive practices) are their self-definition;
2. Social movements may be socially conservative, socially revolutionary, or both, or neither. Therefore from an analytical perspective, there are no “bad” and “good” social movements;
3. Alain Touraine’s classic typology is used for categorization purposes. It defines a social movement by three principles: the movement’s *identity* (self-definition of the movement of what it is, on behalf of whom it speaks), the movement’s *adversary* (movement’s principal enemy, as explicitly identified by the movement), and the movement’s vision of a social model, or a *societal goal* (the movement’s vision of the kind of social order, or social organization, it would wish to attain in the historical horizon of its collective action).

To conclude, social movements are an important symbol of the epoch characterized by globalization. A distinguishing feature of the majority (or perhaps even all) contemporary social movements is that they come into being as a resistance response against globalization, and continue their existence thanks to the neo-identities created for the actualization and affirmation of the movement. In Castells’ (1997: 108) words,

> Thus, new social movements, in their diversity, react against globalization, and against its political agents, and act upon the continuing process of informationalization by changing the cultural codes at the root of new social institutions. In this sense, they surge from the depths of historically exhausted social forms, but decisively affect, in a complex pattern, the society in the making.

4.2.2 Nationalism

Ethnicity and *nationality* are often used as synonyms, and even if distinguished – frequently confused in scientific and political as well as everyday discourses. Both of them are signifiers of collective identity and inclusion. The main difference however is that ethnicity refers to societies' common origin, history and inherited culture while nationality confines to the self-identification (mainly cultural and political) of communities. In this section both types of collective identities will be discussed with relation to the contemporary social situation. Namely, the focus of this section is on the phenomena of emergence and powerful expression of ethnicity and nationality in neo identities.

Sociology and political science has long been dealing with the process of formation of ethnicity-based political bodies on the basis of the emergence of an ideology of ethnic distinctiveness from other social or political bodies. This process acquired the name of *ethnogenesis* (Roosens 1989 in Fitzgerald 1993: 83), the development and public presentation of a self-conscious distinct ethnicity. It is characterized by an enhancement of shared ethnic history and traditions, symbols and heroes, beliefs and practices. In scientific and periodical literature ethnogenesis and related phenomena are named quite differently, including terms such as "revival of ethnicity", "resurgence of ethnic consciousness", "fake ethnicity", "defiant ethnic revivalism", "new ethnicity" etc.

Ethnogenesis can be *passive* or *active*. Passive ethnogenesis is quite a natural and long process of a gradual shift in viewing (both by members and outsiders) a certain group of people as a distinct ethnicity due to objective external and/or internal factors such as, for example, geographic isolation, persecution, social stratification or linguistic distinctiveness. Active ethnogenesis in contrast is more subjective and fast. It occurs when political powers (active groups, parties or individuals) intentionally build new meaning for ethnicity and foster ethnic identity construction. Although we have brilliant examples of historical active ethnogenesis, for example, the creation of the Finnish nation, the second type of ethnogenesis is typical for the contemporary situation. (Fitzgerald 1993: 83-91.)

However, according to Thomas Fitzgerald (1993: 83-84, 89), who bases his conclusion upon works by Roosens and Sollors, in today's information society we are dealing less with the revival of ethnicity and more with resurgence of ethnic consciousness - assertions of identity, in other words. Even though people are becoming more culturally uniform, some ethnic groups try at the same time to differentiate themselves by deliberate appeals to traditions (the "survival of cultural baggage" metaphor) and reinterpretations of history. Many aspects of what is really going on are obscured by the use of concepts such as "culture", "cultural uniqueness", and "past" and are often perceived by outsiders as "fake ethnic claims". One thing is certain - such cultural revivals are never truly a return to the past. The past is usually reconstituted to serve the group as they try to go forward. Also, creating ethnicity is related to the defense of social and economic interests, search for material profit and enhanced personal status.

Ethnic distinctiveness and ethnic identity seem to be very important in the social contemporary processes. However, ethnicity itself is a very narrow term to describe the claims of ethnic consciousness. Ethnicity denotes collective sharing of ancestry, language, and historical past. Assertions of ethnic identity and thus ethnogenesis, however, seem to be usually combined with other identities, for instance, religious, or territorial. For that reason, to use Manuel Castells' (1997: 59) words:

> […] ethnicity does not provide basis for communal heavens in the network society, because it is based on primary bonds that lose significance, when cut from their historical context, as a basis for reconstruction of meaning in a world of flows and networks, of recombination of images, and reassignment of meaning. Ethnic materials are integrated into cultural communes that are more powerful, and more broadly defined than ethnicity, such as religion or nationalism, as statements of cultural autonomy in a world of symbols. Or else, ethnicity becomes a foundation for defensive trenches, then territorialized in local communities, or even gangs, defending their turf. Between cultural communes and self-defense territorial units, ethnic roots are twisted, divided, reprocessed, mixed, differentially stigmatized or rewarded, according to a new logic of informationalization/globalization of cultures and economies that makes symbolic composites out of blurred identities.

Nationality, on the other hand, seems to be a broader concept than ethnicity. Nationality stands for belonging to a particular nation, which is a "cultural commune constructed in people's minds and collective memory by the sharing of history and political projects"

(Castells 1997: 51). Therefore nationality stands for sharing not only ethnicity, common ancestry, but also what is generally called culture – common experience, traditions, symbols, rituals, religion etc.

According to Castells (1997: 27), "The age of globalization is also the age of nationalist resurgence, expressed both in the challenge to established nation-states and in the widespread (re)construction of identity on the basis of nationality, always affirmed against the alien". So the present is a time of *nationalism* – the emergence of national identity. According to the very definition of nation, nationality should be an example of legitimizing identity. Instead, it follows the pattern of contemporary social movements and tends to be a project based on resistance identity due to the crisis of the nation-state.

Globalization has undermined the main principle of nation-states - sovereignty. First of all, nation-states are becoming increasingly dependent on international capital and production flows and so losing control over their economies and finances. Secondly, the globalization of media and electronic communication limits the political freedom of nation-states. Thirdly, the globalization of crime, especially terrorism, provides an everlasting threat for the particular nation's security. Fourthly, nation-states are getting very reliant on the advanced cutting-edge technologies, whether they are produced locally or need to be imported. In other words, nation-states are simply losing their power and autonomy. (Castells 1997: 254-266.)

Joep Leerssen (2006: 239) argues that nostalgia for the cultural differences of nation-states of the past has given rise to a form of a "new regionalism":

> Paradoxically, rustic nostalgia became a form of social criticism; and in many cases, this social criticism on a regional basis was grafted onto long-standing cultural differences and cultural movements with nineteenth-century culture-nationalistic roots, e.g. in Wales, Brittany, Catalonia, Corsica, Friesland and elsewhere. […] This trend towards regionalization profited from a general weakening of the power of the sovereign state in Europe.

On the higher level this process together with strengthening power of local communities, non-governmental structures and social movements undermine the power of nation-states even further.

In spite of nation-states' crumbling, nationalism is perhaps stronger than ever. In the political world, for example, according to Joep Leerssen (2006: 245-246), the re-emergence of ethnic nationalism resulted in the "rejuvenation of the extreme ethnonationalist right":

> The extreme right in Europe, which for decades looked like a dying-out, spent force, has managed to infect a new generation – both in Western Europe and in the former communist countries. A pull to the nationalist right has also affected the mainstream parties in various countries, and has led to a new propagation of national themes in the public sphere, such as the televised popular elections of 'the Greatest German/Englishmen/Dutchman', and wide-spread calls to re-nationalize the history curriculum taught in schools.

However nationalism is nevertheless a defensive reaction against globalization and a creative project to accommodate a new nation in the new circumstances. Manuel Castells (1997: 31) believes that "contemporary nationalism is more reactive than proactive, it tends to be more cultural than political, and thus more oriented toward the defense of an already institutionalized culture than toward the construction of defense of a state".

The emergence and rise of a new nationalism is a vital trend of globalization, one of the reasons and at the same time outcomes of glocalisation/particularisation. Nationalism is not necessarily confined to the existing nations; it can exist as ethnonationalism, bordering with ethnogenesis. In this case it would split up the existing societies in smaller sociocultural communities. Nevertheless, the main goal of nationalism is to restore and rebuild a new nation-state based not just on shared territory and history and the pursuit of sovereignty, but instead on identity and with the aim of fitting into the new world of networks and flows.

4.2.3 Identity Marketing

Many communities are claiming their own distinct identity today, and while doing so they use completely different approaches and interpretations of what they are and what their goal is. As already mentioned, neo-identities are flexible; they are less dependent

on culture, history and places, and they are also constructed from many different sources. With a boom of neo-identities, local identities are constantly multiplying. Unfortunately, the increase in number goes together with a decrease in their validity as perceived by others.

Globalization and the market economy have long set standards of market-like social behaviour. Brian Longhurst (2004: 2) calls it "new kind of consumerist post-modern aesthetics" and believes that this, trait together with "intensified forms of individualized identities", is an indication of a new contemporary type of social relations. Malcolm Waters (1995: 140) elaborates on the topic of lifestyle consumerism as a characteristic of postmodernism social order:

> Under a consumer culture, consumption becomes the main form of self-expression and the chief source of identity. It implies that both material and non-material items, including kinship, affection, art, and intellect become commodified, that is their value is assessed by the context of their exchange, rather than the context of their production or use. An advanced or postmodernized consumer culture experiences hypercommodification in which minute differences between products or minute improvements in them can determine variations in demand, and in which consumption is differentiated on the basis of the signifiers known as 'brand names'. […] The tendency is captured in such terms as 'taste', 'fashion' and 'lifestyle' that become key sources of social differentiation, displacing class and political affiliation. The consumer culture is created through the advertising and simulatory effects of the mass media. In its original form it was probably a deliberate creation but under postmodernized conditions it is 'hypersimulated', having a life of its own that is beyond the control of any particular group.

In short, there seems to be an ideology of market behaviour in everyday lives. For this reason, new distinct identities use the principle of market-like promotion to gain validity. This reaction may be labeled as *identity marketing.* It denotes, like marketing in economy and trade, the creation, communication and delivering value of identity to individuals and other communities. Under the identity marketing process, according to Martín-Barbero (2002: 626), "local identity is […] compelled to transform itself into a marketable representation of difference: it becomes subject to make-overs, which reinforce its exotism".

In some ways, to follow Castells' hypothesis, identity marketing can be understood as resistance reaction. Thus, for instance, Martín-Barbero (2002: 625-626) argues that identity crisis is not confined to the deconstruction of borders and a feeling of meaninglessness. Another important feature is the "absence of central instance of regulation and self-expression" in the complex heterogeneous societies. In the absence of common discourse it is very confusing to distinguish between communities' intentions, strategies and origins as well as between different communities. These transformations change personal identities as well. Multiplications of references through which subjects come to identify themselves, as well as the partial and precarious integration of the multiple dimensions that shape them, increase the complexity of a crisis of identity. Resistance is therefore aimed against the overall confusion, and the possibility of remaining unnoticed and/or lost in the heterogeneous flux of variety of communities. The "marketing" of one's own particularity is therefore a means of creating a project identity.

The logic of consumerism changes both collective and personal identities. It is natural that individuals' feeling of resistance and creativity produces a reaction against unfavourable situation of non-recognition and neglect. Identity marketing, a process of the promotion of identity in ways similar to brand marketing in business, then comes into action. Even when not recognized as such, the process of identity marketing is a powerful means of obtaining neo-identities in the circumstances of globalization.

4.3 Local-Global Dichotomy in Contemporary Identities

The global and the local do not present terms of geography and space. They are rather social terms. In the most general meaning the *global* (as it is understood in this thesis) is an expression of overwhelming unification and homogenization, while the *local* is an expression of particularity and distinctiveness.

Elaborations on neo-identities, their expression in social movements, nationalism and consumerism, identity crisis and identity boom as descriptions of a new social order – all of them in fact talk about the global and the local even though these words were

hardly used in the analysis. To summarize this chapter's main ideas the main theoretical points made throughout the previous chapters will be "translated" into title-concepts of this thesis – namely, into the *global* and the *local.*

In this way, the first important notion of the work, 'globalization', seemingly refers to what the global is and what role it has in the contemporary world. However it is a very narrow and one-sided view. The point of conceptualising globalization using a variety of metaphors was to prove that globalization is a "dialectical interplay of the local and global" (Giddens 1991: 5), or as Malcolm Waters (1995: 139-140) puts it, "[globalization] implies a complex interweave of homogenizing with differentiating trends." Globalization is so-called mostly because the effects of it are global - globally recognized and globally relevant. Therefore, its essence of is in the dialectics of the the global and the local, while effects are undoubtedly global.

Identity, at the same time, is certainly an expression of the local. Whichever identity is referred to, it is always a source of self-actualisation and self-affirmation, and therefore something that makes one feel as a distinct individuality. A feeling of collective identity and inclusion are never aimed at diminishing the particularity of an individual, but rather as a protective response against neglect and oblivion, non-recognition of a person's own distinctiveness.

Identity crisis and identity boom are concerned with identity, an expression of the local, but these processes are global in their scale of occurrence and influence on contemporary social processes. Neo-identities are also globally frequent. However they present an interesting interplay between the global and the local. As was previously analysed, neo-identities exist to articulate distinctiveness, and they most often draw material for articulating this distinctiveness from local sources – distinct individual history, experience, tradition, language etc. In other words they use the local as building material. On the other hand neo-identities are always a response to the global (whether it is global threat or global fashion), and techniques of expressing their distinctiveness (for example, identity marketing) are global as well.

In other words, every issue concerning the contemporary situation is an unprecedented mix and interconnection of the global and the local. “Our world, and our lives, are being shaped by the conflicting trends of globalization and identity,” declares Manuel Castells (1997: 1). Anthony Giddens (1991: 1) argues that “One of the distinctive features of modernity, in fact, is an increasing interconnection between the two ‘extremes’ of extensionality and intentionality: globalizing influences on the one hand and personal dispositions on the other.” Johan Fornäs (1995: 30) labels the paradox of contemporary reality as “differentiating universalism”. Roland Robertson (1992: 101-103) expresses the complementarity of these two as part of a “globewide nexus” of the world as a whole: “Globalization [is] a form of institutionalization of the two-fold process involving the universalization of particularism and the particularization of internationalization.”

All in all, whichever terms are chosen to discuss aspects of today’s paradoxical reality, social and cultural trends, transformation in individuals’ and communities’ behaviour and values –it can be interpreted in terms of dialectics of the local and the global.

5. NEO-IDENTITIES: LOCAL MEANINGS IN GLOBAL NETWORKS

Understanding of the phenomenon of neo-identity, which is a recent interpretation of interconnectedness of the global and the local in reconstructing contemporary identities, requires detailed analysis of particular examples of them. This chapter complements theoretical description of neo-identities with several different and non-related illustration cases.

In order to analyse how conflicting yet simultaneous powerful forces of globalization and localization shape neo-identities two cases of localities were studied. Each one of them represents a trend of intensification of identity reconstruction and representation in the course of global identity boom processes. The first case study, a subject of subchapter 5.1, investigates the phenomenon of contemporary nationalism resurgence of South Ossetians. The second, in subchapter 5.2, focuses on a socio-linguistic analysis of phenomenon of spontaneous social movement originating to creating of a language variety on the Russian-speaking Internet blogs, chats and forums.

These two case studies present phenomena of different realities: the first one, traditional locality, belongs to the political sphere, while the second, non-traditional locality, deals with linguistic self-expression of a new life-style. However, both of them are strongly related to the global tendencies in society and culture, namely to neo-identity construction reinforcement - localization, and globalization of culture, society and ideology.

5.1. Contemporary South Ossetian Nationalism: Means of Constructing a National Neo-Identity

The 8th August 2008 was long planned by Beijing and Olympic Committee to become part of the world history as one of the greatest and astonishing celebrations of Chinese-led world sports union of XXIX Olympics. Unfortunately, history rarely follows any plans and 08.08.08 will always be associated not with Beijing opening ceremony

fireworks, but with bursts of shells and shots of firearms in South Ossetia, known as unrecognized republic in Georgia.

The tragic event however attracted world attention, however ambiguous, not only to the international issues of security and politics of Russia and Georgia, but to the problems of a small Caucasian nation as well.

5.1.1 Historical Overview: Ossetians in respect to Russians and Georgians

South Ossetia is a small region with territory of 39,000 km^2 and population of approximately 70,000 on the Southern side of the Caucases with the capital in Tskhinvali (Tskhinval in Ossetian). Politically, the status of South Ossetia is difficult to define. According to its international status, South Ossetia is a region of central northern Georgia. Georgia considers the territory of the Tskhinvali region (Georgian name for South Ossetia which is divided in between six administrative units) is occupied by Russian army. South Ossetia itself declared independence from Georgia as early as November 26, 1991. Only two states have recognized South Ossetia's independence so far, namely Russia and Nicaragua. Most often however it is referred to as an "unrecognized republic", "breakaway territory of Georgia" or "de facto independent state". (Wikipedia 2009b, 2009c.)

Ethnically Ossetians are distinct from Georgians and Russians: they track their descent to the Alanian and Scythian tribes that have been living on the Caucuses for thousands of years. Official languages of South Ossetia are Ossetian and Russian, while Georgian is also widely spoken and is the only official language of the state of Georgia. Ironau, the Ossetian language, belongs to Iranian stock and is similar to Pashto and Farsi. The majority of Ossetians are Orthodox (Russian Orthodox Church while Georgians belong to the Georgian Orthodox Church) with significant minority of Sunni Muslims. (Ratliff 2006; Wikipedia 2009c). In the 18^{th} century Ossetia voluntarily joined the Russian Empire. At that moment Ossetia was divided into South (Tifflis region) and North (Terskaya region) due to the internal administrative division of the Russian Empire.

Georgia became the part of the same Empire approximately a decade later – since then South Ossetians and Georgians have been living in the same state. (Dzidzoyev 2008.)

The first Georgian-Ossetian conflict took place in 1918-1920, soon after the October Revolution in Russia. The reason was the desire of Ossetians to join the new Bolshevik state while Georgia was initially against the new government (Wikipedia 2009b). Georgia viewed it as the first attempt of Ossetians to gain independence from Georgia. (Ratliff 2006). In the view of Ossetians, as expressed by Valery D. Dzidzoyev (2008), a historian, political analyst and a lecturing professor of Ossetian State University, the conflict of 1918-1920 should better be named "the first genocide against South Ossetians" (this view is a not unanimously accepted even by the Ossetian academics):

> In 1920, based on released and verified data, Georgians burnt 130 Ossetian villages and killed 4,812 Ossetians forcing over 20,000 South Ossetians to flee as refugees, of whom 13,000 died of hunger and diseases, others fled afoot from war-torn and devastated regions into North Ossetia, i.e. Russia. These data, along with other evidence of Georgians' shocking crimes in their FIRST GENOCIDE of South Ossetians, have long been available to historians dealing with the 20th century Caucasus Nations History. (Dzidzoyev 2008.)

In 1923 Georgia became part of the Soviet Union and transformed into the Soviet Socialist Republic of Georgia. South Ossetia was granted the status of South Ossetian Autonomous Region. Another cluster of Ossetians became the North Ossetian Autonomous Region within the administrative division of Russia within the USSR. The USSR was explicitly a multi-national state and therefore there was a substantial effort of the state against any kinds of ethnical conflicts. The local national identities were overturned by the Soviet ideology of equality and human solidarity from Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

In the late 1980s the instability and impending collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in the revival of the nationalist movements in its republics. In 1989 the South Ossetian regional council asked the Georgian Supreme Council to upgrade its status to that of autonomous republic in order to be united with North Ossetia and out of concern regarding Georgian chauvinism and unequal treatment. This demand was not met. Further, in 1990 under the leadership of its first president Zviad Gamsakhurdia Georgia

proclaimed its independence and followed the politics of territorial integrity not letting its autonomous regions (namely, South Ossetia and Abkhazia) get their own independence. Although Soviet leaders formally approved of the Ossetian project of an independent North-and-South Ossetia united state, Georgia did not. In September 1990, the Ossetians declared sovereignty under the USSR and in return, in December 1990 the Georgian government abolished South Ossetia's autonomous status. The outcome was a violent conflict and a civil war, or the "second genocide" in Dzidzoyev's terminology. After the intervention of Russia and pacifying role of Shevarnadze, a Georgian president elected in 1991, unstable peace secured by Russian, Ossetian and Georgian peacekeeping battalions was brought into the region. In January 1992, a referendum was held in Tskhinvali with a clear majority of the people supporting South Ossetia's autonomy from Georgia. The referendum was never considered legitimate but since then South Ossetia has de facto independent status. (Ratliff 2006; Wikipedia 2009b; Castells 1997: 39–40; Dzidzoyev 2008.)

Tensions between Georgian and Ossetian sides increased after the 2004 election of President Mikheil Saakashvili, who pledged to restore Georgian territorial integrity by re-establishing control over South Ossetia and the other unrecognized region of Abkhazia. In July 2004, the Russian Duma passed a resolution proclaiming its support of the South Ossetians in the conflict with Georgia. On November 12, 2006 South Ossetia held its second independence referendum. Independence from Tbilisi was nearly unanimously approved. In spite of its popularity, this referendum was not recognised as legitimate by international organisations. (Wikipedia 2009c.)

Late at night on August 7 to 8, 2008 Georgian troops in another attempt of gaining control over the long-lasting breakaway region of South Ossetia started a massive air and ground attack over the capital of the region – the city of Tskhinvali. After the Russian peace troops of Tskhinvali starting fighting back supported by troops that entered the region from North Ossetia the conflict turned into the five-day war. Under brokerage of Nicholas Sarkozy, President of France, the cease-fire was declared and the Russian forces under the Medvedev-Sarkozy agreement left the territory of Georgia. On August 26, 2008 the Russian Federation officially recognized South Ossetia's

independence, shortly followed by Nicaragua on September 5, 2008. Other countries of the UN, NATO, EU etc. still consider South Ossetia one of the Georgian regions, or an unrecognized republic. There are no unanimously accepted statistics on number of casualties on either sides (Novaygazeta 2008; Human Rights Watch 2008). However, many hundreds, both military and civilians, died and got wounded, thousands lost their homes and were forced to flee from their homeland.

5.1.2 Framework and Material of the Analysis: Contemporary Nationalism and Neo-Identity

Apart from the political debates on international security and violation of humanitarian laws, the conflict of Georgia and South Ossetia gave birth to debates on intercultural tolerance and right for national/cultural recognition. The war undoubtedly resulted from political tensions over the territory, subordination and control. However, the prerequisites and underlying motives for these tensions were not invented just by the political leaders of the arguing nations. Deep cultural processes, such as intensification of patriotic feelings and revival of collective ethnic identity, undoubtedly contributed to the emergence of the conflict. A focus of my research in this chapter is particularly the process that South Ossetian society has been undergoing for quite a while prior to the war of 2008 – a process known as "nationalist resurgence" (Castells 1997: 27).

According to the hypothesis of neo-identities presented in chapter four, one of the major catalysts for contemporary nationalist resurgence is the condition of globalization. In spite of integration of political institutions and markets, universalism of world culture and a major crisis of nation states, nationalist trends are strong and because of the global scale of these trends – contagious: "The urge to express one's identity, and to have it recognized tangibly by others, is increasingly contagious and has to be recognized as an elemental force even in the shrunken, apparently homogenizing, high-tech world" (David Hooson cited in Castells 1997: 28). The case of South Ossetians' strive for recognition is a significant example of globalization of particularization and, as a result, contemporary nationalist resurgence.

Contemporary nationalism is different from that of nation-state building nationalism. It is less politically than culturally driven and the driving forces are not elites, but masses. In other words, contemporary nationalism belongs to the sociocultural sphere and can be even called “cultural nationalism” (Kosaku Yoshino cited in Castells 1997: 31). That means that main constituents of this nationalism are not economic or political elements, such as land, power and state, but cultural ones and therefore they belong to the sphere of values, beliefs and meanings. For that reason the final goal of nationalist resurgence is not necessarily a sovereign state, but rather a distinct national identity. Interestingly enough, nationalists’ collective identity initially is most frequently a form of resistance identity. It is constructed as a protective reaction against threat. In the contemporary world the biggest threats are somehow closely related to the issues of unification forces of globalization and fight against global elites. (Castells 1997: 28-31.)

Global nationalist resurgence tendency can be considered another force undermining the traditional nation-state. The popular and vital debate on territorial integrity vs. right for recognition is a result of this trend. Because of the global reach and intense of contemporary nationalism, we can see the examples of inter- and intra-national conflicts and tensions resulting from intensification of collective identity feeling. The classic examples of identity-based modern states are so far Israel, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Kosovo, territories such as Catalonia, Scotland, Brittany etc. Not all the territories seek for sovereignty and not all of those who seek for it - manage to acquire it. For that reason, apart from the UN list of official, internationally widely recognised states there is so called UNPO (Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization 2009) list which consists of countries that struggle for recognition in the international community but for various reasons do not get it. The country of the main interest of this chapter, South Ossetia, was not an official member of this organization (unlike Abkhazia, another Caucasian state similar to South Ossetia in status and history). However, South Ossetian society went through the process of nationalist resurgence for sake of getting international recognition as a distinct ethnicity, territory and state.

Before proceeding to the actual analysis of the means of expression of Ossetian identity in the course of their nationalism, I would like to sum up again the main features of contemporary nationalism. They can be summarized under three main notions:

- *Recognition*: contemporary nationalism is not necessarily aimed at creation of a separate nation-state. Its primary goal is recognition;
- *Identity and Cultural Revival*: contemporary nationalism consists of intensification of local identity and nationalist feelings among masses. As building materials for the identity the local historical and traditional cultural sources are used;
- *Globalization:* contemporary nationalism appears as a protective reaction against threat of globalization (its global unification and global elites) but at the same time it is aimed at the nation's better fit into a new globalised world order.

The analysis of Ossetian nationalism will be done according to this theoretical framework. In other words, there are three main subject areas that are approached in the analysis: issues of goal of recognition, culture and identity, and construction of neo-identities and the influence of globalization on Ossetian nationalist resurgence. These three components also show how the global (the conditions and the goal) and the local (sources, materials and meaning) intertwine together to create the elaborate phenomenon of contemporary nationalism.

In order to access these three categories, I analysed the material of the web-project "News of South and North Ossetia" at www.ossetia.ru. This information portal was launched in autumn 2004 and has been growing and becoming more and more popular ever since. The portal provides not only news, but a wide choice of different articles, interviews, photographs, etc. about South and North Ossetia, their economic, political, social and cultural affairs. It also gives its users a possibility to discuss articles as well as self-invented topics on its quite popular forum: as of January 24, 2009 the number of forum participants was 5,686. The main audience of the portal is ethnic Ossetians living in Russia, Georgia and as immigrants all over the world, and people who are interested in what Ossetia is and who Ossetians are. In this way this portal creates a hub for the imagined community of Ossetia. The language of the website is Russian (with few articles in Ossetian language, Ironau), because it is the language that is certainly spoken by the majority, not to say the whole population, of ethnic Ossetians. It is also used for

the purpose of popularization the issues of Ossetia all over Russia and post-Soviet countries. The web-project www.ossetia.ru was chosen out of similar projects (e.g. www.iriston.ru, www.ossetians.com, www.iratta.com, www.osetins.com etc.) because it is more consistent and versatile - it has sections dedicated to the news and events, as well as socio-political analytics and collection of articles on Ossetian culture and traditions that have been published regularly for over four years. Two particular sections - named *Analytics* and *Ossetia* – are subjects of thorough analysis of this chapter.

The section *Ossetia* consists of description of cultural customs and traditions, famous personalities and important historical events, traditional rituals and beliefs etc. It gives a good insight into the way Ossetians see the world and relationship between people. It is very important to the understanding of the subject area of culture and identity.

On the other hand, the summary of petrified traditions does not provide enough material to analyse contemporary nationalist resurgence of South Ossetians. It can only be used for understanding some motives and mechanisms of the intensification of nationalist feelings of Ossetians. In order to gain better insight into the nationalism issue, another section that contains up-to-date analytics of present events was also analysed. The *Analytics* section was chosen among others (e.g. *News*, *Events*, *Interviews*, *Photo Reports*, *Forum* etc) in order to see how particular events evoke certain reaction in social and political spheres. Articles of this section cover in details a large variety of topics (e.g. Abkhazia, Georgia, Russian politics, Orange Revolution in Ukraine, Former Yugoslavian Republics, Kosovo and Serbia etc.) that nevertheless always have something to do with the most important events in political and social life of South and North Ossetia. The articles are structured as a digest: they are not necessarily written by authors of the website. Most of them are taken from various Russian newspapers and magazines with a large share of translations of foreign and international editions such as German *Die Zeit*, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, French *Le Figaro, Le Monde*, Italian *La Stampa*, British *The Economist, The Guardian, The Independent*, American *The New York Times, The International Herald Tribune*, etc. Analysis of this section contributes to all the three subject areas of the analysis – recognition, culture, and neo-identities and globalization.

The actual analysis consisted of careful reading through the articles of *Ossetia* and *Analytics* sections in order to find out what information, facts and examples are used there in order to describe and/or construct contemporary identity of South Ossetians. The relevant information then was singled out and arranged into tables presented in appendices 1 and 2.

The information from these articles was arranged into the tables to present both cultural and socio-political topics covered in the articles. For the cultural analysis, the Hofstede's (1997: 7-10) 'onion diagram' model was used. According to this model, culture manifests itself at different levels of depths that can be illustrated as the skins of an onion. The outer, so the most superficial and visible, layer of manifestation is that of cultural symbols (cell (2) in the appendices). The next ones are respectively rituals (3) and icons (4) (both bearers of positive characteristics, heroes (4.1) and negative ones, anti-heroes (4.2)). The deepest layer is culture's values and beliefs (5). Although this model is not the most objective and comprehensive way to describe any culture, I decided to use it for the purpose of structuring the description of Ossetian resurgence of traditional Ossetian culture and values in the recent years. Another important factor of contemporary nationalism is the use of history as one of the sources for the resurgence of patriotic feelings – for that reason the category of historical examples (6) was added. And the final category (cell (7) only in appendix 2) of analysis accesses the problem from socio-political point and depicts how Ossetians of the present view the future goals of their nation and the progressive innovations that bring the goals closer to their fulfilment.

The table also contains (1) the title or more often the topic of the article translated in English. The date and link to the publication is also provided. The authors of the articles are omitted. For the purpose of the analysis all of the articles were treated as cultural texts that were written by a collective but homogeneous group – project www.ossetia.ru – and express the collective identity and position of Ossetians.

The following step of the research included analysis of the tables in appendices 1 and 2 in order to reveal expressions of the global and the local in the Ossetian's identity representations in the articles. Three following sections describe dialectics and

interconnectedness of the global and the local in the construction of Ossetian neo-identity. Practical information used in these descriptions is taken from the tables of appendices 1 and 2 only, provided with more details from the articles summarized there.

5.1.3 National Identity of South Ossetians: Recognition

Contemporary nationalism intensification of Ossetians is an interesting phenomenon that spreads over various social spheres and geographical territories. It is unique because it has its own reasons, processes and outcomes. On the other hand, it can be easily described using the main subject areas of theory of nationalist resurgence and neo-identities.

The most important component in understanding wars and national and/or ethnical conflicts is undoubtedly its *reasons*. According to the framework of contemporary nationalism, modern states or territories engage in confrontations not necessarily in pursuit of sovereignty. Today to be recognised and respected as a culturally, ethnically, historically, socially distinct entity becomes much more important than simply gaining legal independence.

Following the historical course of Ossetian nationalism and Georgia-Ossetia conflicts (summary in cell (6) in appendices 1 and 2), it becomes quite obvious that South Ossetia's primary goal in many years of confrontations and opposition to Georgia was not just independence. The very first armed conflict between Georgians and South Ossetians that occurred in 1918-1920 was a result of a forced territorial and governmental separation of two parts of the same Ossetian nation. Before that period Ossetians were divided into South and North due to the lines of administrative intrastate division. Since the 18th century when Ossetian territories voluntarily became part of the Russian Empire both parts of Ossetia were always part of the same state (before this time Ossetians did not practise a state system). The conflict of 1918-1920 went into the Ossetian history as 'the first genocide' against Ossetians. Nevertheless, the confrontations diminished as soon as South and North Ossetia nominally became parts

of the same state – USSR. The following large-scale conflict of 1989-1991 followed another attempt of separating North and South Ossetia.

The latest 2008 conflict was for the most part the result of intensification of politics of restoring territorial integrity of Georgia by the government of the president Mikheil Saakashvili. Moreover, there was another struggle, intellectual, preceding the actual war. I am talking about the contradictions in Ossetian and Georgian variants of history. According to the Georgian sources, South Ossetia never exited as such. It was simply an invention of Soviet government that united several villages with a high proportion of ethnical Ossetian population in so-called Autonomous South Ossetian Region. Before that, claim Georgian historians, there were no tracks of any Ossetian territories and administrations on the southern side of the Caucases. Russian and Ossetian sources claim the opposite – Ossetians were present in the region for as long as Georgians themselves. And the word combination South Ossetia was used starting from the 18th century when North and South Ossetia were both parts of the Russian Empire. This topic is quite widely covered in the articles of www.ossetia.ru. And seemingly the fact that Georgia denies existence of South Ossetia was and is a much bigger offence to the Ossetians than banning the use of Ossetian language in schools and public administration bodies because, putting it in the words of Michel Wievorka (2004: 292), "to tell a group that its identity must disappear and dissolve is tantamount to discrediting, denying and despising it".

Moreover, the well-known fact is that South Ossetia has been fighting for independence from Georgia. So, technically, its goal is a sovereign state. At the same time, the republic repeatedly expresses willingness to loose this sovereignty by becoming absorbed by another state – Russian Federation – simply to fulfil their historical dream of uniting in a single state together with another cluster of ethnic Ossetians who live in North Ossetia. In other words, that means that for South Ossetia it was important just to gain independence from the villain who keeps people of the same nation apart, so that they can finally unite afterwards. This and the previous arguments speak in support of the idea that South Ossetia's nationalism is a contemporary type, and its main goal is not sovereignty, but primarily *recognition*.

Another interesting fact is that intention of union under the same government is promoted and articulated mostly by South Ossetia. The position of North Ossetian local government is not so determined – at least the republic of North Ossetia-Alania has never announced any plans of gaining independence from the Russian Federation. At the same time people of both republics show great solidarity and compassion to each other, especially in the time of tragedies on either side. For instance, in 2004 the Beslan massacre – school hostage – took place. Armed terrorists besieged a school in North Ossetia taking 1,100 hostages. According to the official statistics, after the three-day siege 334 hostages were killed, including 186 children, many more wounded and reported missing. (Wikipedia 2009a.) September 2004 was shortly followed by a period of greater consolidation of people of South and North Ossetia. There was not just practical support from South to North Ossetia, but mostly moral and ideological. It was the period when www.ossetia.ru was launched, when ideas of unification were articulated more often and more loudly, when many debates on history and destiny of Ossetia were resumed with more enthusiasm and vigour. The same trends took place in 2008 after the war in South Ossetia.

Another period of intensification of debates on the future of Ossetia occurred in late 2006-2007 parallel to the events in Kosovo, a troubled region of ethnic Albanians in Serbia that acquired non-unanimously recognised independence in 2007. This period brings back the debates about the history of Ossetia and Alania, the initially united territories, and historical justice, under which South Ossetia deserves being separated from Georgia not less than Kosovo from Serbia. This period was controversial and therefore problematic and since it brought unrest to both Ossetias, they replied with another wave of consolidation. These waves and periods are quite visible in the course of analytics publications of www.ossetia.ru.

The conclusion for the given examples of Ossetian people's but not governmental consolidation speak in favour of the hypothesis that contemporary nationalism is a form of resurgence of a national consciousness, and not traditional nationalism. This consciousness seems to be a pretext for the need and desire for future developments and social reforms. According to the theory of neo-identities it is a natural outcome of

interplay of global reach of globalization and protective mechanisms of localization. Both need for recognition and resurgence of national consciousness constitute contemporary nationalism of South Ossetians. It goes, however, together with other processes, namely creation of neo-identities on the basis of traditional culture in the conditions of globalization, processes that are going to be discussed in the following sections.

5.1.4 National Identity of South Ossetians: Identity and Cultural Revival

Identity is the key concept in contemporary nationalism of South Ossetians. Moreover, it is a perfect example of a modern phenomenon of neo-identity described in detail in chapter four. Neo-identities present a new understanding of traditional social and collective identities. They are more oriented towards future developments and more creatively invented in much shorter terms. At the same time the building material for these identities is embedded in history, places and traditional culture. For this reason it is quite often mentioned that ethnicities and nations seemingly return to their past - traditional celebrations and rituals, religions and systems of beliefs. This section focuses on self-representation of the traditional culture of Ossetia according to the "News of South and North Ossetia": cultural information used in the articles tends to articulate and stress the importance of tradition which is also a way of reinventing tradition and popularizing it on the new, more global level. The cultural information was taken from not only *Ossetia* section (appendix 1), where the cultural information is given in the form of encyclopedic articles, but also from *Analytics* (appendix 2), where contemporary social and political issues are discussed. As was previously described, the framework of the onion model by Geert Hofstede (1997: 7-10) was taken to structure description of Ossetian culture (see cells (2)-(5) in the appendices).

South Ossetians describe and discuss a variety of *symbols* (2) in the article on www.ossetia.ru. First of all, South Ossetian official symbols (flag, coat of arms and anthem) are frequently mentioned and displayed as pictures in the articles of the website. They are important symbols of both distinctiveness of South Ossetia and its close ties with North Ossetia: the South Ossetian flag, a white-red-yellow tricolour

(symbolic representations of moral purity, martial courage and wealth respectively, and, also, social structure of ancient Ossetian society: military aristocracy, the clergy and commoners) is almost identical to the one of the republic of North Ossetia – the only difference is few centimeters in proportions; and coat of arms, a slight adaptation of the symbol of South Ossetia known from the maps of 18th century (white mountains on red background with a snow leopard in the front), is also shared with North Ossetia. Interestingly enough, Russian flag plays an important role in official symbols of South Ossetia as well.

Religious symbols mentioned in the articles, for example icons (e.g. Our Lady of Mozdock and Iver) and holidays (e.g. St. Hetag's Day), are an important component of everyday conversations and therefore live. They also represent a hybrid character of Ossetian religion, because important religious symbols are taken from all the three relevant Ossetian systems of beliefs – Orthodox Christianity, Islam and ancient pagan faith.

Another cluster of significant symbols in the articles is related to the mental image of Ossetians as a *distinct ethnicity*. Thus, eagle is not treated just as a bird, but as a symbol of a proud person, an ideal for any Ossetian. Similarly lion or snow leopard represents courage. Ancient heroes from Caucasian sagas, Narts, are symbols of heroism, supernatural powers and model moral qualities. Ossetian language, Ironau, is also a symbol of historic distinctiveness of their nation.

Speaking about representation of another layer of culture, *rituals* (3), Ossetians from both South and North Ossetia still follow many of traditional practices. Most interesting example is that Ossetians follow their own calendar of festivities, namely the celebrations of traditional pagan holidays. So, for instance, Dzheorguiba fest and St. Hetag's day are more popular than some Orthodox holidays.

Ossetians also have several rituals concerned with *cycle of life*. Funeral and mourning rituals, according to the "News of South and North Ossetia" are especially well-preserved. After the death, the house of a dead is normally crowded for several days when people – both family and friends, and distant acquaintances come to show respect

and say good-bye. Even the enemies had to stop their fights if members of either family had died - for that reason a special article was written on the web-project telling that many Ossetians believed that Mikheil Saakashvili had to go to Moscow and re-establish relations with the Kremlin right after the death of Alexy II, former Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia.

Ossetian culture today as well as before has its own *icons* (4), personalities who are easily recognised as significant by the representative of this culture. Some of those personalities represent positive images and qualities, and therefore become symbolic *heroes* (4.1). The negative images are as well important for icons of every culture, sometimes its *villains* or *anti-heroes* (4.2) unite people of one culture better than its heroes.

Out of imaginary personalities mentioned in the articles the most significant for Ossetians are Narts – ancient gigantic heroes - known not only by Ossetians, but almost all North Caucasian peoples, especially the descendants of Scythian tribes. A hero, closely connected to Narts, Uastyrdzhi, the Ossetian St. George, is the most prominent of all Ossetian gods: his name is mentioned in the South Ossetian modern anthem, and its holiday, St. Hetag day, is one of the most popular Ossetian celebrations up to these days (especially after collapse of Soviet Union).

Real people are also praised as heroes in the news articles. Ossetians, for instance, worship prince David Soslan, an Alan (Ossetian) prince who in 12th century married Georgian queen Tamar and together they conquered many lands and created a united Georgia. Other heroes include the first Ossetian national poet, Kosta Khetagurov; an outstanding author who wrote his books in Ironau, Arsen Katsoev; a historian of Ossetian nation, 1st president of South Ossetia, Ludwig Chibirov; a successful businessman and director of a large beer producing Baltic Beverages Holding (BBH), Taimuraz Balloev; world-famous conductor of Ossetian origin, Valery Gergiev etc.

Anti-heroes for Ossetians, as it follows from articles of www.ossetia.ru, are Zviad Gamasakhurdia, the first president of Georgia who was in charge in the time of the civil war and conflicts of 1989-1991, and in much greater degree Mikheil Saakashvili,

current president of Georgia. The latter one is presented as anti-hero from two different sides – on the one hand he is a villain who violently wipes out South Ossetian culture and population, on the other, - an object for jokes and ridicule.

Another interesting detail is that quite often an anti-hero for Ossetians is not just a person, but a collective body, namely Georgian government in general (and never Georgian people unlike Ingush people, conflict counterpart of North Ossetians). In the most recent period of South Ossetian nationalism presented in the articles of www.ossetia.ru, Georgian government is the anti-hero also because it is a symbol of global Westernization, Americanization to be more precise, because of the clear pro-American orientation of the incumbent Georgian president. In fact, Georgians as people for Ossetians collectively do not have a status of a either a friend or an enemy. The long history of living together undoubtedly affects the current attitude towards each other:

> Those who live in South Ossetia divide Georgians distinctively into "us" and "them". In fact hostility towards Georgians is not actually ethnically-based, more ethnically-politically and depends on current position in 'independence vs. territorial integrity' debate. Even after the conflict of August 8-12 ethnical Georgians from mixed villages or Zkhinval stayed to keep living and working together with Ossetians. Moreover, there were always many mixed marriages between Georgians and Ossetians and now families are split – Ossetian women followed their husbands to Georgia and Georgian women stayed with their Ossetian husbands in South Ossetia. All of them will have to live through many years with no chance of seeing parents, brother and sister. [own translation] (Krylenko & Afanasiev: 2008.)

Interestingly enough, images of anti-heroes do not coincide with Ossetian concepts of alterity, image of strangers. According to the contents of the articles on www.ossetia.ru, South Ossetians identify themselves with North Ossetians and their ancient ancestry – Alanians and Scythians only. And they differentiate themselves from Georgians, Ingush people, and Westerners in general (Europe and USA). Russians stand somewhere in the middle: Ossetians do not identify themselves with Russians, but speak of themselves as the most 'russified' Caucasian people.

The deepest level of any culture is their *values* and *beliefs* (5). Article of both sections of "News of South and North Ossetia" provide quite good insight into Ossetian distinct belief system. First of all, Ossetians excessively *respect the elderly*. Traditional pattern

of behaviour were based on the age-based hierarchy. This tradition is changing but still contributes to the way Ossetians see their society. Also, Ossetians are a very *masculine* nation. It does not mean that women are underestimated and not respected. Ossetians have a great respect for women, especially mothers. At the same time the male-female distribution of roles is quite strict, which nevertheless changes over time. What does not change is traditional *hospitality* of Ossetians. Everyman's duty is to receive a guest heartily and make him/her feel comfortable. It means giving at least traditional three pies to the guest even if those pies are everything they have.

Religious imperatives (both Orthodox and Muslim) are not crucial for the majority of Ossetians. Because of mixture of religions, namely Christian Orthodoxy, Sunni Islam and ancient pagan beliefs, most Ossetians demonstrate a good deal of *religious pluralism*. Pagan traditions are especially strong – some pagan holidays and saints relevant for modern and traditional Ossetian society were already mentioned before. What is more interesting and important is that Ossetians have a special Law of Honour superior to any religious beliefs and political ideologies. It has its own name – *Farn*.

This Law is a long-lasting tradition. It long had a status of modern laws, although today we would call it a collection of moral imperatives. It is based on principals of dignity, pride and justice. That is how Ruslan Kuchity (2008) describes the examples of Farn:

> According to the Ossetian philosophy, the person can be insulted […] verbally or physically. Keeping in mind that the people were all afraid of getting humbled and dishonored, almost every case of offence was considered as a major insult. For example, if anyone hit a man with stick or lash. They said, "Only a dog can be disciplined with a stick". So, the offender equals the man with a dog, and in response to this major insult the offender would be sentenced to death. […]
>
> An Ossetian was also very sensitive and intolerant to someone verbally offending his mother, sister, wife or a close, deceased relative. Such an insult was almost unavoidably followed by a murder and vendetta.
>
> The standards of the mountainous Ossetian society were very strong and clear. They taught everybody to care about their honor and dignity more then about their life and death. Any major insult was to be appropriately handled and nobody who called himself a man could let it go without revenge. Because if he did, he could cover himself and the whole clan with shame for many years. It meant the society would "lower" him and his family and this was considered to be worse than a physical death.

Strong influence of Farn is the reason why both Orthodox and Muslim religions tend to blend with pagan beliefs. Farn is an important notion to any Ossetian until nowadays – for example Taimuraz Mamsurov, a Head of Republic of North Ossetia, Russia, has just recently published a book *Build Your Own Tower* (2003) which gives advice to the youth how to be a true Ossetian and cites code of Farn. It prescribes to follow the law of honour and therefore praises dignity, pride, discipline, communal responsibility, freedom for the community, and very importantly justice, that for an Ossetian means vendetta, revenge to the offender.

Without understanding the importance of traditional Ossetian culture it is difficult to understand the essence of contemporary nationalism of South Ossetians. Values and beliefs, traditional Ossetian identity and very powerful Laws of Honour become building material for neo-identity in contemporary period of Ossetian history. Neo-identity is created out of tradition but globalization in its turn transforms the understanding of tradition and pushes culture towards new societal order. In this way, neo-identities are not turned to the past. They restore and rebuild an identity in order to fit into the new world of networks and flows. And that is one of the main reasons of intensification of nationalism, including that one of South Ossetians. To understand how traditional identity transforms into neo-identity, the future goals of South Ossetia and its people are going to be analysed in the following subchapter.

5.1.5 National Identity of South Ossetians: Globalization and Neo-Identity

Globalization as it was already said in chapter two can no longer be simply a background to certain contemporary events. A more appropriate assessment of globalization these days is as an active agent and powerful force for social events and processes. At least this is a position of this thesis.

To analyse globalization and its role in contemporary nationalism resurgence in South Ossetia, I summarized what Ossetians' aspirations about their future are and what contemporary innovations they consider positive and useful for Ossetian nation. These categories are combined in cell (7) of appendix 2, summary of *Analytics* section, under

the title “Progressive Innovations and/or Future Goals” where the former are labelled with symbol “○” and the latter with “●”.

Achievements of South Ossetians, summarized in appendix 2, are less numerous than future goals and aspirations. However, it is possible to see a certain pattern in the publications on www.ossetia.ru in what recent reforms and innovations Ossetian consider worth being proud of.

Thus, Internet, cell phones and knowledge of foreign languages are undoubtedly certain symbols of progress. They are so important for Ossetians as well as for the rest of the world because they ensure global reach of communication, the most important component of present-day globalization order.

Another important detail that is very salient in the descriptions of contemporary innovations is intensification of Ossetian youth movements. Whether movement is a political union, or flash-mob events’ team, or dancing group ‘Simd’, the important thing is that they are shaped and driven by the youth. Traditional Ossetian culture has a well-defined place and status for the young people – to learn main rules of justice and moral imperatives from the elderly, to be courageous in battles but do not take part in decision-making. The youth were important but never were allowed to be proactive in the essential political decisions. Tradition, although very important for Ossetians, nevertheless shifts and the intensification of youth movements in South Ossetia can be considered a sign of a global trend.

Another recent change affecting primarily young people is massive return to traditional religious beliefs. South Ossetians traditionally were orthodox Christians with a small population of Sunni Muslims, but they were always united by very flexible way of following their own religions in favour of dominant Law of Honour, or Farm. Recently, however, as one can learn from the articles, it was suddenly remembered that Orthodox tradition dates back to the Byzantine influence of 4^{th}-10^{th} centuries and Islam – to 15^{th} century of Crimean khanate. The authentic strictness of either religion is now followed by an increasing number of people, especially the young. Many communities and countries in the world undergo the same process known as religious fundamentalism.

Speaking about future *goals* of South Ossetians, it is needless to repeat again the desire for independence from Georgia. This goal is primary and is expressed with a variety of examples from the history of both nations to emphasize historical justice and right for independence. On the other hand, as briefly discussed before, it has a mixed nature – while it is embedded into history, territory and traditional culture, it also aims at progressive innovations in order to fit into the new world order.

Gaining sovereignty from Georgia for South Ossetia is not only obtaining desired justice, unity of nation and fair borders – it is an important step towards being recognized as an equal member of the world community, and gradually free market economy and world governance. Therefore, international laws and values play an important role in shaping Ossetian aspirations in discussions on articles on the new portal. In particular, humanistic and democratic principles are highlighted. South Ossetian independent republic is viewed as a law-abiding democratic state built on principles of freedom and equality, adherence to the international human rights, democratic pluralism and rejection of totalitarianism, religious intolerance and terrorism and violence as instruments of politics and administration. They also emphasize the importance of multiculturalism and equal rights for recognition. In other words, Ossetians strive to reconstruct their republic according to globally accepted principles of democracy as the most useful and humane form of government and socio-political structure of the state.

Democratisation itself is already a powerful process of globalization. Speaking about Ossetians, according to www.ossetia.ru, democracy was foreign to them. South Ossetia never had its own state – it was only part of monarchic Russian Empire, communist USSR and most recently – transitional Georgia. Global trends of unification have brought the idea that democracy should be a form of any good and modern government and Ossetians readily followed this trend. In certain way the traditional Ossetian decision-making process of the councils where everybody could have a word was very democratic. And that is the reason why Ossetians believe that their democracy has ancient roots. On the other hand, one of the most powerful values of Ossetians is

excessive respect to the elderly meaning age-based distribution of power which simply contradicts basic principles of democracy.

Another contradiction concerns the relationship between the Ossetian Law of Honour and international law that Ossetians are so eager to follow. The main concept of Farn is justice which means also revenge till the enemy falls dead. It is one of the reasons why Ossetians in general and the Ossetian press in particular (article of February 13, 2008 on www.ossetia.ru) hail Vitaly Kaloyev a hero. He is a man who murdered a flying control officer, Peter Nielsen, who worked for a Swiss air-company and was responsible for a crash of a plane in July 2002 when many Russian schoolchildren died, including two children and wife of Mr. Kaloyev. Peter Nielsen was held free from any responsibility and Vitaly Kaloev, desperate after loss of his family, was seeking for justice or at least apology from the air-company or flying control officer. Having received none he stabbed the alleged offender, Peter Nielsen to death. Vitaly Kaloyev was arrested and sent into prison but however released before the term, returned to his home in North Ossetia and even became a deputy minister of architecture in North Ossetia and was and still hailed as a hero by Ossetians. The position of Ossetians over justice is therefore very different from that of International Law or International Human Rights. On the other hand, there is no evidence that Ossetian desire to follow international laws and western values of freedom and human rights is fake or misleading. Paradoxically goals of multiculturalism, right for the recognition, equality, non-violence and religious pluralism are real and very much desired by Ossetian society.

Contradictions that were the main topic of this section are another proof to the point that Ossetian contemporary nationalism is a form of reconstruction and intensification of neo-identity. Traditional values on the one hand are kept deep in the consciousness and in certain way affect lives of Ossetians, on the other they are becoming increasingly important in talks, self-presentation and construction of self-image, but less and less in real deeds. At the same time Ossetians follow the globalization flows and reconstruct their identities in the way to fit and integrate into the contemporary world. Some discrepancies in the contemporary identities of Ossetians are most likely affected by contradictory forces of the global and the local. The global sets up the goals, conditions,

and even the rhetoric for further developments. The local provides the sources of constructing unique neo-identity in order to be distinct and worth recognizing in the global world. In other words, dialectics of the global and the local shapes neo-identity of South Ossetians: based on the contradictory mixture of historic traditional customs, beliefs and values and aspiration of future development in terms of the globally unified social patterns.

And although materials of www.ossetia.ru do not present the voice and opinion of every Ossetian of all the levels of education and social classes, they do however provide a significant demonstration of Ossetian public opinion and therefore contemporary nationalism trends.

5.2. Socio-Linguistic Identity of a Modern Russian-speaker: Case of *Preved* Internet Slang

Russian officials on many levels and the public in general are normally proud of the Russian language, especially its rich, expressive and beautiful literary form. Many hours in schools' governmentally controlled and prescribed curriculum on all the levels of education are devoted to the study of grammar, orthography, syntax and stylistics of Russian. Linguistic purity and rightness of spoken and written Russian is an important concern of a regular parent and also the Minister of Culture and Education for quite a number of years by now. For that reason 2006, year of emergence and immediate spread of *Preved* Internet slang, might be assessed as tragic for the course of purification of the spoken and written language by Russian intelligentsia and purists.

5.2.1 Emergence and Brief History of *Preved* Internet Slang Phenomenon

As of winter 2006 forums, blogs and web-chats became full of strangely-spelled specific words and phrases which covered mostly topics of sex, and animal-like behaviour: some of them - funny, some – very offensive, but necessarily vulgar and

brutal. The most commonly used vocabulary of this new slang (including translation/explanation of Russian words into English) is presented in appendix 3[1].

In the alternative spelling of this Russian Internet slang, voiceless consonants, for example, are replaced with their voiced counterparts (or vice versa), unstressed vowels – with their pairs etc. Charles Boutler (2009) summarizes the main transformations peculiar to this slang as shown on Figure 4 below.

Standard Russian	**Replacement**	**Example**
-ик at the end of a word	-ег, -иг	уч**а**ст**ник**— уч**а**сн**ег**
-ться at the end of a verb	-цо, -ца, -ццо, -ця	еб**а**т**ься** — ип**а**ц**ца**
о, unstressed	а	п**о**к**а** — п**а**к**а**
а, unstressed	о	р**а**сск**а**з — р**о**ск**а**с
и, unstressed	е	п**и**л**о**тка — п**е**л**о**тка
е, unstressed	и	**е**бл**а**н — **и**бл**а**н
я, unstressed	йе, и	**я**з**ы**к — **йе**з**ы**г
я, stressed	йа	ба**я**н — бо**йа**н
ю, stressed	йу	**ю**г — **йу**х
ё	йо, о	долбоёб — далпа**йо**п
з	с	пиз**д**ец — пе**с**д**е**ц
б	п	не е**б**ёт — ниип**ё**т
в, final or followed by a consonnant	ф	**в**чер**а** — **ф**чер**а** уда**в** - уда**ф**
щ	сч, ш, щщ	е**щ**ё — и**сч**о
тс, дс	ц, цц	кан**а**д**с**кий — кан**а**ц**ц**кий
-т	-д	зач**ё**т — зач**о**д
-г	-х	м**о**з**г** — м**о**с**х**

Figure 4. Phonetic and Spelling Transformations of Standard Russian into *Preved* Slang Variant (Boutler 2009).

There would be almost nothing interesting about another creation of slang on Internet if this language had not become overwhelmingly popular and spread offline into various discourses of different social groups. So, for instance, school teachers all over Russia started panicking and spending extra time with their students, correcting thousands of

[1] Further in the text the examples of slang words will be given in its original form in Cyrillic followed by an English explanation of the word's meaning. The most important and repeated words however will be written in the text of the chapter in transliteration.

превед (correct spelling: привет, meaning: hello) and describing the difference between the variants from Internet and standard Russian (Kraeva 2006).

The phenomenon did not limit its spread to the language of Internet bloggers and chatters only, it has turned to be a distinct social force on various levels. On February 23, 2006, for instance, young activists of the party Union of Right Forces (Soyuz Pravyh Sil, SPS) during their protest against an official of Moscow Military Commissariat put some of the slang words on their posters: *Иванов, превед!* (Hello Ivanov!) and *Ф аццтафку, ацкий сотона!* (Fill in resignation, devilish Satan!) (Belkin & Amzin 2006). In Novorossijsk, some time later, local administration used slogans with *Превед, Медвед* (hello bear) to agitate the youth to participate in the coming elections (Rybakov 2007). In May 2006 Russian edition of Newsweek magazine announced the appointment of the new editor-in-chief, Leonid Parfenov, by a poster where he was shown saying *Превед*. (Wikipedia 2009d).

The slang words nowadays are actively used in some printed media, many radio and TV broadcasts (Zhan 2006), to say nothing of Russian pages on the Internet. The most popular Russian search engine, www.yandex.ru, which has an automatic service of offering correct spelling if the search word is mistyped, cancelled it on popular slang words like *Превед*, *аффтар* (hello, author) etc. (Belkin & Amzin 2006).

The crucial moment in the history of this phenomenon is an amusing story. On February 3, 2006, a user Lobzz of a blog at www.dirty.ru was searching for an illustration of his article about wild animals that might be seen in forests. Accidentally he came across a picture *Bear Surprise* by John Lurie (figure 5) which suited his article perfectly. The only detail was a word "Surprise!" written on a speech bubble next to the bear. Lobbz (his real name is Roman Yatsenko) changed that unsuitable for him word into a playful "*Превед*!" (misspelled привет, hello)[2]. He has not invented this word himself, it was already mentioned few times by other users in some quite closed blog communities. (Zhan 2006.) However, after publication of the transformed picture of John Lurie (which was for a long time considered by majority of Russian Internet users a drawing

[2] In standard Russian *привет* (hello) is pronounced as [prı'vjet] while the transformed *preved* – *превед* as [ˌpre'ved]

by a child) the phenomenon of *Preved* (*Превед*) became an inevitable fact of Russian linguistic and social realities, both online and offline.

Figure 5. *Bear Surprise* by John Lurie modified by blogger Lobzz (Zhan 2006).

The picture together with *Preved* rapidly spread over the Russian bloggers' community in few hours, over various Internet pages in Russian – in few days. According to the small statistical research of a user of a www.livejournal.com blog community nicknamed OD (2006), at the beginning of February 2006 the use of this word was insignificant from 0-3 to 15 times on either blogs or Russian portals of the web. However, around mid-February the numbers rose up first to 200, and then, towards the end of the month to over 2000. Therefore the rate of the increase of use of this word on Russian pages of Internet was around 17% per day, resulting in a dramatic rise in just few weeks. (OD 2006.) Seeing this trend a businessman Vadim Sova from Moscow bought a domain www.preved.ru for $20 and few days later sold it for $1500. His successor, Kostantin Rykov, also profited by selling email addresses @preved.ru. (Zhan 2006.)

Together with the word *Preved* also the bear became extremely popular as an Internet meme. First of all, it was given a peculiar name *Medved* - *Медвед* (transformed

медведь, bear, so that is rhymes with preved). This word can probably score second in the popularity of Internet slang vocabulary. The phrase *Preved Medved – Превед Медвед* – became a usual greeting on Internet chats, forums and even in everyday conversations of regular people, including both children and adults. *Medved* became a certain symbol of this slang and its users. It started appearing on other pictures online as an unexpected character of a famous painting or an extra person on a photo– a process called *medved*-izing (омедвеживание). It lives offline too: on billboards, T-shirts, baseball hats, watches and other products and advertisements. *Medved* also inspired creating a special symbol, a smiley 'Y'. (Zhan 2006.) Since letter Y is not used in Russian alphabet it is used in Russian texts only as a smiley of a bear with its paws stretched up. To recollect resemblance with *Medved* it is necessary just to picture anyone else with his/her arms stretched up in Y-way (as for example it was done on Russian Newsweek poster mentioned before: the editor-in chief had his arms stretched up and there were several *Medved*-s flying in the sky).

The vocabulary of the slang however was not created overnight. Words and phrases were coined by a variety of bloggers in quite a long period of time (since late 1990s-early 2000s). Any word or phrase that was invented was a symbol of *криатифф* (a creative invention), the uniqueness of a blogger who uses it to express him/herself. It is believed that the most active users in community of Russian-speaking bloggers were initially (in early 2000s) journalists, people with interests in Russian linguistics (professional and amateur writers, philology students etc.) and IT professionals (Belkin & Amzin 2006), all adults and most of them with a very good knowledge of standard Russian. However, it was them who created new slang words, in part as a way of ridiculing illiteracy in standard Russian, in part – to create original form of self-expression.

In 2005 Russian edition of Newsweek magazine published an article by Artem Vernidub (2005) about creators of new words on Russian Internet blogs. For this article it is praised by Wikipedia (2009d) as the first printed media that covered a topic of a new Internet slang phenomenon. According to this article, there were several currents in the slang invention process. For example, a blogger of the web-project www.fuck.ru

Udav, or electrician Dmitry Sokolovsky when offline, was one of the first *Padonak - Падонак* (scumbag, cynical jerk) who in his articles promoted the philosophy of cynicism and animal-like behaviour – debauchery, sexual intercourse, violence and alcohol. Also the words he used were always written in the manner of an illiterate person who writes what he/she hears (in standard Russian spelling rarely matches pronunciation). This language was previously formed by Russian-speaking users of FidoNet, a non-commercial worldwide computer network popular in the early 1990s that used a system of communication between bulletin board systems before the introduction of easy access to the Internet. Later on Udav created a web-project www.udaff.com that completely consisted of his followers who shared the ideology of *padonak* subculture. In their turn they continued writing in their specific way on another important and popular blog website www.livejournal.com where some of their prominent bloggers became well known for their violence and cruelty in criticising and ridiculing other people's blog entries. Their peculiar style became known as *Padonkaffsky Yazyk – Падонкаффский язык* (language of padonak, scumbags' language) (Vernidub 2005).

Another interesting event in the history of slang creation is *Learn Albanian!* flash mob on www.livejournal.com (October 19, 2006). The user Scottishtiger from the USA commented on a blog entry written in Russian that he does not understand what is written there and that every user of Live Journal, an American blog portal, should use English there. Another user tricked Scottishtiger and said that unreadable language is Albanian. The owner of that blog, however, offered to perform a flash mob: every user and their friends will start sending messages in Russian to Scottishtiger, every message explaining each letter of "Albanian" (Russian) language. Scottishtiger had to close his blog account because of the thousands of messages in Russian he received just in few days (Zhan 2006; Belkin & Amzin 2006). Substantially later, after the increase of popularity of *Preved* and *Medved*, *Albanian* turned into *Olbanian language* and became one of the names of the slang.

Another name that refers to the slang is *Bashorg* (*Bashorg-овский язык*). It originates to the web-project www.bash.org.ru, which tracks, collects, and rates (since 2004),

funny expressions found on user-created contents of forums, chats and blogs. Many slang words became popular after being published there. For example, the funny symbol [:ІІІІ:] is incorporated in the interface as a button for *боян* (musical instrument similar to accordion), function to report an old and repeated joke.

In other words, despite extremely high popularity of contemporary Russian Internet slang, it still does not have a unanimous naming. For this reason this paper is going to refer to it as "*Preved* Internet slang" considering that the effect that the publication of a picture of *Medved* bear saying *Preved*! - *Превед*! was crucial for the course of its development.

5.2.2 *Preved* Internet Slang as Linguistic and Social Phenomenon

A study of language variants, such as Internet slang, belongs to the competence of linguistics and it is quite logical to address the question of peculiarities of *Preved* Internet slang phenomenon from the linguistic perspective.

A well-known authority on language, editor of the Cambridge Encyclopedia database, David Crystal (2001), for example, suggests a five-type approach to describing a written mode of a language variety. In this way, distinctive features of *Preved* Internet slang can be summarized in this way:

- *Graphic* features: the general presentation and organization of the written language, defined in terms of such factors as distinctive typography, page design, spacing, use of illustrations, and colour:

- Use of newly-created graphic symbols to substitute written words and phrases (e.g. Y, [:ІІІІ:], (c), +1 etc.); use of *Medved* bear picture as a virtual producer of new words;

- *Orthographic* (or *graphological*) features: the writing system of an individual language, defined in terms of such factors as distinctive use of the alphabet, capital letters, spelling, punctuation, and ways of expressing emphasis (italics, boldface, etc.):

- Orthographic replacements of paired consonants, stressed and unstressed vowels, changing standard spelling for illiterate-like phonetic writing;

• *Grammatical* features: the many possibilities of syntax and morphology, defined in terms of such factors as the distinctive use of sentence structure, word order, and word inflections:	• Extensive use of clichés and set phrases as part of the sentence or sentence as a whole while preserving standard Russian grammatical structure of sentences;
• *Lexical* features: the vocabulary of a language, defined in terms of the set of words and idioms given distinctive use within a variety:	• Specific vocabulary of misspelled words featuring swear words, taboos, dysphemisms, covering mostly topics of violence, alcohol, sexual intercourse;
• *Discourse* features: the structural organization of a text, defined in terms of such factors as coherence, relevance, paragraph structure, and the logical progression of ideas:	• Orientation towards a dialogue, or spoken medium, face-to-face conversation structure (although mostly used in written form on forums, chats and blogs).

(Crystal 2001: 7-8)

The characteristics peculiar to *Preved* Internet slang as summarized here do not completely match with what it is normally attributed to language use on Internet, especially its most interactive parts of forums, chats and blogs. David Crystal in his *Language and Internet* (2001), one of the most cited books on language of the Web, focuses on pragmatic and technical constraints and opportunities of Internet medium of communication as a crucial element in shaping the variant of language to be used. His position is widely shared by linguists (Ma 1996; Werry 1996; Posteguillo 2003 etc.).

The prevailing majority of texts and message exchanges found on Internet are written texts. However, Internet is a social medium for communication and interaction rather than a technical publishing tool. In other words, although language used on Internet pages appears in its written form, its nature belongs to that of a speech. Written and spoken language modes are different and have their own distinctive characteristics:

> Speech is typically time-bound, spontaneous, face-to-face, socially interactive, loosely structured, immediately revisable, and prosodically rich. […] Writing is typically space-bound, contrived, visually decontextualized, factually communicative, elaborately structured, repeatedly revisable, and graphically rich. (Crystal 2001: 25, 28.)

The discrepancy between the language medium, writing, and aims of its users, speaking, is the main explanation for the transformations of the language variant used for Internet communication. Most of the linguistic devices tend to compensate the constraints of written medium to reproduce style of face-to-face conversations. In this way, the most important strategies are time saving, and compensation of emotionality and face-reactions. The first is achieved by introducing abbreviations and contractions for single words and phrases (btw - by the way, asap – as soon as possible, cu – see you etc.), using simplified syntax and grammar, omissions etc. (Posteguillo 2003: 102-120) The latter – by use of emoticons: descriptions of physical conditions (:), :D, (((etc.), verbalizations of physical cues (hehehe, ahaha - laughter), descriptions of physical actions (*hug* or <hug> or (hug)), emphases (no, I WONT go; please!!!!) etc. (Ma 1996: 176).

On the one hand, *Preved* Internet slang is hard to fit into this framework, because on its orthographical level, where most of the deviations from standard Russian take place, slang transformations do not contribute to saving of time as many words turn to be written with even more letters than the original. On the other, *Preved* language variant tends to convey emotional reactions rather than meanings and in this way it surely compensates lack of face-to-face interaction.

At the same time it is important that the examples of this theoretical approach and its illustration are taken from the study of use of English on the Internet, not Russian or any other language. It is quite logical that online English attracts international scholarly attention because of its status of lingua franca of the Internet. It is in fact crucial in understanding non-English linguistic Internet phenomena as well. English language, a "turbine engine of globalization" has become the most widely used language in the recorded history (Nihalani 2008: 243) significantly due to its status of language of the Internet. It is the language of new terms and new expressions related to the world of Internet. If such terms do not have an equivalent in other languages, which is the case with a great number of them, the non-English-speaking Internet users have to use code-switching, shifting from their languages to English. English dominance is also widely discussed as a threat to other languages, especially their existence on the Web.

Nevertheless Santiago Posteguillo (2003: 122) believes that "precisely because of pressure of English dominance the evolution of digital Spanish, digital German, digital French, etc. is somewhat peculiar and distinct to that of digital English." And the case of Russian invention of *Preved* Internet slang is a very good proof to Posteguillo's point of view.

Preved Internet slang is seemingly built on different premises from that of international English variant that is used on web-chats and forums. As it was noted before, Russian variant does not use too many abbreviations and other ways of saving typing time to speed up the flow of communication. Most of the differences account for a different grammar and syntactic structure of the Russian language. On the other hand, the English prototype is very important for the formation of this slang, especially its vocabulary. This influence will be covered in the following subchapter 5.2.4 on detailed analysis of vocabulary of *Preved* Internet slang.

Linguistic study of language variants on the Internet is not limited to the description of orthographical, lexical and syntactic deviations. Language varieties are also studied as expressions of group identity. In case of Internet users these groups might be, for example, hackers or web designers (professional groups), or users of certain chats, forums, virtual worlds (interest groups). David Crystal (2001: 59) argues that in fact Internet communication, despite its global openness and "ability to transcend the limitations of physical environments, cultural differences, and time-zones, thereby allowing people from anywhere to communicate with people anywhere else about anything at all", always occurs on local, small-scale or individual levels, resulting in "much more restricted and parochial" types of communication. In other words, language varieties of Internet are expressions of virtual communities and their identities rather than just a peculiar set of linguistic features. Therefore it is the social nature of these communities that accounts for their linguistic particularity.

The overview of the history of *Preved* Internet slang phenomenon given in the previous section emphasized that this slang was invented on blogs, but very rapidly extended to other Internet communications and, more importantly, to offline real face-to-face communications. The slang became so popular that it is impossible to say if it is a

property of a certain group. If in the beginning it was possible to attach certain varieties of slang to one or another interest group of blog projects, after the convergence of different trends as a result of popularity of the picture with *Medved* bear, now it is impossible to say which community it belongs to. The most plausible variant is that *Preved* Internet slang is an expression of identity of a modern Russian-speaker, anyone who has ever seen a picture of *Medved* saying *Preved*.

Soon after the spread of the *Preved* language offline many people, especially school teachers and older generations of intelligentsia, labeled it as a "language of new generation of aggressive illiteracy" [own translation] (Zhan 2006). In fact, its social implications toward the standard Russian are twofold. It is a well-known fact that the inventors of the basis of the slang were people of higher education and good knowledge and interest in linguistics, those who were fighting the illiteracy with irony by reduplicating and multiplying typos and spelling mistakes that they saw on various blogs and forums. Additionally they were adding comic effect and creating unique expressions of emotionality. After a while a joke became so popular that the comic effect was simply lost to the majority of its users, turning it into a cliché, a highly standardized expression of pseudo-emotionality. Widespread and influential vocabulary of misspelled words, especially, dysphemisms puts in danger destiny of standard Russian language use, especially by young people on the Internet. On the other hand, as a protest reaction against it, the same inventors of the slang tend to reinstate the role of standard Russian by promoting an opposite attitude of "I know how to speak Russian" in any blog writing. And by the time of finishing this chapter in February 2009 it has became a fact of reality that *Preved* Internet slang in general became much less popular on all the levels and less dangerous for literary Russian, although quite many words nevertheless became a part of colloquial both spoken and written Russian.

Another important question remains unanswered: why this particular Internet slang spread offline and became so popular in a certain period of time (ca. 2005-2008)? According to my hypothesis it was the result of a few parallel social trends in the Russian society. Around the beginning of 2006, when the *Preved* mania began, Russian political and social life was undergoing processes of intensification of national identity.

It is difficult to say whether it was a response to global threat or global fashion. The preceding important events included the 2003, 2004 and 2005 Colour Revolutions in Georgia (Rose Revolution), Ukraine (Orange Revolution), and Kyrgyzstan (Tulip Revolution) respectively: all of them in the former Soviet Union republics, former Russian allies and "fellow-countries" as they were always thought of by majority of population in Russia. Extreme anti-Russian politics of these countries affected the public opinion in that period of time. In response to this threat, different political powers intensified their work. The centrists' party of United Russia, that existed from 2001, in 2005 became very popular and managed to dramatically grow in number of members and followers. It means that the public started showing much more trust and support to the current Russian government, its policy and strategy. In the beginning of 2006 the representatives of the party for the first time announced its intention to create a political system close to that of mono-party in Russia with United Russia as a head of parliament. An interesting detail is that the official symbol of this party is a bear which is also traditionally viewed as a symbol for Russia, both by outsiders, foreigners, and insiders, Russians.

Youth political movements intensified substantially as well. A governmentally funded patriotic party of "Nashi" (Ours), presenting itself as a democratic anti-fascist movement, converged out of previous less important movements and became very active presumably as a response to (or in fashion with) the youth-led Colour Revolutions. According to its ideology, the movement aims at the modernisation of Russia to make it a strong, lawful and independent state; creation of Russian global leadership as a node in global economic and political world order where Russia is a link between Europe, South Asia, Asia Pacific and North America; Russian unique way of development – absence of control and pressure from outside. Two threats to the desired modernisation of Russia that Nashi explicitly names are global terrorism and global hegemony of USA. (Nashi 2009.) Although technically youth movement of Nashi and United Russia are not related, their ideologies and goals are quite similar, as well as their leaders and/or idols, the most influential of them - the president of Russia in 2000-2008 and prime minister after 2008 Vladimir Putin.

Another detail is the announcement of president Putin's possible successor around the same time in 2005-2006. It was Dmitry Medvedev whose last name derives from a Russian word for a bear. His name is therefore quite often related to the *Medved* bear, an important symbol of *Preved* slang. It is impossible to say if the emergence of the slang was actually a result of political actions, this position was not yet analysed, but it is a fact of reality that creation of misspelled words in sometimes offensive form became part of the all-Russia patriotic trends (which are in turn a response to the global intensification of nationalism).

The ideas expressed by *Preved* Internet speakers long before it actually became an important socio-linguistic phenomenon were born out of social and political situation of growing patriotism and nationalism consciousness resurgence. Naturally political parties, especially the youth movements, adopted the funny and popular words from the Internet and made them even more popular in the other medium of political communication. From there it spread to journalism and marketing discourses creating truly global (at the same time local, limited to Russian speakers only) medium for the use of the slang. Patriotic tendencies, historical symbols of Russia promoted by pro-government political parties and contemporary playful expressions from the language of bloggers simultaneously met in the same point of time, converged and gave birth to the wide spread of the phenomenon of *Preved* slang. The picture of *Medved* then became some symbol of a new, modern, changing Russia, and the Internet slang – an important part of its identity for the insiders. This identity is something that is very difficult to understand from outside because of the complexity of its symbol codes and their linguistic expression. The users of the slang themselves believe that their Internet slang is genuinely Russian, unique and untranslatable.

From the social perspective the phenomenon of *Preved* slang might be considered as a spontaneous social movement. For this reason, Castells' (1997: 69-71) methodological principles of social movements' analysis can be applied (with restrictions) to study of *Preved* slang as a social phenomenon. According to this analytical tool, social movement should be studied *neutrally* (*Preved* slang is neither dangerous for standard Russian nor the best way of language development); movements have their own

identity, *adversary* and *societal goal* and all of them should be understood in movement's *own terms* (vocabulary of *Preved* slang).

The following sections are going to analyse the contents of the slang using in part this methodological perspective. In other words the vocabulary of *Preved* Internet slang (Appendix 3), its own self-expression, will be studied and analysed to reveal manifestations of its users' identity, adversary and ideology (societal goal). This analysis will be also organised according to the theoretical framework of the whole thesis, and will be divided into subjects related to the local identity on the one hand and, on the other, the global network where this identity belongs to.

5.2.3 Vocabulary of *Preved* Internet Slang: Expressions of Local Identity

Preved Internet slang as most of the other artificially created language varieties is designed by and for a certain social group or a community. Community is a disputed concept in modern social sciences, especially due to the phenomenon of Internet communities which are sometimes impossible to define in real-life terms of internal structure and organization, group solidarity, and shared characteristics of community members such as, for example, age, gender, profession, interest, political orientation etc. However, the paradox of Internet glocal communities is, to follow Cavanagh's (2007: 112) words, that

> […] whether Internet communities are understood as an affective space to which we have a strong commitment, or a playful space in which we are free to experiment and log off from the consequences, the result appears to be the same. Online communities are subject to centripetal tendencies which shear away weak ties and lead to a community of the initiated.

The case of *Preved* Internet slang proves that a sense of community shared by those who use the slang, despite all the differences between members of the community, is a powerful tool of keeping its culture together. It is community's sense of identity that accounts for assigning social roles or statuses to the group members and placing outsiders, out-group against insiders, in-group.

Previously it was suggested that *Preved* Internet slang creates a local identity of a modern Russian-speaker. Modern here is used in two senses: on the one hand it is a referral to the contemporary period of time; on the other, it suggests that a Russian-speaker in question has a progressive worldview and, particularly, has a modernist, experimental attitude to the use of the Russian language. Also it is an identity of a Russian-speaker, not a Russian, because Internet slang is open to any speaker of the Russian language: for instance, some sources for the compiling of the slang vocabulary include the website of the Ukrainian Scumbags (YmersY 2006) and the English-Russian slang dictionary written by a Frenchman (Boutler 2009).

On the other hand it still remains quite vague what exactly community of modern Russian-speakers is: what are the shared principles and values, cores of community's culture. The linguistic nature of this community suggests that the principle of inclusion/exclusion in the community is the simple fact of knowing the language variety of *Preved* Internet slang. In this way, it is slang's vocabulary that creates group's identity which at the same time reflects its ideology, values and beliefs.

The focus of this section is therefore the contents analysis of vocabulary of the *Preved* slang (appendix 3). Despite the fact that most of the words used in the slang are clichés for expression of emotions, the images and meanings used emphasize what kind of social characteristics are appreciated and praised (identity and values) and which ones are unaccepted and despised (adversary, a negative identity - an important component of identity).

The core concept in the vocabulary is *creativity*, *кpиамиффф* as it is referred to. This language variety as described in its historical overview (section 5.2.1) was created by a certain group of people calling themselves *аффтар* (authors). Naturally in the vocabulary of the language, author takes a very distinct and respected place of an idol. It is the basis, even role model for identity of the slang speaker. So, ability to create new texts and resourcefulness are highly appreciated values for the users of the slang.

Creativity however is defined for the slang speakers in their own terms. The essential element of creating texts and not turning to *оффтоп* (off topic) is following certain

guidelines in order to be *appreciated and accepted* by the public. The evaluation is highly institutionalized: in the vocabulary they are two distinct sets of words expressing appreciation or disapproval. The first ones are loosely covered by the umbrella term *зачот* (accepted); the latter – *адстой* (bullshit). At the same time creations should be *original*. Plagiarism is one of the worst misdeeds for authors. Therefore there are special words and/or symbols for defining the authorship (such as *(c)* for copyrights) and reporting a repeated, old or somebody else's story or text (*боян*, or [:]lllllllll[:], (accordion)).

Important component for being appreciated in this community is use of *developed sense of humour*. The positive remarks about text appreciation include variety of words and phrases of degree of laughter the reader experiences after reading creative texts. On the lowest level there are sound imitations, such as *гыыы*, *ы* or *ыыыы*, *бугага* etc. They are followed by longer and stronger periods of laughter imaged in words *плакалъ* (cried of laughter), *ржунимагу* (cannot stop myself from laughing), *испацтула* (fallen under the chair), *пацталом* (fallen under the table).

Another element of appreciation is being *realistic* and depicting real personal experiences – the term *жизнинна* (vitally, realistic) is a high form of appreciation. In the same line authors do not appreciate poetry, which is quite firmly associated with expression of non-realistic.

Creative and funny texts in the opinion of slang users should also come together with *brevity*. Texts should be quite short and not take too much time to read, therefore an author can be disapproved for writing *многа букаф* (many letters), or something like *вайна и мир* (*War and Peace* (in four volumes) by Leo Tolsoy) (see *ниасилил*).

Personal characteristics important to the identity of the slang speaker are *vulgarity*, use of *obscene language*, and *firmness and unambiguity* in making judgments. This suggests *masculine* nature of desired principles. The patriarchal masculine worldview can also be seen in the naming of genders: while there is no particular slang referral to men, women are labeled with quite a scornful word *пелотка* (literally a cap of a Soviet pioneer). At the same time it is one of the few euphemisms in the vocabulary of the

slang, which major principle is excessive use of taboo and obscene words. The same attitude of despise is aimed at homosexuals who are referred to as *педарас* (faggot). Their sexual orientation is treated as a deviation form norm and in a way something that was brought to the contemporary reality by westernization.

Among other personal qualities appreciated and praised by those who use Preved slang there is *slight self-irony*, which is expressed in words of ironic self-praise like *кросавчег* (handsome man), *криветко* (shrimp, newbie), *мосх* (nerd), *сцуко* (professional), etc.

The distinctive characteristics of Preved slang is extensive use and oversimplification of symbols and metaphors constructed on the principle of personification. These words allow to build a parallel description of identity vs. adversary as they are articulated in the vocabulary of the slang.

Positive images/Identity	Negative images/Adversary
• *Аффтар* (author)	• *Дрочер* (onanist)
• *Падонак* (cynic jerk, scumbag)	• *Пендос* (American)
• *Сотона* (Satan)	• *Педарас* (faggot)
• *Криветко* (shrimp, newbie)	• *Абизьяна* (stupid monkey)
• *Медвед* (Medved bear)	• *Афца* (stupid sheep)
• *Сцуко* (professional)	
• *Участнег* (participant)	
• *Кросафчег* (handsome man)	

The suffix *–чег* (used in the last two words of the positive images/identity column) is highly productive in slang word-building. It is however also a sign of inclusion, so any word naming a person that was turned into the slang by adding this suffix symbolizes that this person has become a part of an in-group. For example, the language has at least two ways of addressing an American: one is scornful and offensive – *пендос* (used when referred to a stereotypical narrow-minded American, e.g. famous Live Journal user Scottishtiger); another – ironic but quite positive - *омериканчег* (used e.g. when

talking about Americans who want to find out what is written on John Lurie's transformed Bear's Surprise picture).

The most important characteristic of identity of *Preved* Internet slang however is its originality and uniqueness, possibility to be understood by the insiders only. It is not a closed community that does not allow new members to join the others, but there are a few restrictions for those who want to participate. First of all is a good knowledge of the Russian language – the slang does not make much sense in any translation or even transliteration, and creativity, openness and ability to experiment with the literary form of the Russian language. Secondly, it is important to share sense of humour and irony, especially its brutality and obscene language, with those who use the slang in their Internet communication. And finally, it is necessary to feel own originality in order to be more or less creative in text-writing and to use the language variety with pride despite attacks and critique of those who do not understand this slang. All in all, the feeling of uniqueness, impossibility to translate the essence of the slang into other languages is an essential component of identity of *Preved* slang speakers. It is no wonder that according to the online poll on possible translations of the word *Превед* (hello) the answer "it does not have equivalents in English" scores third after "wasssuup" and "zurbrize" (Zhan 2006).

Interestingly enough, this perspective on uniqueness of the language draws parallels with the ideology of political youth movement of Nashi. Their main argument is that Russia has its own way. Slang speakers express themselves in the way no one else is able to understand, which they believe is genuinely Russian in spirit. The adversaries in the statement of Nashi are global terrorism and global hegemony of the USA, while for Internet slang speakers they are global unification (absence of creativity and specific sense of humour) and also Americans (not as a nation but as a stereotypical symbol of narrow-mindedness and westernization). Therefore young people of Nashi youth movement and those who use *Preved* Internet slang in fact express the same ideas of patriotism, the first from the political perspective, the second – socio-linguistical.

5.2.4 Vocabulary of *Preved* Internet Slang: Expressions of Global Network

Identity of *Preved* Internet slang, its users to be more precise, is another example of a neo-identity: it does not only construct a unique form of self expression affirmed against an outsider, or an adversary, but also places this identity in the global network of both linguistic and socio-cultural global phenomena.

Linguistically as mentioned before the medium of the Internet is mostly an English-speaking space. According to Posteguillo (2003: 23-36) English use on the Internet is overwhelming on all the levels from technological and terminological (technical aspects initially worked out in English speaking environments) to contextual, discourse and ideological levels (English as a lingua franca since 19^{th}-20^{th} century due to economic, political and later technological dominance of English speaking countries).

The dominance of the English language on the Internet influences use of other languages in the same medium. Most of the languages used online are therefore "subject to a terminological pressure that makes them evolve differently than English Netspeak, because these other digital languages are forced to accept a significant rate of foreign terms which they have to incorporate by means of various morphological processes" (Posteguillo 2003: 123). The most commonly used morphological strategy is using code-switching, shifting from one's language to English to describe certain objects or specific terms.

In the case of the Russian language code-switching is a peculiar process mainly because of the different alphabets used in English (Latin) and in Russian (Cyrillic). Therefore simple use of a code-switcher, any English term, requires change of the alphabet. At the earliest stages of the Internet penetration into everyday reality Russian was still using code-switchers proper – English words written in Latin in the middle of the Russian text in Cyrillic. Gradually with the growing importance of Internet in all the spheres, code-switchers became more and more integrated in the Russian language by either direct translation of the words (e.g. search engine – поисковик) or their transliteration (e.g. browser – браузер). Dominance of English online is not limited to terminology only, and therefore the language of personal communication, emails, chats and forums, its

English prototype, has large influence on the same types of communication in other languages, including Russian.

Preved Internet slang is supposed to be a genuinely Russian creation, something that was invented as an alternative to and protection from the English as the only language of the Internet. However, the vocabulary of the slang features many examples of integrated code-switchers that originate from global Internet English.

One of the most productive word-building means in Internet English is contractions and abbreviations. Some *Preved* slang words are modifications of these English words. For example, expression of appreciation *ЗФБ* is constructed as an abbreviation of transliterated from English into Russian "the fucking best". *ИМХО* is a direct letter-by-letter transliteration of famous Enlgish IMHO, in my humble opinion. However, to russify this abbreviation a slang speaker applies his/her own meaning to it: *имею мненье – хрен оспоришь* meaning loosely "I have an opinion that you cannot contest". Another well-know English abbreviation of "lol", laughing out loudly, is used in the slang in the same meaning of expression of laughter but in at least two different forms: on the one hand in its direct transliteration *ЛОЛ*, and on the other as a more creative symbol *ЫІ* (one of the letter of Russian alphabet, ȳ) that looks quite similar to the written lol.

Other examples of integrated code-switchers include transliteration and russification of terms, such as *камент* (comment), *оффтоп* (off topic), *криатифф* (something creative), *юзать* (to use), *риспект* (respect), *неарить* (to promote) etc. More creative and original examples are words *форточки* and *фотожопа*. The literal meaning of the first one is "ventilation window", small window panes, almost a direct translation for Windows, which nevertheless gives it a comic effect. The second word is a transliteration of Photoshop with two small transformations – adding the ending letter *а* and changing *ш* (sh) for *ж* (zh). After these modifications the last part of the word *жопа* turned to mean "an ass".

In all the examples of code-switchers listed above English source is hidden by the use of Russian alphabet. After all it accounts to the technical constraints and communication

purposes of the Internet communication described by Crystal (2001). To speed up the flow of communication for the slang speakers it was necessary to avoid switching the keyboard from one language to another: it is not only slow, but very inconvenient, because of the technical problems that one might experience, when language is not switched yet but the word is already written, like for example *лытдыбр* from the vocabulary – it does not mean anything literally but it is a transliteration of a word from English that will be typed if one writes word *дневник* (blog) in Russian on the keyboard switched in English mode.

Apart from linguistic examples of linking the phenomenon of the *Preved* Internet slang to the international English use on the Internet there are several global socio-cultural trends that can be traced throughout the contents of the vocabulary of the Internet slang.

According to Posteguillo (2003: 104-105) English online in general is subject to increased use of euphemisms. The case of *Preved* Internet slang is an example of the opposite tendency – on its lexical level it is based on the excessive use of obscene language and dysphemisms. At the same time standard Russian in general is a very conservative language in relation to taboos and obscene words. Although colloquial Russian is very rich in strong expressions and swear-words they are isolated from the literate form of Russian and therefore the written discourse. The fact of using swear words in a written form in Internet communication is therefore a sign of more openness and fight against parochialism of the modern Russian-speakers, writers to be more precise. Some young linguists consider the overuse of strong language and traditional taboo topics of sexual intercourses and generative organs are a positive sign of language liberation (Elena Yamshshikova, Vyacheslav Kuritsyn in Vernidub 2005). The liberty in discussing topics of sex and sexuality, openness to experimentations, tolerance and acceptance of deviations and differences, less adherence to the parochial worldview and societal rules actually describes the contemporary global ideology. Although the global openness and tolerance are not facts of reality, their ideology is. *Preved* Internet slang users demonstrate it as an example: they are eagerly using swear-words in discussing taboo topics of sex, but at the same time due to their masculine values treat homosexuality as a deviation and subject to aggressive hatred.

Another global social tendency is connected with the most important value of those who use *Preved* slang, creativity. The initial goal of the authors of this slang was to create original ways of self-expression. For that reason it was invented to replace the voiceless consonants with their voiced counterparts and vice versa, interchange paired vowels, adjust the writing to the manner of illiterate writing etc. The playful words appeared that initially were meant to mock illiteracy among blog writers and convey new modern meanings, for example that ones of liberty in discussing topics that were taboo in the past. However the initial creativity became institutionalised in the slang productive word-building patterns. The unique self-expressions became clichés for the users of this popular slang.

At the same time those who use the slang believe that by writing in this peculiar manner they are becoming unique as opposed to those who do not. In this way it seems that the slang speakers massively follow another socio-cultural trend of contemporary world – identity marketing. Under the consumption ideology of globalised world the identity of a modern Russian-speaker who uses Preved Internet slang flows the same trend with other local identities: "[it is] compelled to transform itself into a marketable representation of difference: it become subject to make-overs, which reinforce its exotism" (Martín-Barbero 2002: 626).

In this way neo-identity of modern Russian-speakers is a peculiar interplay of global and local. The means of expression, its special orthographical and lexical features, the metaphors used for constructing new meanings belong to local, genuinely Russian, as its speakers think of it themselves. At the same time, the analysis showed this language's inclusion in the linguistic (dominance of English on the Internet influencing in one way or another use of other languages) and socio-cultural (ideology of tolerance and openness, nationalism resurgence, and identity marketing) networks created in the course of globalization processes. In this way neo-identity of the modern Russian-speaker of *Preved* Internet slang is constructed and articulated with the help of local means of expression, while community's societal goals and underlying ideologies are shaped by the global socio-cultural trends.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of the thesis was to study the contemporary phenomenon of intensified localization processes, identity boom as it was referred to in this thesis, and in particular, how two conflicting yet simultaneous trends of global unification and intensification of constructing local identities shape today's socio-cultural reality.

First of all, two most important notions of globalization and identity were studied theoretically in chapters two and three respectively. Globalization was presented as a multi-sided construct which comprises such phenomena as large-scale change; diminishing of real and virtual borders; mobility and flows of things, information, technology and people; and common socio-cultural unification. At the same time it was stressed that globalization paradoxically not only brings universal unification but also triggers massive localization, intensification of expression of local differences by individuals and societies. This paradox of globalization vs. localization compounded in the single notion of glocalisation is analysed further, but only with the help of another important notion - identity.

Problems of identity are introduced first from the socio-psychological perspective, because, according to the reduction principle in science, social phenomena should be approached from perspective of both society and an individual, a component of society. At the same time the emphasis is given not only to social identity of an individual, but also to the collective identity of communities. Identity is treated as merely an expression of a self-image, self-perception and self-actualisation. Identity, whether individual or collective identity is in questions, is a construct, a creative, dynamic, fluid and plural 'invention'. For that reason identity does not exist, but rather is being performed by individuals and communities, and one of the strongest reasons for this performance is motivation for self-esteem, achievement, maintenance and promotion of positive distinctiveness.

Further, in chapter four, notions of globalization and identity are put together. Two title notions of the global and the local were introduced here as well; however, their

meanings are slightly different from traditional usage. The global is treated as the expression of unification and homogenization, and the local - of particularity and distinctiveness. Study of phenomena and mechanisms of glocalisation, paradox of globalization vs. localization, is approached from the perspective of dialectics of the global and the local.

Today's society is subject to influence of global unifications on technological, economic, political, social and cultural levels. Contemporary advances of globalization have created and intensified processes of compression and deconstruction of traditional time and space, causing transformation of society from a static construct to an imagined and mobile community. As a response to the threat of this instability and major change, societies have faced the problem of identity crisis – sense of personal meaninglessness and isolation, and blurring of traditional identity boundaries on the personal level, and destruction of solidarity, crisis of social and political institutions, and crisis of nation-state on the social level. To protect themselves from identity crisis individuals as well as societies engaged in a creative process of reinventing their identities. Individuals preferred to choose what particular culture to belong to at the same time seeking for inclusion into communities of like-minded. On the social plane various social movements in search of identity fundamentalism and nationalist resurgence tendencies became very salient and numerous. However, in spite of the fact that new, reinvented identities always construct themselves on the basis of historical and cultural meanings, or their local, they in fact tend to be much less rooted in the past than oriented towards future and present globalised world-order. Globalization in its turn multiplies and promotes this identity reconstruction phenomenon, turning it into global fashion and global ideology. Due to the scale of these tendencies this thesis named this phenomenon an identity boom. Also, to emphasize the new meaning assigned to the contemporary reinvented identities they were given a particular name too – neo-identities.

Neo-identities present a peculiar interplay of global and local: they emphasize differences and distinctiveness, local in other words, but they also originate to the global processes (global threat or global fashion) and tend to construct themselves in order to

find better ways of inclusion into a global societal network, either economic, political or social and ideological.

In order to understand the phenomenon of neo-identities and provide illustrative material to its theoretical description, two case studies were made. Both of them present a qualitative study of various, not connected phenomena of constructing identities.

First one in subchapter 5.1 studies contemporary phenomenon of nationalism resurgence of South Ossetians and, in particular, ways of constructing and articulating their national identity on the web-project News of South and North Ossetia (2009). The contents of the articles published in two sections of the news portal were analysed to reveal how South Ossetians shape their own national identities in terms of traditional culture revival, as well as nation's goals and intentions in the present and the future. The analysis reveled that represented identity of South Ossetian nationalist resurgence is shaped by contradictory components of local meanings (historical examples and traditional cultural symbols, heroes, rituals, values and beliefs), global ideology (multiculturalism, democracy, and right for recognition, equality, and distinctiveness) together with aspirations to fit in the contemporary socio-political globalised world-order.

The second case-study in subchapter 5.2 analysed a phenomenon of creation of Internet language variety on Russian-speaking blogs, forums and chats that produced a spontaneous social movement around this slang. This language variety deserved special attention because unlike many other slangs and jargons on the Internet it did not only create an identity of its users' community but also became widely used in offline communication presumably as a part of the all-Russia intensification of youth movements and resurgence of patriotic consciousness. Study of the vocabulary of the slang, self-expression of those who speak it, reveled that its particular orthographic, lexical and stylistic features are expressions of the local meanings (based on Russian language and genuinely Russian symbols such as bear), while its ideology expressed behind these meanings belongs to the global linguistic (English as lingua franca and its influence on other languages) and socio-cultural (marketing of creativity, increased

liberty in language experiments, ideology of openness, patriotic consciousness resurgence) trends.

Both of the examples analysed in the practical part of this thesis revealed that seemingly different and unrelated phenomena have much in common considering that both of them are contemporary examples of construction of identity. From the analytical perspective of this thesis both of the case studies present examples of neo-identities shaped by the interplay of the global and the local. The local is used to express distinctiveness, therefore it is local meanings, sources and materials (such as history, traditional culture, symbols, heroes and adversary, language etc.) that account for neo-identities' uniqueness. The global however has a more complicated role. On the one hand it accounts for the motivation of neo-identity construction being a response to the global threat or global fashion. So, the global sets the conditions and prerequisites for neo-identities. On the other, the global shapes the societal goals of recognition and inclusion as well as ideologies to reach these goals.

Another important detail that was not analysed directly is that the Internet, global communication medium, actually is the most important means of creating, preserving and promoting local identities. In the case of the Internet language variety there is no doubt that means of Internet is crucial for building up such a vast and diverse community of Russian-speakers who nevertheless share the same modern and creative ideas and therefore have a common identity. In the case of the analysis of Ossetian nationalist resurgence web-portal of virtually united South and North Ossetia gives an example of how a distinct local identity is constructed from various global sources and becomes available globally to every user of the Internet. In this way Internet as technological advance of globalization enables localities to reconstruct, present, and promote their identity and distinctiveness with ease and convenience to global audience. At the same time Internet as a global social medium for communication and interaction contributes to further publicizing ideology of uniqueness, identity reconstruction and traditional culture revival. Form this perspective any local identity articulated online automatically becomes a neo-identity.

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Appendix 1. Summary of the Contents of www.ossetia.ru: Ossetia Section

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain		
Oct10, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/oss.food; http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/food-list						
Ossetian cuisine	• Meat: mutton, beef, poultry • Pies: corn and wheat flour with different fillings (cheese, potatoes, cabbage, meat, beans etc) of round or triangle shape	• Three pies for festivities • Even number of pies for funeral • Tamada (toast-master, elderly and eloquent) at the head of the table with elderly close to him and the younger the further • Distribution of meat: head and neck to the eldest			• Respect to the elderly	
Oct10, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/christianity						
History of Christianity in Ossetia	• Icon of Our Lady of Mozdock and Iver				• Orthodox Christianity	• IV-XX A.D. strong influence of Byzantium and Christianity on Alan people • XIX century Russian Orthodox Church influence
Oct11,04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/islam						
History of Islam in Ossetia					• Islam • Hybridization of religion: Islam-Pagan beliefs-Orthodox Christianity	• XV century of Crimean khanate influence

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain		
Oct11, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/2-ossetia						
History of Two Ossetias	• Iron (self-name)		• Prince David and Queen Tamar(a)			• Ancient Scythian people of VI B.C.
Oct11, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/oss-society						
Ossetian Society of XV-XIX centuries					• Tracking descent (patrilocal) to the ancient Alan family names	
Oct13, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/oss-mith						
Ossetian Mythology	• Nart Saga		• Narts – ancient heroes • Donbettir - sovereign of water • Tutir - wofherd, forefather • Kurdalagon - divine blacksmith • Afsati - owner of noble animals and magic reed-pipe • Falwar - domestic animals protector	• Uags – demons		
Oct13, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/oss-holl						
Ossetian Festivities		• Own Ossetians Calendar of Festivities				
Oct13, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/tsoppai						
Dance Tsoppaj		• Tsoppaj – traditional dance around a person dead of flash (variation of Simd)				• Dance described in XV century

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain		
Oct14, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/chepena						
Dance Chepena		• Chepana – traditional dance full of fun and jokes (e.g. throw any participant in water or undress upon the leader's command)				
Oct14, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/kinjal						
Dance with Daggers		• Dance with daggers – male dance used to impress women, children and foreigners(variation of Simd)				• Dates back to XIX century
Oct14, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/ustiti-kaft						
Dance Ustiti Kaft		• Ustiti Kaft – traditional women-only dance (variation of Simd)				
Oct14, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/tost						
Toast Tradition		• Strict order of toasts: 1) for good God 2) for Uastyrdzhi, travellers' protector (St. George) 3) for Tbau Uatsilla, who bring happiness 4) for the reason of celebration				

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain		
		5) for the host 6) for Alardi, protector of children 7) for Fam, the Law 8) for angels and spirits of mountains and plains 9) for bread-spirit Uatsilla and sheep-spieit Falwar 10) for happiness and abundance 11) for doorstep				
Oct18, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/kosta						
Kosta Khetagurov			• Kosta Khetagurov – first national poet			
Oct23, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/gimn						
Translation of Ossetian Anthem into Russian	• Eagle	• Simd – traditional dance			• Wisdom of the elderly • Courage of the young	
Oct14, 04; Oct23,04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/fam-so; http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/fam-so; http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/sud-ossetia						
Ossetian Family Names					• Family belongs to certain villages or land	

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain		
Oct24, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/wedding; http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/wedd						
Wedding Traditions	• Three pies • Beer	• Traditional wedding ritual involving extended family and citizens of the whole village • Bride-price (if too high the bride can be stolen)			• Respect to the elderly	
Oct25, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/funeral						
Funeral Tradition		• Traditional visits of all the acquaintances and relatives to the house of the dead person • Several funeral dinners during the year after the death			• Respect and forgiveness to the dead	
Oct25, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/mourning						
Tradition of mourning	• Black mourning dress	• Abstinence from normal life order (e.g. men do not shave and take bath, wear the same clothes, do not drink, sing and dance etc.) after a close friends or relative's death			• Respect to the person in mourning	

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain		
Nov13, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/narti						
Narts			• Ancient Narts – heroes and giants: Uryzmseg, Soslan, Batyradz, Satana etc.			
Nov24, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/saint-georg						
Legend of Uastirdzhi					• Hospitality • Respect to the elderly • Reward depends on deserts	
Nov28, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/emblems						
Emblems of Ossetia	• Coat of Arms: mountains on red background with a panther on the front					• Coat of arms found on the map of 1735
Apr13, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/arsen_kocojev_w						
Arsen Katsoev			• Arsen Katsoev – outstanding writer, the first fiction-writer in Ossetian			
May31, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/tower						
Build Your Tower: Moral Guideline to the Youth	• Eagle				• Life-long education • Discipline • Responsibility	

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain		
					• Pride • Personal and communal interests are inseparable • Honesty • Respect to the elderly • Hospitality and respect to the host • Dignity • Revenge to the serious offence • Truth • Male friendship • Help and support to the ones in need	
Nov19, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/ir/georguba						
Uastirdzhi		• Dzheorguiba – national Ossetian festivity of Uastirdzhi				

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples	(7) Progressive Innovations (○) and/or Future Goals (●)
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain			
Oct14, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/smertnaya							
Death Penalty: Critique towards possibility of cancelling the DP moratorium						• USSR mistakes	• Counting on opinion of the young in politics; • Democratic/humanistic principles
Oct15, 04; Nov8, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/hr-2000; http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/hr-2001; http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/hr-2002							
Violation of Human Rights in North Ossetia: Report on 2000, 2001, 2002							• Transformation of local administration (similar to federal) • Cleansings of the administrative staff • Reforms of control/executive governmental bodies • Wider information coverage
Oct16, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/cause-conflict							
Reasons for ethnic conflicts on the Caucasus					• Religious pluralism and freedom to practise "own" religion and trust "own" Gods	• Change of politico-administrative borders in 1920, 1930, 1950	• Unity of nations/peoples; • Fair borders
Nov7, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/kvebek-tskhinvali							
Separation movements: Tskhinvali region (South Ossetia) and Quebec, Canada				• Georgian government		• Difference in the historical sources (Georgian, Russian, Ossetian);	

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples	(7) Progressive Innovations (○) and/or Future Goals (●)
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain			
Nov8, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/falsif-history							
Falsification of History				• Georgian government	• Free-spirit of Ossetian people • Unity of Ossetians in one state	• History of South Ossetia from Georgian and Ossetian sources	
Nov14, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/about-history							
Reflections on History: If South Ossetia a historic formation or invention of Bolsheviks			• David-Soslan	• Georgian historians, government, mass media		• History from Georgian and Ossetian sources: from 18th century to 1990s. Shota Rustaveli,	
• Nov21, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/invest							
Investments into Ossetian Infrastructure							• Favourable for investments region. Many possibilities for international economy. Part of the global free-market economy
Nov27, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/mk_os							
North Ossetia's tragedy of Beslan: Aftermaths and reflections on reasons of the terrorist act		• Vendetta		• Ingush people	• Ancient rules and laws of highest justice and revenge for serious assaults (Superior Law/Tradition) • Justice=revenge • "To serve Russia", to be loyal to Russia		○ Unification of Ossetian people for matters of mutual protection

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples	(7) Progressive Innovations (○) and/or Future Goals (●)
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain			
Dec13, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/tbil-rose							
Outcomes of the Revolutions in Georgia				• Georgian government (not Georgians) as a villain for South Ossetia			
Dec15, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/confl-chech-islam							
Islam taking over the Caucasus region				• Western mass media			○ Muslim Imam using cell phone, Internet, speaking English, editing a magazine ○ Return to traditional religion (especially by the youth)
Dec20, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/beer-power							
Baltic Beverages Holding (BBH): Change of the Leader			• Taimuraz Balloev				• Probability that ex-president of BBH (ethnically Ossetian) is going to become the next governor of North Ossetia
Dec20, 04 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/bolloev-dossier							
Taimuraz Balloev	• Beer (national drink of Ossetians)						
Jan2, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/georgia-2004							
Georgia of 2004			• Russian government	• New pro-American government			

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples	(7) Progressive Innovations (○) and/or Future Goals (●)
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain			
Jan28,05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/hr2004_analit							
Violation of Human Rights in NO: Report on 2004 (the year of Beslan)							• Transformation of local administration, • Cleansings of the administrative staff • Reforms of control/executive governmental bodies • Human rights controlled by local and international organisations
Feb13,05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/jvan-evras							
Death of Prime Minister of Georgia Zurab Zhvaniya (a successful go-between in the Ossetian-Georgian conflict resolution dialogue)				• Mikheil Saakashvili			
Feb16, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/iber-iron							
Georgian Governmental (Iber-Iron proposal) Concept on solving Georgian-Ossetian conflict				• Georgian Government (National discrimination and diversification of the state)			• Republic • Law-abiding democratic state

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples	(7) Progressive Innovations (○) and/or Future Goals (●)
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain			
Mar10, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/ital-opit							
Italian politics in South Tirol to be copied by Georgia in South Ossetia							• International tourist destination; • Local work places for the young
Mar21, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/russ-opl							
Possibilities of recognition of South Ossetia by RF						• Russia as a historical ally of Ossetia	• An independent from Georgian politics states. • Ties with Russia, its strong ally
Mar24, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/presidents-site							
Website of President of Georgia				• Mikheil Saakashvili (an object for jokes rather than villain)			
Mar30, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/ini_hon							
Critique to the Georgian Governmental Concept on solving Georgian-Ossetian Conflict				• Present and past government of Georgia • Zviad Gamsakhurdia • Mikheil Saakashvili		• History of conflicts and casualties of Ossetians in them	

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples	(7) Progressive Innovations (○) and/or Future Goals (●)
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain			
Apr13, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/georgian-initiative							
Comments to the Georgian Governmental Concept on Solving Georgian-Ossetian Conflict						• Alania	• International Human Rights • Equality and Freedom • International Security and Law
May6, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/guardian_wwii							
60th Victory Day WWII	• Victory Day						
May11, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/politika11042005							
Ossetians and Ingush people					• Adaptability • Respect to the Elderly		
Aug18, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/prav-dj-vax							
Muslims within Ossetians	• Highlander • Eagle	• Jehad as fight against weak faith of believers (for Sunni Muslims)			• Vigorous Temper		
Sep30, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/geor-abx							
Celebrations of 12 year de facto independence of Abkhazia	• Alcohol (homemade)						
Nov18, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/kosovo-poker							
Kosovo: possibility of getting autonomy supported by NATO and USA							• Role/example for future independent South Ossetia

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples	(7) Progressive Innovations (○) and/or Future Goals (●)
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain			
Dec5, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/zapaklo-porokhom							
Georgia preparing for possibility of military actions in South Ossetia				• Pro-NATO Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili	•	• 1990s when Georgia was unwisely violent towards Ossetians and Abkhaz people	○ Own pipeline ○ Introduction of South Ossetian-controlled social system (pension payments) ○ Local mobile phone operator
Dec6, 05 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/suzhet-vragi							
Traditional Enemies	• Russian Orthodox Church				• Orthodox traditional values		
Jan15, 06 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/samopr-gos							
New trends in politics of de facto states							• Kosovo model and formula "Right and freedom for status and recognition" • European values; multiculturalism and ethno-national development
Mar03, 06 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/ne-meshki							
South Ossetia intends to become part of Russia	• Russian Passport					• 18th century: United Ossetia as part of Russian Empire	
Apr5, 06 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/nabl-vlad							
Past and Present of Ossetia and Russia			• Stalin	•	• Loyalty to Russia	•	

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples	(7) Progressive Innovations (○) and/or Future Goals (●)
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain			
May23, 06 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/montenegro-next							
Montenegro's Referendum and Independence						• South Ossetians claims for recognition preceded that ones of Montenegro and Kosovo	• Kosovo and Montenegro model/example for formation of South Ossetian State
Aug3, 06 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/prizr-strom							
Territorial integrity or Right for Recognition?							• Rights to live • Right to have freedoms, personal safety, ethnic identity, and speak own mother-tongue
Nov3, 06 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/sovremennoe-mifotvorchestvo							
Modern Myths of Ossetia	• Mountains						• Multiculturalism • Independence
Nov11, 06 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/net-vybora							
Referendum and public president elections on November 12, 2006					• Extended families with great respect to the elderly • High level of education		• Freedom of mass media; • Internationally legitimate elections;
Dec22, 06 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/obz-inos							
Eduard Kokoity	• Folk dances • Bread and cheese • White-red-yellow national Ossetian flag						

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples	(7) Progressive Innovations (○) and/or Future Goals (●)
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain			
Feb27, 07 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/sk-st							
Terrorist Acts' After mats							• Non-violence and no terrorism
Mar29, 07 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/fin-br							
Reburial of remains of Zviad Gamsahurdia				• Zviad Gamsahurdia			
Apr2, 07 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/eff-bum							
Youth Social Movements							○ Active movements of young patriots
Apr12, 07 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/stampa							
Ossetians vs. Europeans		• Simd (national dance)	• Stalin		• Good warriors		
May3,07 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/fidibasta							
Excuses made by Ossetians	• Ironau (Ossetian language) • Alcohol				• Ægъдау-Farn (Superior Law/Tradition) • The most russified Caucasian people	• Government and State as initially foreign forces (never self-established but adopted from the empires and states that Ossetians were part of)	
May8, 07 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/chubais							
Building of Zaramag hydroelectric power station	• Zaramag						

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples	(7) Progressive Innovations (○) and/or Future Goals (●)
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain			
Jul18, 07 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/den-xetaga							
Saint Hetag celebrations in Ossetia	• Saint Hetag holiday • Home made beer • Triangle pies				• Orthodox Christianity together with old pagan beliefs		
Jul25, 07 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/flagi							
Flags	• Ossetian flag • Russian flag						
Aug25, 07 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/rodina-kefira							
Birthplace and History of Kefir	• Kefir						
Oct18, 07 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/zena-sobstvennosti							
Restitution Law				• Georgians	•	• Conflict of 1989-1991	
Nov13, 07 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/uo-sviaz							
Communications in South Ossetia							○ Ostelekom, local cell phone company; ○ Local Internet provider
Nov20,07 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/ludvig-chibirov							
Ludwig Chibirov's 75			• Ludwig Chibirov				
Jan12,08 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/mirnim-putem							
Mikheil Saakashvili's briefing			• Georgian Queen Tamar				
Feb13,08 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/vitalii-kaloev							
Hailing Vitaly Kaloyev a Hero					• Revenge as the way to justice		

(1) Title/Topic of an article	(2) Symbols	(3) Rituals	(4) Icons		(5) Beliefs and Values	(6) Historical Examples	(7) Progressive Innovations (○) and/or Future Goals (●)
			(4.1) Heroes	(4.2) Anti-Heroes Enemy/Villain			
Mar11,08 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/fleshmob							
Flash-mob in Vladikavkaz							○ Flash-mob youth movement becoming massive and popular
Aug14,08 http://www.ossetia.ru/analytics/valerii-gergiev							
Interview with Valery Gergiev			• Valery Gergiev				• Peace in the region; • Mutual respect, wisdom and tolerance of people of Georgia and Ossetia to prevent further conflicts

Appendix 3. Vocabulary of *Preved* Internet Slang [*] [**]

(Boutler 2009; Memorium 2006; YmersY 2006)

(c): copyrights, used as a reference to the name of the original author of the joke, phrase etc.

+1: expression of approval and confirmation with previous text, comment etc.

5 баллов!: five points, expression of full approval and high praise.

Эта пять!: this is a five.

Адназначна (adv): unambiguously, with no doubt; derivate from *однозначно*; a word often used by a charismatic politician Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

Адстой (adj., m.): misspelling of *отстой*, which literally means 'sediment', 'remained' but used in its colloquial meaning of 'bullshit', 'crap'.

Албанский (adj., m.): Albanian, meaning Russian language in general or the present slang in particular. Originates to the flash mob on www.livejournal.com in 2004. The sentence *учи албанский*, 'learn Albanian', is now used as an invitation to people making mistakes in Russian or in this jargon. Sometimes spelled as *олбанский*.

АПВС?: short for *А пачиму ви спгашиваете?*, which is a transformation of *а почему вы спрашиваете?*– 'why do you ask', pronounced with a supposedly Jewish accent.

Аффтар (m): author, writer of an Internet post, deformation of *автор*.

АЖ/КЗ: short for *аффтар жжот, креатифф зачотный* – 'the author rules, the post is accepted' (see Зачот). Antonym of '*КГ/АМ*'.

Аффтар выпей йаду:expression of dissatisfaction with the opinion. Transformation of *автор – выпей яду* – 'author, poison yourself'.

Аффтар жжот: the author rules, one of the highest sign of respect and widely used appreciative comment. In proper Russian - *автор зажигает* – 'the author sets on fire'.

Аффтар жжот нипадецки: the author truly rules, literally *автор жжет не по-детски* 'the author sets on fire not like a child'.

[*] Every word in the vocabulary is given in its original form in Russian, spelled in Cyrillic characters, followed by an explanation of its meaning in English. Some entries feature standard Russian words which are also translated and/or explained in English.

[**] The contents of the vocabulary might appear obscene and offensive. Taboos and obscene language in English translation are used in order to preserve shades of meaning of the original.

Аффтар пешы ысчо: expression of agreement and request for the author of the text to write more; modification of автор – *пиши ещё*, 'write more/again'.

АХЗ: have no single idea. Acronym for *а хуй/хер/хрен знает*, usually given as an evasive answer with a varying level of rudeness (arranged from the strongest to the weakest) depending on the middle word implied.

ХЗ: shorter form of *АХЗ*.

Ахтунг! (interj.): attention (from German '*Achtung'*), used as a means to attract attention to one or another comment. Another meaning – any deviation from normal, standard behaviour.

Аццкий (adj., m.): strong form or high degree of something (either good or bad). Derived from *адский* — 'hellish'.

Аццкий Сотона: an expression of admiration; derived from *адский сатана*– 'hellish devil'.

б/п: honestly, no kidding, no doubt. Short for *без пизды*, 'no cunt (involved)'. Sometimes used as *беспесды*.

Бабруйск (n., m.): the furthest province, uncivilized place; derives from *Бобруйск*, city in Belarus (Mogilev province).

В Бабруйск, жывотное!, **ф Бабруйск, жывотнайе**: expression used to tell that someone is morally, aesthetically and intellectually underdeveloped; derived from *В Бобруйск, животное* – 'go to Bobrujsk, animal'.

Бляпашлифсенахуймудаки: expression of exasperation and anger with the users around. Contraction of *бля, пошли все на хуй, мудаки* – 'damn, go all fuck yourselves, dickheads'. Sometimes shortened as *БПФНМ*.

Боян (n., m.): an old hat, a story which has been told many times before, the post repeating an older one; in the initial meaning *баян* is 'accordion', a musical instrument. Sometimes used as an emoticon **[:]**lllllllll**[:]** or **[:]**VVV**[:]**.

Бугага: laughter, sound imitation.

Бядняшшка (n., f.): poor thing, expression of compassion; misspelled *бедняжка*.

В газенваген!: way to say to someone 'get lost', 'disappear'. Believed to be derived from German 'Gasen', gassing, and 'Wagen', a car, a deathly machine believed to have been used in World War 2.

Вмемориз!: sending a phrase/word/joke to the favourites, expression of pleasure and delight. Derived and transliterated from English 'to the memories'.

Во френды!: adding someone to the friend list; derived from English 'to the friends'.

Гидрокалбаса (n., f.): tap water used to drink after strong alcohol when there is nothing to eat with it.

Гламурно (adv.): fashionably, chic, exquisitely (ironic); from English 'glamour'.

Готично (adv.): good, solid and brutal; refers to elements of dark humour; derived from *готический*, 'gothic', and name of subculture of goths.

Гыыыы: laughter, soundimitation.

Данунах: mark of disbelief or disagreement to do something; contraction of *да ну на хуй* – 'no fucking way'.

Днивниг (n., m.): blog; deformation of *дневник*, a 'diary', 'journal'.

Дрочер (n., m.): onanist, internet porn consumer. Derived from colloquial *дрочить*– 'to masturbate', and the English suffix '–er' for the doer.

Жесть (n., f.): something impressive, awe-inspiring; derived from *жёстко*– 'hard', 'tough'.

ЖЖ: Live Journal (www.livejournal.com) blog, abbreviation of Russian equivalent *Живой Журнал*.

Жжот: see *Аффтар*.

Жизнинна (adv.): realistic; expression of admiration by text's realism or reflection to one's experience; transformed *жизненно* – 'vitally', 'like in the real life'.

Зачот (n., m.): accepted; a form of praise referring to university exams with two possible results —*зачет* or *не зачет* – 'passed' or 'failed'.

Зачотный (adj. m.): very good, neat; adjective derived from a noun *зачот*.

ЗФБ: high form of praise for the commented remark, abbreviation of transliterated English 'the fucking best'.

ИМХО: Russian transliteration of English 'IMHO', 'in my humble opinion'. Sometimes explained as the acronym of *Имею Мнение - Хрен Оспоришь* meaning loosely 'I have an opinion which you cannot contest'.

Ипацца (v.) : deformed spelling of *ебаться;* offensive colloquial verb for having intercourse or some tedious activity.

Испацтула: transformation of *из-под стула,* 'from under the chair', implying that the person writing fell of his chair from laughing. Form of praise for the comments or posts above.

Йа (pron.): I; slang spelling for *я*, 'I'.

Йопта: exclamation of surprise; derived from *ёб твою мать*, 'motherfucker'.

Йух (n., m.): 1) south; transformed *юг*; 2) gives a second meaning to some harmless expressions as it is a word хуй, 'dick', spelled backwards.

Кагдила: deformation of *как дела?,* 'How are you?'.

Камент (n., m.): comment, message posted on a blog or a forum as a reply to the lead post. Correct Russian term - *комментарий*.

КГ/АМ: dismissive comment on a post, stands for *креатиф гавно, афтар мудак* meaning loosely 'the text is bullshit, and the author - an ass'.

Классный юзерпик!: expression of fancy for user's profile picture; derived from English 'user's pic(ture)'.

Криатифф (n., m.): creative post, message. Derived from *креатив* which is in its turn a transliteration of English 'creative'.

Криветко (n., n.): 1) an ironical light insult, 2) a form of ironical self-praise, 3) newbie; deformation of *креветка* - 'shrimp'.

Кросафчег (n., m.): a slightly ironic form of praise; deformation of *красавчик* standing for literally 'handsome man', 'dandy' and figuratively 'queer', 'gay' (supposedly used by gay men to address each other). The suffix *'-чег'* is a productive slang suffix that is widely used to add a slightly ironic meaning to any referral to a person: *омериканчег* (*американец*, an American), *вадительчег* (*водитель*, a driver), *муссыкантчег* (*музыкант*, a musician) etc.

Ктонть (pron.): someone, anybody; contraction of standard *кто-нибудь*.

ЛОЛ: laughing hard; from English 'lol' – 'laughing out loud'.

Лытдыбр (n., m.): blog; formed as a Russian rendering of the Latin letters that one gets when typing in Cyrillic *дневник*, 'journal', on a Russian/English keyboard with the keyboard toggled to English (i.e. lytdybr).

Медвед (n., m.): *Medved* bear; an Internet meme; from standard Russian *медведь*.

Моск (n., m.): 1) brain, 2) nerd, smart person (ironically); derived from *мозг*.

Нах: short for *на хуй*, 'to hell'.

Ниасилил (v.): I could not read it all, a comment usually posted after long and tedious posts. Deformation of *не осилил*.

The reason why a post has not been read entirely can be explained as follows:

Ниасилил патамушта многа букаф: I could not read it all — too many letters (*потому что много букв*).

Ниасилил патамушта вайна и мир: I could not read it because it is as long as *War and Peace* by Leo Tolstoy (*потому что «Война и мир»*).

Ниасилил патамушта стихи: I couldn't read it because it's poetry (*потому что стихи*).

Ниипёт! (v.): way to say 'do not care'; transformed *не ебёт*, 'do not give the fuck'.

Обассака (n., f.): something outstandingly funny (to the extend that the reader could wet himself); comes from *обоссаться*,'to wet oneself'.

Оффтоп (n., m.): off topic, borrowed from the English expression. Written in Cyrillic *оффтопик* seems to be a diminutive (with the *-ик* ending) and was shortened to a more serious looking *оффтоп*.

Падонак! (n, m.): scumbag, cynical jerk; expression of approval to be a part of an in-group; from standard *подонок*.

Пазитиф (n, m.): something positive and optimistic; derived from English 'positive'.

Патамушта (conj.): because (as an answer without further explanation); transformation of *потому что*.

Паццталом: under the table meaning that one has fallen under the table of laughing too hard; derived from *под столом* – 'under the table' (the reader has fallen under the table from laughing too much). Synonym: *паццтулом* from *под стулом* meaning 'under the chair'.

Пеарить (v.): to promote, make more popular; derived from Russian modern term *пиар* - 'PR', 'Public relations'.

Пелотка (n., f.): 1) woman; 2) vagina, pussy; from *пилотка*, 'cap of Soviet pioneers'.

Пелотка бритайа: good, attractive woman, literally shaved (*бритая*) pussy.

Пелотка не бритайа: bad, uninteresting woman, literally unshaved (*не бритая*) pussy.

Пендос (n., m.): an American; derives from *пиндос*, a scornful referral to 1) Crimean Greeks (historically), 2) Americans, especially military who station abroad; in colloquial Russian an expression of scorn towards anyone.

Пендостан (n., m.): USA, country of *пендос* (see *Пендос*).

Первый нах: typical first comment to any post, underscoring that the comment is the first. Probably a contraction of *первый, на хуй* - 'I'm first, screw you'.

> **Второй нах и ниипёт**: the second comment to any post if the preceding is *первый нах*; combination of standard Russian numeral второй, and slang *нах* and *ниипёт*, 'I am the seconf and I don't care'.

Песдато (adv.): good, great, brilliant, neat; misspelling of *пиздато*, 'fucking well'.

Песдец (interj.): 1) awesome, 2) fiasco depending on context; misspelling of *пиздец*.

Педарас (n., m.): queer; faggot; derived from colloquial *пидорас, пидор*. Gay people are the most popular objects of jokes, hatred and attacks of *падонки,* users of this Internet slang.

> **Фсе кто выше и ниже — педарасы**: expression used to say that one does not agree with all the comments that were already written and that will be written further; transformation of *все, кто выше и ниже – пидарасы* – 'all authors of comments above and below are faggots'.

Плакалъ (v.): I cried, meaning I laughed to tears; transformation of standard *плакал* by pseudo-returning to a pre-revolution Russian spelling with characters *Ъ*.

Превед (n., m.): greeting; deformation of *привет*, 'hi', and most prominent word of this Russian internet slang.

Ржунимагу: sign of amused appreciation; deformation of *ржу - не могу* – 'I cannot stop laughing'.

Риспект (n., m.): expression of respect and admiration; derived from English 'respect'.

Рулить (v.): to be the best, to rule; derived from English 'to rule' by adding Russian verb suffix and conjugating it with Russian verb endings.

Сотона (n., m.): a lovable person, a devilishly good individual; derived from *сатана* - 'Satan'.

Сцуко (n., n.): 1) a whore; 2) a professional in his/her own field, expression of jealousy; misspelling of *сука* - 'bitch'.

Тупайа абизьяна!: a stupid person; from *тупая обезьяна* – a 'stupid monkey'. Synonym: *Тупайа афца*! - a transformation of *тупая овца* 'stupid sheep'.

Убейсибяапстену: negative assessment of the author of a post, who is invited to kill himself against a wall; in proper Russian *убей себя об стену*.

Ужос (n., m.): sign of thrilling surprise, from *ужас* - 'nightmare'.

Учаснег (n., m.): participant, derived from *участник*.

Фигассе: show of incredulity; derived from *ни фига себе*, 'what the hell!'.

Форточки (n., pl.): Russian playful name for Windows; literally means ‘small window panes’, ‘ventlights’.

Фотожоп(а) (n., m. (f.)): ironical nickname of Photoshop; the second part of the slang word *жопа* also means ‘ass’.

Фтему: form of praise and approval, the comment is up to the topic; deformation of *в тему*, ‘up to the topic’.

Фтыкать (v.): to read; derived from *втыкаться в экран*, ‘to stick to the monitor’.

Хуяссе: Sign of surprise, contraction of *ни хуя себе* – ‘what the hell?’.

Ы: laughter, the letter of Russian alphabet is often repeated to underline the intensity of laughs (ыыыы...); used to replace the English acronym *lol* (laughing out loud), as it looks quite similar.

Юзать (v.): to use; transformed from the English verb combined with a Russian verb ending.