

Georgia and its regions on the post-Soviet socio-economic development path: conditions, level, and dynamics of the process

In this dissertation, the author investigates the development of Georgia and its regional units under the conditions of systemic transformation. The work consists of eight chapters. Its layout corresponds to the research questions.

The main aim of the work is an in-depth analysis of Georgia's socio-economic development path and its regions, with particular emphasis on the period of systemic transformation. As part of its implementation, eight research questions were formulated:

Q1: What period can be considered a critical conjuncture that knocked the country off the Soviet development path it had been on?

Q2: How did Georgia start the process of entering the new (post-Soviet) path of socio-economic development?

Q3: What stages of the systemic transformation occurred in the country after 2003?

Q4: What is the level of advancement of Georgia's systemic transformation compared to other post-Soviet states?

Q5: What are the main conditions for the development of Georgia and its regions in the period of systemic transformations?

Q6: What are the current socio-economic development level and dynamics of Georgia's regions?

Q7: What are the main types of development of Georgian regions?

Q8: What is the social perception of Georgia's development during these systemic transformations?

The time range of the work varies in its different parts. Identifying the critical conjuncture, the focus was on the period from the country regaining independence (1991) to the so-called Rose Revolution (2003). When examining the stages and the degree of advancement of the systemic transformation and the conditions for the development of Georgia and its regions, mainly the period 2003-2020 was addressed. The statistical analysis of the level and dynamics of the socio-economic development of Georgia's

regions was made based on data from 2006-2019. Research on the social perception of the development of selected regions was based on primary data collected in July 2018.

The spatial scope of the work covers Georgia in its first-degree administrative division, according to which the state's territory is divided into two autonomous republics (Abkhazia and Adjara), nine regional units, and one city distinguished by the rights of a region - Tbilisi. Due to the ongoing Russian occupation of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region, these units were excluded from the analysis.

In achieving the main goal of the dissertation, a number of quantitative and qualitative methods were used, the most important being the linear ordering method using the general GDM1 distance measure by Walesiak, which was used to measure the level and dynamics of development of Georgian regions. The obtained results made it possible to carry out typologies of regional development trajectories. The questionnaire interview technique was used as part of the case study on the social perception of the development of two selected regional units (Imereti and Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti).

The results also allowed several recommendations to be made for the country, relating primarily to the need to change Georgia's regional policy model.