

DIMITRI UZNADZE'S IDEAS REGARDING THE CIVIC EDUCATION FOR PUPILS

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Abstract. The paper is dedicated to analyzing the pedagogical legacy of the eminent Georgian psychologist and educator, Dimitri Uznadze, in the context of civic education for pupils. Although Dimitri Uznadze is primarily known as the founder of the “Theory of Set”, his role as a school reformer and pedagogical thinker has been less studied. The aim of the research is to highlight Uznadze’s views and establish their connection with the needs of contemporary civil society. The paper discusses his opinion, according to which the main task of a democratic state is the education of the citizen. Dimitri Uznadze identifies two main components of civic education: 1) providing knowledge (regarding legal and social issues) and 2) civic training of character and willpower. Special emphasis is placed on the innovation he proposed – the introduction of pupil self-government. In his view, the school should be a “small state”, where pupils learn the principles of democratic coexistence through practical activities. In conclusion, the paper reveals that Uznadze’s ideas on civic education (the formation of an active, creative citizen who shares public interests) retain significant relevance in light of the challenges facing the contemporary Georgian school.

Keywords: Dimitri Uznadze; Civic Education; School Reform; Pupil Self-Government; Democratic School; Pedagogy; Moral Education; Legal Consciousness.

Introduction. The issue of forming a harmoniously developed personality, encompassing their physical, intellectual, moral, aesthetic, labor, and civic education, captures society’s attention at all stages of development and maintains its relevance. It represents a shared concern of the family, educational institutions, and society. A full-fledged member of society cannot be formed without civic self-awareness. Furthermore, support for this must be planned from an early age. Civic education is closely linked to the formation of a country’s and family’s traditions, humanism, care for one’s neighbor, patriotism, and loyalty to the homeland, which constitute the values of moral education (Malania, Akhvlediani, 2014: 181).

The formation of an individual’s social culture will help a person feel like a full-fledged citizen of their country and develop a sense of responsibility towards all members of society: towards elders, peers, and future generations. The school, as an educational and upbringing system, utilizes academic disciplines, literary works, educational, extracurricular, and socially useful activities, among other means, in the context of civic education (Malania, Akhvlediani, 2014: 182).

From the perspective of civic education, the most optimal stage is the upper school age. Upper school age is a period of civic formation and choosing a life path, during which the sphere of relationships expands dramatically. In this period, there arises not only the possibility but also the necessity for pupils to deeply master moral principles. This is conditioned by the fact that it is only at this stage of individual development that a person is able to enter into multifaceted connections with society. It is precisely from this point that a qualitatively new movement in the pupil’s life begins towards an independent life, a serious preparation for labor activity in society. This is a period of ascent for moral forces. It is during this period that the best

conditions are created for the emergence of a sense of social optimism. Social optimism is one of the most important components of civic consciousness (Ordzhonikidze, Akhvlediani, 2014: 287-288).

In civic education, an important place is occupied by the formation of legal consciousness. Its formation is directly linked to the transmission of legal knowledge (Ordzhonikidze, Akhvlediani, 2014: 289). The most significant characteristic features of pupils' civic position are: knowledge of the fundamental laws and taking them into account in one's own actions; knowledge of civic rights and responsibilities; demonstrating social activity for the benefit of the common cause; goodwill towards people, striving for humane relationships (Ordzhonikidze, 2002: 136-137).

One of the primary tasks of educational work in school, specifically civic education, is the formation of the pupil's moral orientation. A moral orientation, as is known in pedagogical and psychological science, is a manifestation of a firm social position, which is generally formed on a worldview basis (Ordzhonikidze, Akhvlediani, 2014: 293). The educational function of teaching lies in the formation of the pupil's scientific worldview, the development of their moral, aesthetic, and physical growth, and the formation of civic responsibility (Losaberidze, 2018: 34-35).

When mentioning Dimitri Uznadze, one of the founders of the university, the founder of a psychological school, a great scientist and psychologist, everyone recalls, first and foremost, the "Theory of Set" and his immense contribution to the field of psychology. His works, research of global significance, have not lost their relevance to this day. His activities in scientific, social, and educational directions significantly determined the path of the country's development (Makhokhashvili, 2021: 3).

However, in Dimitri Uznadze's multifaceted activities, there is one aspect that, quite undeservedly, seems to have fallen into the shadows and has not become a clear part of Uznadze's biographical portrait in the eyes of modern Georgian society. Dimitri Uznadze at school – Dimitri Uznadze as a teacher – Dimitri Uznadze as a school director – Dimitri Uznadze as a school reformer – this side of his portrait was overshadowed by Dimitri Uznadze the scientist, and today few people know that the school which modern educational systems strive to create already existed 100 years ago, thanks to Dimitri Uznadze (Makhokhashvili, 2021: 3).

The aim of this paper is to analyze Dimitri Uznadze's pedagogical worldview in the context of the civic education for pupils. The paper attempts to illustrate how Uznadze's vision relates to the needs of modern civil society and how his ideas can be practically applied in today's schools.

Methods. The paper employs both qualitative and theoretical research methods, which enable a systematic analysis of Dimitri Uznadze's pedagogical legacy within the context of the civic education for pupils.

Document Analysis – Within the framework of the research, original works by Dimitri Uznadze were studied, specifically "Pedagogical Letters" (1915), "On School Reform in the Caucasus" (1917), as well as other materials reflecting his pedagogical activities. Both primary sources and secondary scientific literature were analyzed.

Historical Analysis – The method of examining Dimitri Uznadze's pedagogical views within their historical context of development was employed. This made it possible to trace the origin, formation, and evolution of his ideas within the educational landscape of Georgia at the beginning of the 20th century.

Content Analysis – A content analysis of scientific literature and primary sources was used to identify Uznadze's main ideas, categories, and concepts regarding the issue of civic education. Special attention was paid to key concepts such as: "civic education", "civic training of character", "willpower", "self-government", and "the school as a small state".

Method of Synthesis – This was used to generalize and systematize Uznadze's pedagogical ideas, which made it possible to present his concept of civic education as a unified theoretical system.

Comparative Analysis – A comparison of Uznadze’s pedagogical views with modern educational approaches in the field of civic education was carried out, which revealed the relevance of his ideas and the possibility of their application in contemporary school practice.

Bibliographic Research – Scientific literature dedicated to the work of Dimitri Uznadze was studied, including the works of contemporary Georgian researchers (N. Bokuchava, N. Kakulia, E. Losaberidze, I. Malania, M. Akhvlediani, L. Makhokhashvili, N. Ordzhonikidze, S. Panchulidze). This allowed for a multifaceted understanding and interpretation of Uznadze’s ideas.

The comprehensive use of these methods made it possible to analyze Dimitri Uznadze’s pedagogical legacy in the aspect of civic education and to outline the prospects for integrating his ideas into the modern educational system.

Discussion. In 1915, Dimitri Uznadze published a series of “Pedagogical Letters”, which already showed the beginnings of his future psychological theory. According to these works, the process of teaching and upbringing should facilitate the development of the pupil’s inner, personal activity, which determines their civic character (Panchulidze, 2013: 18).

On 27 March 1917, the Congress of Public School Teachers of Western Georgia was opened in the courtyard of the classical gymnasium in Kutaisi. Dimitri Uznadze actively participated in the work of the congress. At the congress, he delivered a report on the importance of the national school (Panchulidze, 2013: 43).

At the congress, the best part of the teaching community across the Caucasus became acquainted with Uznadze’s pedagogical views. Added to this was the publication of Uznadze’s review in Russian – “On the Reform of the School in the Caucasus”. It discusses fundamental issues of educational structure, the goal of upbringing, and pedagogy. The work clearly shows the concerns of Georgian pedagogical thought at that time. Specifically, the issue of the “civic education of the new generation”, the role of willpower and the civic distinctiveness of character, organizing the school on democratic principles, introducing self-government in schools, and correcting the mistakes of the old intellectual school, because knowledge alone cannot create a builder of life (Panchulidze, 2013: 44).

Dimitri Uznadze’s work – “On the Reform of the School in the Caucasus”, which he presented as a report at the Congress of Teachers of the Caucasus in May 1917, was first published in Georgian in 1990 in the journal “School and Life”. It is easy to see that the great scientist’s opinions regarding the reform of the school system are extremely modern and relevant even today (Uznadze, 2021: 7) and still encourage the modern school towards raising an enterprising, creative Georgian (Kakulia, 2016: 7).

In the aforementioned work, Dimitri Uznadze writes: “...A democratically organized state strives to educate not just an individual, but first and foremost, a citizen. Therefore, the issue of civic education of the younger generation is the most important issue of the public education system. In pedagogical practice and literature, a vigorous debate on this issue is currently underway. It is undeniable that democracy is interested in educating conscious citizens who have the ability to creatively intervene in the development process of the state’s life. But what means does the public school have to implement this important goal? First of all, it is necessary to give children a certain amount of knowledge on the given subject; this consideration must be taken into account in the public school curriculum. But this is not the main thing. Essential is not the assimilation of a circle of views, but the civic training of character and willpower. This goal, however, can be realized in the practice of school life. After all, the school is a small state, and the citizens of this state are its pupils. Let the school be organized democratically, let its management essentially pass into the hands of the pupils. The living practice of governance will train the civic character of the younger generation; it will develop in children the significance of the interests of the whole and the awareness of the necessity of limiting the individual for the common cause. It will strengthen in children the belief that the accidental and temporary

exist only to strengthen and develop the permanent and enduring, that the primacy belongs not to the personal, which is essentially accidental, but to the social, which is enduring, permanent, and necessary. Once this is done, the civic education of character will undoubtedly be ensured. Thus, the introduction of self-government in a whole range of activities (excursions, class, discipline, etc.) is the most important means of cultivating civic feelings. If today the modern school and its leaders spend the greatest part of their time and energy on developing curricula and teaching methods, the school of the future, whose goal will be the education of a civically minded character, will necessarily think a great deal about the bustling practical activities within school life, which daily arouse in children self-activity, initiative, and perseverance. All of this will be colored by the desire to serve the common cause, by the awareness of readiness to create something permanent and enduring..." (Uznadze, 2021: 15-16).

The issue of the civic education of the younger generation does not escape Dimitri Uznadze's attention. A person, by their very essence, is a social being and a member of society. Accordingly, their activity, no matter in what direction it is oriented, is of a socio-political nature and is subject to certain laws. To implement purposeful and conscious behavior, a person must necessarily be knowledgeable in the political and social sphere (Bokuchava, 2017: 150).

The education system is obliged to take care not only of the formation of individuals but also of citizens, who will have the ability to creatively intervene in the development process of state life. Dimitri Uznadze specifies the means by which the school can realize this most important goal: 1. Knowledge. It is necessary to give children certain information on the given subject. 2. The civic training of character and willpower, which can be realized by introducing self-government in certain activities within school life (excursions, discipline, classroom activities, etc.) (Bokuchava, 2017: 151).

Dimitri Uznadze attaches fundamental importance to preparing the adolescent for life when determining the content of the goal of upbringing. Dimitri Uznadze condemns passivity and develops the idea of raising an active personality (Panchulidze, 2025: 37).

Dimitri Uznadze sees the main purpose of the pedagogical process in the upbringing of firm willpower and an active character. As early as the beginning of the 20th century, when defining the goals of upbringing, Uznadze shared the thesis that has become a priority in all progressive concepts of modern pedagogy and pedagogical psychology. Dimitri Uznadze's practical research determined the development of the democratic character of schooling and upbringing, which is still widely implemented and disseminated in Georgia today (Panchulidze, 2025: 40).

It is precisely the goal of today's 21st-century school that Dimitri Uznadze described almost 100 years ago. The scientific discussion on the interconnection of democracy, education, and the school as a social institution is over a century old. Both at the level of theory and practical experience, the advantage of the democratic school is clear. This advantage is made even more evident today by the widespread dissemination of the idea of civil society based on democratic values around the world (Panchulidze, 2014: 254).

According to Dimitri Uznadze, the training of members of civil society occurs only within the life of a democratic and self-governing school, in daily school practice. Thus, the social aspect of upbringing constitutes Dimitri Uznadze's pedagogical concept (Panchulidze, 2014: 257).

In practice as well, within the system of the "Sinatle" (Light) school, Dimitri Uznadze did everything to create suitable conditions for the free development of the child's will and activity. At the same time, he also shaped the school reorganization program according to the idea of this active, creative, strong-willed person and citizen (Panchulidze, 2014: 258).

Conclusions. This paper has examined the pedagogical legacy of Dimitri Uznadze in the context of the civic education for pupils. The research has shown that parallel to Uznadze's scientific work as an eminent

psychologist, his pedagogical views and practical activities directed towards reforming school education deserve special attention.

The paper highlights that Dimitri Uznadze was one of the first Georgian thinkers to scientifically substantiate the importance of civic education and to propose corresponding pedagogical mechanisms. As early as the beginning of the 20th century, his works clearly outlined the idea that the main task of a democratic state is not only the education of an individual, but first and foremost, the education of a citizen.

According to Uznadze's concept, there are two main components of civic education: 1) The transmission of knowledge – informing pupils about social life, laws, rights, and responsibilities; 2) The civic training of character and willpower. Special emphasis is placed on the second component, because, in Uznadze's opinion, only intellectual knowledge cannot create a full-fledged citizen.

Noteworthy is the innovation proposed by Uznadze – the introduction of pupil self-government in schools. In his view, the school should be a “small state”, where pupils, through practical activities, master the principles of democratic coexistence, a sense of responsibility for the common cause, and an understanding of the priority of public interests.

The paper reveals that Dimitri Uznadze's pedagogical ideas, especially in the field of civic education, retain particular relevance in light of the challenges facing the contemporary Georgian school. The principles he developed – raising an active, creative, strong-willed citizen who shares public interests – fully correspond to the demands of modern democratic society.

Thus, it can be said that Dimitri Uznadze was not only an eminent psychologist but also a forward-thinking educator and school reformer, whose ideas can make a significant contribution to the development of the modern Georgian education system and the process of raising pupils' civic consciousness.

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