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TITOLO TESI

**CONFLICT AFFECTED PEOPLES' ACCESS TO EDUCATION: IDP PUPILS IN GEORGIA**

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**Conflict affected peoples' access to education: internally displaced pupils in Georgia**

**ABSTRACT**

This work seeks to understand what kind of impact educational policies have had on the secondary school students among internally displaced persons (IDPs) and their identity reconstruction in Georgia. The study offers a snapshot of the current situation based on desk study and interviews conducted among a sample of secondary school IDP pupils. In the final chapter, the findings will be reflected against the broader political context in Georgia and beyond. The study is interdisciplinary and its methodology is based on social identity theory.

I shall compare two groups of IDPs who were displaced as a result of two separate conflicts. The IDPs displaced as a result of conflict in Abkhazia in 1992–1994 are named as old caseload IDPs. The second group of IDPs were displaced after a conflict in South Ossetia in 2008. Additionally, I shall touch upon the situation of the pupils among the returnees, a group of Georgian old caseload IDPs, who have spontaneously returned to de facto Abkhazia. According to the interviews, the secondary school student IDPs identify themselves strongly with the Georgian state, but their group identities are less prevailing. Particularly the old case load IDP students are fully integrated in local communities. Moreover, there seems not to be any tangible bond between the old and new caseload IDP students. The schools have neither tried nor managed to preserve IDP identities which would, for instance, make political mobilisation likely along these lines.

Right to education is a human right enshrined in a number of international conventions to which the IDPs are also entitled. Access to education or its denial has a deep impact on individual and societal development. Furthermore, education has a major role in (re)constructing personal as well as national identity.

Approved \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## ACCESSO ALL'ISTRUZIONE DELLE POPOLAZIONI COLPITE DA CONFLITTI: STUDENTI IDP IN GEORGIA

La tesi mira a comprendere l'impatto delle politiche educative su IDP (*internally displaced persons*, persone internamente dislocate) studenti delle scuole superiori in Georgia e sulla ricostruzione della loro identità. Lo studio offre un quadro della situazione attuale in base a un'analisi *on desk* e a interviste svolte con un campione di studenti IDP delle scuole superiori. Il capitolo conclusivo illustra i risultati alla luce del più ampio contesto politico georgiano. La ricerca assume carattere interdisciplinare e si basa sulla teoria dell'identità sociale.

L'elaborato confronta due gruppi di IDP dislocati in seguito a due conflitti. Gli IDP dislocati a causa del conflitto in Abcasia nel periodo 1992–1994 sono denominati “prima ondata”. Il secondo gruppo proviene dal conflitto in Ossezia del Sud nel 2008. Si è inoltre considerata la situazione degli studenti tra i Ritornati, un gruppo di georgiani della prima ondata tornati spontaneamente in territorio abcaso. Le interviste indicano che gli IDP studenti delle superiori si identificano fortemente con lo Stato georgiano, ma le loro identità di gruppo risultano meno evidenti. Sono in particolare gli IDP della prima ondata a essere completamente integrati nelle comunità locali. Sembra inoltre non sussistere alcun legame tangibile tra la prima e la seconda ondata di studenti dislocati. Le scuole non si sono impegnate per preservare le identità degli IDP, non ottenendo un risultato che avrebbe probabilmente favorito la mobilitazione politica.

Il diritto all'istruzione è un diritto dell'uomo sancito da diverse convenzioni internazionali che si applicano anche agli IDP. Consentire o impedire l'accesso all'istruzione ha un profondo impatto sullo sviluppo dell'individuo e della società. L'istruzione svolge inoltre un ruolo primario nella (ri)costruzione dell'identità personale e nazionale.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

## LIST of ABBREVIATIONS

CRC Convention on the Rights of the Child
CoE Council of Europe
EFA Education for All
FCNM European Framework Convention on Protection of National Minorities
GEO Georgia
HRBA Human Rights based approach
ICRC International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP Internally Displaced Person
IHL International Humanitarian Law
MDG Millennium Development Goal
MES Georgian Ministry for Education and Science
NGO Non Governmental Organisation
OCHA UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
UN United Nations
UNESCO UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNESCO/IIEP UNESCO International Institute for Educational Planning
UNHCR UN High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF UN Children's Fund



## CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

*“Internal displacement is the great tragedy of our times. The internally displaced people are among the most vulnerable of the human family.”*

*Former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan.*

### 1.1. The object and purpose

This work seeks to understand what kind of impact educational policies have had on internally displaced persons (IDPs) and their identity (re)construction in Georgia. The research will be conceptualized around formal school education. The focus will mainly be on secondary rather than primary schooling because, firstly, the subject and the related interviews require ability a certain level of abstract thinking. Secondly, by the end of the secondary education pupils normally take a decision whether or not to pursue their studies further – if there is an option for it. Finally, the international standards related to right to education are clearer and firmer with respect to primary than secondary schooling.<sup>1</sup>

Education is, on one hand, a powerful agent of change in a society providing an individual with means to develop to his full potential. On the other hand, the way how a society designs and delivers education indicates how constructively it deals with its diversity which may consist of different ethnic, religious, linguistic or social groups. The role of the state concept plays an important role in this respect. An exclusive concept of nation state stemming from the 18th century (people=nation=state) which recognizes only the titular people hampers peaceful and smooth ways of dealing with intergroup tensions and creates potential for an open conflict. Education plays a major role in constructing (fictive) national identity. In the past, founding state schools was a precondition for establishing nation states<sup>2</sup> as the standardised, supposedly shared moral and cultural norms created the very basis of a national

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<sup>1</sup> However, Paulson quite correctly points out, that when discussing education in conflict or post-conflict situation, the factual picture will not be accurate if other type of non-formal schooling is excluded and not taken into account or utilized., Paulson, Julia, *(Re)creating Education in Post-conflict Contexts: Transitional Justice, Education and Human Development*, International Center for Transitional Justice, 2009, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Tilly, Charles, *States and Nationalism in Europe 1492-1991*, in Comaroff, John, L. and Stern, Paul, C., *Perspectives on Nationalism and War*, Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1995, p. 197.

identity.<sup>3</sup> The form and shape of the identity has a powerful impact on horizontal social cohesion between diverse groups and individuals living in the society.

In this research, I seek to illustrate how the schooling of IDPs was organized after the displacement in post-conflict/early reconstruction phase in Georgia. I shall compare two groups of IDPs who were displaced as a result of two separate conflicts. The IDPs who were displaced as a result of the ethnic conflict in Abkhazia in 1992-1993 are usually called old caseload IDPs. The second group of IDPs were displaced after a conflict in South Ossetia in 2008. There is a slight overlap in conceptualising these two groups as the conflict which started in South Ossetia in 2008 spread over to Abkhazia forcing some Georgians to flee from the territory of de facto Abkhazia for the second time. However, in general, the distinction is clear. Additionally, I shall discuss the situation of returnees, a group of Georgian old caseload IDPs, who have spontaneously returned to the Gali district in Abkhazia, located next to the administrative boundary line dividing Tbilisi controlled Georgian territory and de facto Abkhazia. The secondary school pupils among these people form a third group covered by this work, although the scope is limited.

I am particularly interested in the group affiliations the IDP secondary school pupils indicate in order to assess their perception of their current group membership which in turn gives an indication of the level of social cohesion. I shall assess the IDP groups primarily by utilizing social identity theory and the related categorization theory, which will give an indication of the depth of their belonging to a certain group. This will in turn have an impact on their individual bonds. I believe that generating social cohesion should be one of the goals reflected in the design of educational policies. The findings are assessed within the group and then compared with the other IDP groups. The comparative findings are then discussed in the frame of the educational structures and policies followed in Georgia. I shall also discuss how the followed policies have influenced the social identity of the IDPs. These findings are then reflected against the current political situation in Georgia – both domestic and international – discussing the possible way forward.

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<sup>3</sup> Bauman, Gerd, *Introduction: Nation-state, Schools and Civil Enculturation*, in Schiffauer, Werner, Bauman, Gerd, Kastoryano, Riva and Vertovec, Steven (eds), in *Civil Enculturation: Nation-State, School and Ethnic Difference in the Netherlands, Britain, Germany and France*, Berghahn Books, New York, 2004, p. 2.; A classic thematisation on subject can be found in: Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Verso, London-New York, 1991.

Right to education is a human right enshrined in a number of international conventions. As a result, it is necessary to shed light on and assess the normative framework of the education and how well the rights of the IDP pupils have been respected, protected and fulfilled.

The role of education policy is crucial in shaping social and civic identities and reformulating or reconstructing national identity after a conflict. This is even more challenging in a diverse society consisting of many ethnic (and other) groups. Tensions in a society can also be based on social division. The roots might lay on exclusion from employment, land and access to technology needed to produce something (economic exclusion). The exclusion can also be linked to health care, housing – or education (social exclusion). It is not unusual that at least some of these factors are overlapping.<sup>4</sup> Against this reasoning, there are similarities between groups of IDPs and ethnic minorities.

IDPs are among the world's most vulnerable people. Unlike refugees, IDPs have not crossed an international border to find a safe haven but have remained inside their home countries. Even if they have fled for similar reasons as refugees (armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations), IDPs legally remain under the protection of their own government – although in some cases that very same government can be the reason for their flight. As citizens of the respective state, they preserve all of their rights and protection under human rights and international humanitarian law. At the end of 2011, there were an estimated 26.4 million internally displaced people around the world.<sup>5</sup> As these figures demonstrate, there is urgent need to find workable solutions for the serious problems the IDPs are facing. The process that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union has been characterized by ethnic conflicts as number of Soviet entities tried to regain their independency or redraw their borders. Georgia and South Caucasus as a whole have been particularly affected by this development.

### ***Structure of the work***

The first chapter of this research introduces the object and purpose of this work and describes two key issue of this work, namely who are internally displaced people and what is the role of the education in a post-conflict society.

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<sup>4</sup> Tawil, Sobhi, and Harley, Alexandra, *Education and Identity-Based Conflict: Assessing Curriculum Policy for Social and Civic Reconstruction*, UNESCO Bureau of Education, Geneve, 2004, p 13.

<sup>5</sup> Figures according to UNHCR, information available at <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c146.html>

The second chapter presents the theoretical framework describing the social group theory borrowed from sociology and utilised in this work.

Third chapter will shed light on the most important international instruments related to right to education – encompassing both IDPs and ethnic and linguistic minorities – which have relevance to this work especially when discussing the voluntarily returned Georgian IDPs in the Gali district in Abkhazia.

The fourth chapter will introduce the historical and political context where the Georgian educational system is placed today.

The fifth chapter will present the research hypothesis and explain the design of the conducted research, its scope and the type of triangulation used.

Chapter six consists of case studies explaining the background of the situation of both old and new caseload IDPs. Most importantly, the chapter presents and compares the results of the surveys conducted among the old and new caseload IDP students. The chapter also includes a rather detailed but small scale study of the situation of Georgian returnees in the Gali district, who as a rule possess and maintain their IDP status in Georgia. The chapter will describe the conduct of interviews and present, compare and assess the related findings.

The last, seventh, chapter will summarise and discuss the most important findings from the interviews and reflect them against a broader political framework. Finally, based on the described process, a few policy recommendations will conclude the chapter.

## **1.2. Conceptual framework**

The research will start with normative analyses and then move on to factual empirical qualitative analyses covering the timeframe from the start of the displacement until today. Semi-structured interviews were conducted among 23 secondary school students (18 old caseload pupils and 3 new caseload) and one young university graduate from the group of new caseload IDPs. Additionally, for the purpose of triangulation, interviews were conducted among Georgian civil servants, school directors, local inhabitants (autochthonous people with no IDP status) and other relevant stakeholders to comment accuracy of the data collected from the IDP pupils.

The assessment of the inclusion/exclusion and identity formation is mainly based on the social identity theory developed by Henri Tajfel,<sup>6</sup>a prominent sociologist. According to this theory, people have multiple identities. The prevailing one is triggered by the circumstances. Furthermore, when a group identity becomes more significant than the personal one, individuals start to see themselves more as prototypic members of their own intergroup which in this case means either old or new caseload IDPs. This is an interesting approach which immediately brings to one's mind that it tends to simplify existing reality. However, when reading through the various documents dealing with the IDPs during the years that have followed the conflict(s), it gives an idea that this is very much how the Georgian authorities (and international donors) have approached this diverse group of IDPs.

The situation in Georgia has remained very much in the spotlight due to its relevance for international politics and for regional peace and stability. Related and illustrative studies have been carried out in connection with IDPs. These studies have also been reflected on in this work. However, there are no comparative studies conducted on these two groups or studies focusing on the IDPs' identity. The perceived identity, which is stronger than factual belonging of the young people to a certain group, is a stronger and in my opinion more legitimate driver behind the course of action. The findings of this type of study should be taken into account in policy planning of both international donors and in particular by the Georgian national authorities. It is unlikely that the attitudes of elderly IDP population will change or can even be influenced. Therefore, the sustainable solution for the IDP question and the connected durable conflict resolution will and can only be dealt with around the younger generations.

This paper does not try to discuss the complex issues of historical justice and international law connected to the events that lead to the current situation between Georgia, Russia and the breakaway regions. Concepts of Human Rights and human security do include collective elements. However, I see that the earlier mentioned concepts are mainly concerned about the freedoms, rights and security of individuals who are the primary right holders. In the same way, I see that the ultimate responsibility of any given state is the wellbeing of its citizens, with the individuals, even when it collides with political aspirations such as regaining lost territories. Hence, I personally see that the political priority of the state is to ensure a smooth integration of the IDPs in their local communities or to any other location in Georgia proper where the IDPs wish to settle. As we live in an imperfect world, it has become obvious that

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<sup>6</sup> Tajfel, Henri, *Human Groups & Social Categories*, Cambridge University Press, 1981.

too often power politics prevail over international law or that implementation of those laws is selective. The events which started in Ukraine/Crimea in early 2014 have demonstrated that Russia, which is the driving force behind the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, is able and willing to actively protect its own national interests even though that would break the norms of the international law. Therefore, it would be unrealistic, if not irresponsible, from the Georgian political leadership to base its policy towards the country's IDP population on a foreseeable return of Georgians to Abkhazia or South Ossetia. It is very unlikely to happen any time soon.

### **1.3. Internally displaced persons (IDPs) – highly vulnerable people**

According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), internally displaced persons, IDPs, are among the world's most vulnerable people. Unlike refugees, IDPs have not crossed an international border to find a safe haven but they have remained inside their home countries. Even if they have fled for similar reasons as refugees (armed conflict, generalized violence, human rights violations), IDPs legally remain under the protection of their own government – although that very same government might be the reason for their displacement. As citizens of the respective state, they preserve all of their rights and protection under human rights and international humanitarian law. At the end of 2011, there were an estimated 26.4 million internally displaced people around the world.<sup>7</sup> In 2011 some 42% of the world's out-of-school children live in conflict affected areas.<sup>8</sup> As these figures demonstrate, there is urgent need to find workable solutions for the serious problems the IDPs are facing. The process that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union has been characterized by ethnic conflicts as number of Soviet entities tried to regain their independency or redraw their borders. South Caucasus has been particularly affected by these events leading also to protracted internal displacement in Azerbaijan as a result of the 1988–1994 war with Armenia over Nagorno–Karabakh. In year 2010, some 600 000 people were still displaced in Azerbaijan.<sup>9</sup> It is unclear how many people are currently still displaced in Armenia. The estimated number is 6 000. The situation between these two states has remained tensed to the extent that the possibility of a renewal of violent clashes cannot be

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<sup>7</sup> UNHRC, information on IDPs available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c146.html>

<sup>8</sup> Ellison Smith C. and Smith A. (ed.), *Education and Internally Displaced Persons. Education as a Humanitarian Response*, Bloomsbury, London, 2013, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Information according to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Information on displacement in various regions and countries is available at: <http://www.internal-displacement.org/>

excluded. These facts have relevance to Georgia which does not only have a border with both the countries and would therefore be affected immediately by the conflict (in the form of refugees or otherwise). Georgia also has considerable Azeri (6.1%) and Armenian (5.7%) national minorities<sup>10</sup> which in the case of open hostilities between their kin-states could react aggressively and destabilize the political situation in Georgia.

According to the Guiding Principle 28, “competent authorities have the primary duty and responsibility to establish, as well as provide the means, which allow the internally displaced persons to return voluntarily, in safety and with dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence, or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country. Such authorities shall endeavour to facilitate the reintegration of returned or resettled internally displaced persons. Conditions for finding a sustainable solution for IDPs is in place.”<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the principles state that IDPs must have all the available information at their disposal to decide which of the options laid down by the Guiding Principles they want to choose. In the case of Georgia, this remained to a certain extent as dead letters as the Georgian political leadership tried to ignore the problem of providing sustainable housing for 15 years as the politicians were focusing on the creation of suitable conditions for their return. This practically meant regaining the control over the breakaway regions. Only just before and especially after the second wave of displacement as a consequence of the conflict in August 2008 Georgian authorities started addressing the vulnerable conditions of the IDPs more effectively by investing and providing sustainable housing for them.<sup>12</sup>

The IDPs residing in Georgia are systematically divided in two groups: to old and new caseload IDPs. The old caseload IDPs were displaced as a result of the conflict in 1992-1994 in Abkhazia in the western part of the country. The new caseload IDPs consist of persons who fled from South Ossetia in 2008. The primary focus of the study is on the identity building where educational setting plays a major role. The assessment with regard to IDPs will provide an indicator of how the reconstruction of IDPs identity has taken place. The effect of this for the IDPs themselves as well as for the larger Georgian society is also

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<sup>10</sup> Information provided in The Second Report of the Government of Georgia submitted under Article 25, paragraph 2 of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, Tbilisi 2012, 15. available at

[http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3\\_FCNMdocs/PDF\\_2nd\\_SR\\_Georgia\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/3_FCNMdocs/PDF_2nd_SR_Georgia_en.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> UN, Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, Official document number E/CN.4/1998/53/ADD.2, 2004, p. 39.

<sup>12</sup> Ellison and Smith 2013, p. 11.

discussed. An assessment is made if the pupils from these two groups have enjoyed their right to education that is a human right enshrined in international law. Furthermore, if the groups have been treated differently, what sort of impact the differential treatment has had on IDP pupils and how that translates into their vulnerable situation.

#### **1.4. Education in post-conflict society**

IDP flows, regardless of them being generated by man-made or natural disasters, increase the diversity (ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural diversities are just a few kinds of diversities and asymmetries that exist in contemporary societies) in the society demanding measures from the state authorities to address the situation of the vulnerable persons. The policy towards the IDPs, in particular educational policies which will have an impact on their identity formation as well as future educational and working opportunities. How the respective policies will be designed and carried out, and whether they will be inclusive or exclusive, will have an impact on social identity of diverse interstate groups which can have a considerable impact on the reconstruction of the national identity after a conflict.

In spite of a destructive nature of a conflict, it can also offer a possibility, a window of opportunity to reform the educational system and ensure the transition to a system that will accommodate the needs of diverse groups better and enhance the interethnic relations, equality and fulfilment of the rights of different actors involved. This can be feasible due to the fact that old political regimes are challenged by alternative fresh political solutions. Communities coming out of open hostilities have high expectations for the positive impact of the education to catch up the lost time and opportunities. Additionally, more sources may be available (domestic or international) and finally, the resistance of the old establishment for the reform may be gone or weakened.<sup>13</sup> In other words, there is a possibility to create educational system that will not reproduce the socio-economic disparities and discrimination those groups may have faced in the past.

Is it possible to identify best practices from the selected cases? What might be the pitfalls to be avoided when designing the educational setting after a conflict? The interest of the

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<sup>13</sup> The World Bank, *Reshaping the Future, Education and Post-conflict Reconstruction*, Washington D.C., 2005, p. 25-26.



international community has been increasing towards the role of the education in fostering peace and stability in post-conflict situations. However, it seems that the full capacity of the educational institutions creating social cohesion has not been utilized. Schools provide a vehicle to bridge different groups and individuals, in spite of the intercultural mistrust, by focusing on skills building and future prospects. The study seeks to yield concrete points to support institutional engineering and policy planning in a post-conflict society with multiethnic make-up.

Education has a crucial part to play in inclusion/exclusion as well as in identity formation. Education is also an enabling right effecting an individual's possibility to enjoy his/her civil, political, economic and cultural rights. State's obligation to protect and fulfil (IDP) pupils' right to education is a human right enshrined in various international treaties. The complexity of the situation in an already volatile political environment in a multiethnic or multilingual post-conflict situation can make this task a very challenging one for the leadership of the country.

The case of Georgia offers an interesting possibility for comparison of treatment of two different IDP groups, which emerged because of two different conflicts. The first one took place in Abkhazia in 1992–1993, in the western part of the country by the Black Sea. The second one took place in 2008 in South Ossetia, less than 50km north-west from Georgia's capital, Tbilisi. The Georgian authorities treated the two displaced groups differently. After the 21 years of the first conflict and six years after the second there are still around 270 000 IDPs in the Georgian territory and the durable solution for their situation remains open.

When examining integration in the context of educational settings it has to be noted that its positive impact is not self-evident. In some circumstances segregated schools might prove to work better in a particular situation, for instance in deeply divided societies where there are no conditions for living together. Will Kymlicka argues that even though common schooling is desirable at least to transmit a shared set of values within a society, it might still often be the case that separated schools are able to create and promote better loyalty to certain cultural traditions.<sup>14</sup> Segregated schools might be the only applicable model to defuse the situation

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<sup>14</sup> Kymlicka, Will, *Politics in the Vernacular – Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship*, New York 2001, p. 304-305.

and to start moving from the post-conflict situation to reconciliation. However, even if economic constraints are offered as a reason by politicians why extensive measures cannot be taken in order to enhance the integration through education, it is easy to imagine that the bill for the entire society for not taking care of effective integration of minorities will always be bigger. Interestingly, segregated education was discussed during the Forum of Minority Issues as a part of activities of UN Independent Expert for National Minorities in 2008 as a part of drafting UN Recommendations on Minorities and Right to Education. The consultation process during the Forum indicated that some minorities considered segregated education to be positive in order to remain in the same area and not to change educational institutions. As a result, an explicit section on desegregation was not included in the UN recommendations.<sup>15</sup> However, against the existing international standards and case law in some cases factual segregation is not banned as long as it is based on objective needs assessment and not on discrimination of any specific group.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Literature review***

In spite of the fact that Education in Emergencies is a fairly new discipline, the body of literature has been growing fast. According to the existing studies, some states manage to seize this opportunity for change through education better than others (see, for instance, Marques, Jose and Bannon Ian, Central America: Education Reform in a Post Conflict Setting, Opportunities, CPR Working Papers 4/2003) How and why would this be? What are the reasons behind this? Why have some regions failed in implementing the educational reforms? Is there a lesson to be learned? Can some elements be traced that could offer solutions for other societies in a similar situation? Here particular attention has to be placed in the way that the cases are selected/dealt with? How decisive is the state architecture – what kinds of competences are found at a local level? Devolution of powers: the amount of school autonomy and how this is translated in choices with regard to educational models.

The existing research literature includes analyses of the existing legal framework. There is very little research on the factual impact of the selected educational model). Perhaps the most quoted study on the role of education in a divided society is the UNICEF study by

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<sup>15</sup> Wisthaler, Verena, *The Right to Education for Minorities: An Overview on Existing Recommendations from the Hague to Geneva*, in European Yearbook of Minority Issues Vol 7, 2008/2009, Brill/Nijhoff, Netherlands 2010, p. 141.

<sup>16</sup> See the ruling in the case of the ECtHR, *D.H. and Others vs. the Czech Republic*, (Application no. 57325/00), judgement 7 February 2006, available at [http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx?i=001-83256#{"itemid":\["001-83256"\]}](http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx?i=001-83256#{)

Kenneth Bush and Diana Saltarelli; *The two faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict*, 2000, Unicef Innocenti Research centre, Firenze, 2000. It stresses the two potential sides of the education: It can be used to mitigate the conflict and to increase understanding between different groups. There are also individual studies on the role of the education settings in North Ireland (MacCully, Alan, *Teaching Controversial Issues in a Divided Society: Learning from Northern Ireland*, 2005.) and South Africa.

The book by Tony Gallagher from the University of Belfast is titled *Education in divided Society: Learning from Northern Ireland*. The book does not provide a comprehensive picture of the subject nor offered clear ideas of areas to study and elaborate further. The book was a compilation of articles dealing with very diverse issues from the history of the Nazi Germany to US case law. Gallagher admitted himself that the research results of the role of the educational settings carried out in North Ireland have been controversial. This, coupled with the results of the detailed Human and Minority Rights in the Life Cycle of Ethnic Conflicts-project (MIRICO)<sup>17</sup> spelling out the huge variability of the reasons behind the diverse conflicts, makes it dubious to come up with a tangible concept with regard to conflict prevention. For instance, could it be claimed that integrated school model as a rule will be “better” in all societies? Should one promote it everywhere and consequently focus on how segregated schools will be transformed into inclusive ones?<sup>18</sup> This research touches upon these topics while describing the situation in western Georgia.

Research on IDPs has been more focused on other aspects of the displacement rather than on education. The book *Education and Internally Displaced Persons*<sup>19</sup> provides several case studies, which, however, deal with very different situations compared with Georgia.

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<sup>17</sup> Information on the MIRICO-project including related thematic reports can be found at <http://www.eurac.edu/en/research/projects/ProjectDetails.html?pmode=4&textId=2893&pid=8381>

<sup>18</sup> One historical example of application of separated school model can be found in Europe, in Province of Bolzano, in North Italy. The goal of the school model has primarily been to protect and preserve the identity of the German-speaking minority (which forms majority in the Italian autonomous province). The fact that the applied school model is monolingual creates an obstacle to achieve effective bilingualism in the region. According to some critics the result has been that in spite of economic prosperity and factual stability the confrontational relationship between the two ethnic/linguistic groups have persisted. It is not very realistic to achieve advanced proficiency in a language that is taught as a second language in the school. Moreover, the monolingual school environment does not provide natural learning environment and place to establish contacts with pupils from other ethnic groups., Rautz, Guenther, *Dibattito sulla Sperimentazione Scolastica*, in *L'ordinamento Speciale della Provincia Autonoma di Bolzano*, (Edits.), Joseph Marko, Sergio Ortino, Francesco Palermo, Verona 2001, p. 862.

<sup>19</sup> Ellison Smith C. and Smith A. (ed.), *Education and Internally Displaced Persons. Education as a Humanitarian Response*, Bloomsbury, London, 2013.

Furthermore, the cases covered by the book were very different and mainly descriptive or normative and thus did not offer many theoretical considerations.

It is obvious that rebuilding of educational institutions in a fractured society after a conflict is a vast topic. The scope of an individual study can only be placed on selected theme(s). At the same time, which also comes out from smoothly written, well-known study by Bush and Saltarelli, *The two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict*, various factors are interdependent and any kind of deductive conclusion will require understanding of a broad variety of issues. The building of educational institutions is a package that needs to address such issues, and not only, as school models, competences of the school authorities, curriculum, the role of history teaching in the context of reconciliation, teaching language, teacher training, selection of pupils (and teachers), the participation of the parents in the school work, financing of the education etc. Having said this, how to narrow down the work so that it still has a comprehensive structure and the results will be presentable? Moreover, how much authority can it have to deduct research results, to criticize or support certain theory based on few case studies?

### ***Why education matters?***

Education is an enabling right linked to civil, political, social and cultural rights. It aims at full development of a person and creates better socioeconomic opportunities. Ethically speaking it should provide equal opportunities for individuals to improve their living standards as nobody's status is predestined. Instead, it can be altered through education, access to which is based on merit. State is the primary duty bearer of a functioning educational system. It is a requirement for good governance and inclusive democracy. A state will damage its image and expose itself to criticism and political pressure if it does not meet its international obligations. According to the World Bank, investment in education is highly profitable (yielding triple return in terms of tax revenues). In relation to this, the time lost in organizing and providing accurate education delaying individuals' pace to acquire diverse sets of skills is an economic loss for the state's economy. Less and randomly educated individuals – regardless if they are members of minorities, IDPs or persons with immigration back ground – are also less likely to obtain more sophisticated and better paid jobs which will also yield less in revenues for the state. Ultimately, a functioning inclusive education system endorses social cohesion in the society consolidating equality and peace and stability.

There are several UN resolutions, both by General Assembly and Security Council, related to the conflict in Georgia in 2008. None of them make an explicit reference to the right to education of the IDP pupils.<sup>20</sup>

According to an online-survey available on the web site of the Office for Georgian State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality, access to education was considered the second most important factor (30% of the votes) – after trade and freedom of movement (51% of the votes) – in contributing to de-isolation of the residents of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Education in post-conflict situation***

IDP schooling often starts during the conflict. In fact, it is rare that the schooling comes to complete standstill because of a conflict. According to Sinclair, education in emergencies can be divided into four groups: 1) education for refugees, 2) education for internally displaced persons, 3) education under conditions of armed conflicts, insecurity and instability and 4) education for reconstruction after armed conflicts and catastrophes.<sup>22</sup> This work focuses on education for IDPs. Figure 1.1. shows, according to the author of the quoted source,

<b>Conflict status and type of educational initiative</b>					
<b>Conflict status</b>	Non conflict, relative peace	Internal trouble, social unrest. pre-conflict	Armed conflict	Transition out of violence; peace process	Post-conflict
<b>Type of educational initiative</b>	education for prevention		education in emergencies		Education for social and civic reconstruction

Table 1.1. Conflict status and type of educational initiative. Modified from Tawil & Harley 2004, 11. (*Education, Conflict and Social Cohesion*, eds. Sobhi Tawil, Alexandra Harley. Unesco, International Bureau of Education, 2004).

<sup>20</sup> The resolutions are listed and can be found at the site of the Georgian Office for State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality <http://www.smr.gov.ge/index.php?opt=96>

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Sinclair, Margaret, *Planning Education in and After Emergencies*, UNESCO, Paris, 2002, p. 26.

at which state of the conflict the focus should be placed on education. However, there is no consensus on the definitions of different conflict phases. The explanation for this is twofold. Firstly, the range and context of the conflicts is so broad that it is difficult to define the different phases of a conflict. Secondly, very often conflicts do not follow any phases progressively. As a result, the conflict can be in a different phase in a different region or it can “develop” back and forth. Nevertheless, “... education reconstruction activities should begin concurrently with humanitarian assistance and be scaled up as political space, civil society support, administrative capacity and resources permit.”<sup>23</sup> However, there is no clear distinction between humanitarian phase and reconstruction phase.

Organizing education in emergency has often worked on ad hoc basis and therefore human vulnerability has been increased due to lacking adequate emergency management that has led to financial, structural and human loss. After the adoption of Convention of the Rights of a Child and the increase in the number of (inter)state conflicts in the 1990's, the international community became aware that more focus must be placed on the special education needs of the children in complex conflict situations. In spite of the fact that organisations such as UNICEF and UNHCR had gathered experience in this field it is visible that the research area is rather new and its methodology has not developed yet.<sup>24</sup>

The education, however, can have two different impacts. The formal education system can amplify and deepen societal conflicts when it (re)produces socio-economic inequalities and causes marginalisation and exclusion. Additionally, education can be instrumentalized to promote teaching that denies the cultural diversity of the society which then in turn becomes intolerant towards out-group members. There are several examples (for instance Rwanda in Africa) on how education has been used as an important instrument to mobilize ethnicity to serve the political goals leading to a violent conflict.<sup>25</sup>

Education also has an important role in generating social cohesion. According to World Bank report, education fosters individuals' ability to function as a member of his/her

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<sup>23</sup> The World Bank, *Reshaping the Future, Education and Post-conflict Reconstruction*, Washington D.C., 2005, p. 33.

<sup>24</sup> Seitz, Klaus, *Education and Conflict, the Role of the Education in the Creation, Prevention and Resolution of Societal Crises – Consequences for Development Cooperation*, Wiesbaden 2004, p. 9, available at <http://www2.gtz.de/dokumente/bib/05-0160.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

community. Education and training increase social cohesion, reduce crime and develop more equal income distribution.<sup>26</sup>

A school system, which has different school-exit examinations and requirements for advanced studies, would only generate social differentiation creating unequal groups. All in all the Georgian school system has high standards and it aims at providing equal opportunities to all based on merit. Nevertheless, the increased global educational market place together with private schools are challenging the system (as discussed in the conclusions part).

According to influential conceptualising by Bourdieu, the educational systems (in industrialised countries) work in a way which legitimises the class inequalities. The success in terms of educational performance is supported by the cultural capital and more valuable class status. Lower-class pupils do not have these features and as a result it is likely that the majority of them will perform worse in the schools than their better-off peers. According to Bourdieu, this creates a legitimate mean for the higher-class pupils to obtain and maintain their better positions in a society based on their better educational credentials. This process reproduces and justifies the social inequalities.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, there is also another approach defined by Parelius who reminds that educational institutions can exactly be used to contribute to social change by disseminating new values and attitudes promoting greater social equality among the pupils and the entire society.<sup>28</sup> Although Bourdieu's theory was based on a very different context, it could have been projected in local Georgian communities where the IDP pupils arrived after their displacement.

Developing from Bourdieu, Seitz states that the more closely societal participation opportunities, influence and economic wealth are linked in the society, the larger extent the schools reproduce social inequalities. Against this backdrop, it can be concluded that in backward conditions where there are scarce opportunities and the schools are merely

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<sup>26</sup> The World Bank, *Lifelong Learning in the Global Knowledge Economy: Challenges for Developing*, 2002, p. XVII.

<sup>27</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre, *Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction*, in *Power and Ideology in Education*, Karabel, Jerome and Halsey, A. H. (Eds), New York/Oxford, 1977, p. 494.

<sup>28</sup> Parelius-Parker, Ann and Parelius, Robert, *The Sociology of Education*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1978, p. 31-32.

reproducing the existing class or ethnic divides, a modern school is not able to improve economic situation or the social justice of the marginalised people.<sup>29</sup>

After 1991, Georgia's society has been exposed to considerable modernisation. Senghaas states fittingly that conflicts in fact are the driving force behind all the modernization processes in societies. "Societies exposed to modernisation processes are ultimately in permanent state of conflict with themselves."<sup>30</sup> Social change creates friction between different groups and is therefore a source for a conflict in a diverse society. In a nutshell, development is also destabilising force which challenges the existing societal power structures that can prevent people and various groups, such as IDPs, from developing to their full potential.<sup>31</sup>

Structural violence is a concept introduced by Johan Galtung describing a type of violence where a social structure or social institution is preventing people from meeting their basic needs.<sup>32</sup> Salmi elaborates Galtung's ideas further (see the table 1.2.) stating that structural violence can consist of direct, indirect, repressive and alienating violence. According to this typology, exclusion or discrimination of certain groups constitutes indirect structural violence. Repressive violence in education reproduces a democracy deficit that can be caused by not providing sufficiently political education in schools. As an example of alienating violence are minorities who are prevented from learning through their own language. Lynn Davies makes a strong statement in her article saying that the schools themselves, due to their design which is linked to structural violence, are feeding the flame and worsening societal conflicts. According to Davies, schools are linked through three factors with the origins of violent conflicts. These are: 1. the reproduction of socio-economic disparities and the exacerbation of social exclusion, 2. transmission of hegemonic concept of masculinity, 3. the development of exclusive identity and citizenship concepts which do not recognize cultural diversity and promote tolerance. In her rather pessimistic view, schools' ability to deliver education which could effectively promote a peaceful society are

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<sup>29</sup> Seitz 2004, p. 49

<sup>30</sup> Senghaas, Dieter, *Zivilisierung wider Willen. Der Konflikt der Kulturen mit sich selbst*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag 1998., cited according to Seitz 2004, p. 49.

<sup>31</sup> Bush, Kenneth D. and Saltarelli, Diana, *The Two Faces of Education in Ethnic Conflict*, Florence 2000, p. X.

<sup>32</sup> Paul Farmer has discussed and developed the concept of structural violence in his works. Rather than providing a precise definition for the notion of structural violence, Farmer describes the concept through concrete examples. In his opinion, social conditions and their discriminatory effects create the genesis for imbedded abuse and deprivation, in other words, for structural violence. See: Farmer, Paul, *Pathologies of Power – Health, human rights, and the new war on poor*, University of California Press, 2003.



limited unless the entire structure of education, curricula and the way how the schooling is conducted is changed.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Davies, Lynn, *Education for Positive Conflict and Interruptive Democracy in Education, Globalization & Social Change*, Lauder, Hugh (and others), Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 1029-1037.

<b>Forms of violence in the context of education</b>	
Direct violence (deliberate injury to the integrity of human life)	Effects of violent conflicts Land mines Bombing Threats, kidnappings, murders Weapons in schools Corporal punishment Failure suicides
Indirect violence (indirect violation of the right to survival)	Illiteracy Inequities of access and achievement Gender Socioeconomic groups Ethnic groups Linguistic groups Religious groups Inadequate infrastructure
Repressive violence (deprivation of fundamental political rights)	Absence of democracy in schools Lack of education for democracy
Alienating violence (deprivation of higher rights)	Foreign/biased curriculum and textbooks (history, biology)  Foreign language  Alienating pedagogical practices  Harassment Examinations as negative incentive

Table 1.2. Forms of violence in the context of education. Typology according to Salmi, *Violence, Democracy, and Education: An Analytic Framework*, 2000, p. 17, available at <http://info.worldbank.org/etools/docs/library/232525/Salmi.pdf>

## *Conceptual framework*

Diversity management is a concept which seeks to address the increasing diversity in Europe and beyond which is based on growing immigration, free movement of labour force and increased demands and recognition of the rights of various ethnic and linguistic minorities.

Increasing diversity is challenging the traditional dogmas, concepts and identities in diverse countries. Historically, nation states have been responsible for the creation of society's self-image. In this process, modern education systems played a decisive role in creating national identities based on fiction of shared objective and subjective markers as well as on myth of mutual past. These ideas were normally presented by the representatives of titular nation claiming for the ownership of the state. If the idea of a state was based on the exclusive concept of state-mode, it affected the mentality and perception of the dominant population and made it more problematic to recognize diversity and deal with linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural diversities within the society. This homogenous concept coupled with possible discrimination of out-groups, which did not fit in well into the image of the nation state, created flammable conditions for potential ethnic conflicts.<sup>34</sup>

The notion of Diversity management has traditionally been linked to economy and on private companies' ability to lead their multinational or multiethnic staff in the most profitable way.<sup>35</sup> It has been stated that sometimes the benefits of a very heterogeneous workforce have been overstated. For instance, Wrench had carried out comprehensive analysis of the existing critical literature on diversity management deriving from a wide range of academic and political positions, and presented the existing critic in an organized manner.<sup>36</sup> Basically, the arguments do not reject diversity management as a principle, but ask for a more realistic approach of diversity management without over-exaggeration of its benefits. Regarding diversity in contemporary society, some observers have commented, for instance, in the case of the European Union when it has been phrasing its 'unity in diversity' that there simply has not been any other choice due to existing reality.<sup>37</sup> It is a matter of fact that the European

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<sup>34</sup> Bush and Saltarelli 2000, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> Mitja Žagar explained during his lecture in May 2014 in Koper, in Slovenia that this actually had been an unfortunate error. In the early days, no single notion was used to describe various policies and instruments dealing with diversities in states and societies. Someone from intergovernmental organisation with no direct involvement in the scholar work had then simply started to use/imposed the notion diversity management regardless its obvious and slightly misleading connotation with economics.

<sup>36</sup> Wrench, J., *Diversity Management, Discrimination and Ethnic Minorities in Europe: Clarifications, Critiques and Research Agendas*, 2002, Center for Ethnic and Urban Studies, Sweden, p. 107, available at [http://www.isv.liu.se/remeso/publikationer/themes/themes\\_arkiv/1.160397/THEMES192002.pdf](http://www.isv.liu.se/remeso/publikationer/themes/themes_arkiv/1.160397/THEMES192002.pdf)

<sup>37</sup> Toggenburg, Gabriel, *Unification via Diversification – what does it mean to be “united in diversity“*, available at <http://www.eumap.org/journal>, p. 2-4, 2004.

states are very diverse due to their unique historical and political development. As national identities remain sensitive elements forming the very core of the member states, it is very likely that any sort of harmonisation will be allowed which would diminish the existing traditional intrastate diversity. Diversity is also contradicting the principles of economic efficiency where also homogeneity and standardization are considered to yield the strongest profitable results. These are the examples of critiques that demonstrate that we should not simply accept the diversity management concept as given or as a neutral management practice, but there is need to look more critically at its origins, philosophy or claims, and study it as something which has developed in order to serve a certain purpose.<sup>38</sup>

In contemporary societies there are numerous diversities; ethnic, religious and cultural diversities. These, however, only present small number of different diversities. Yet, due to their significant social impact, these diversities must be considered as powerful elements which have influenced history and development especially during and after the merge of modern states.<sup>39</sup> The role diversity management plays in conflict prevention and conflict management is crucial. Due to the role education can play particularly in conflict prevention and in forging durable conflict resolution, I see educational polices as an integral part of diversity management in the framework of conflict management.

Diversity management deals with regulation and management of social relations, ethnic relations in particular. Moreover, diversity management deals with conflict prevention, management and resolutions. I am interested in how schools can be used to contribute to diversity management which aim, in my opinion, is intergroup integration and social cohesion which in turn promotes societal peace and stability.

Due to ongoing internationalisation, ethnic, religious and cultural heterogeneity has been increasing in the contemporary societies. Many cultures have become increasingly heterogeneous as a result of globalisation. Some traditional cultures are very likely vanishing and new ones are being developed by combining in new and unforeseen ways. Simultaneously, cultural identity has become less dependent on geographical location.<sup>40</sup> The idea of culture has shifted and it is now considered a dynamic process, consisting of

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<sup>38</sup> Wrench 2002, p. 4-6.

<sup>39</sup> Žagar, Mitja, *Diversity Management and Integration: From Ideas to Concepts* in European Yearbook of Minority Issues, Volume 6 (2006/2007), 2008, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Friedman, Jonathan, *Globalization and Localization*, in *The Anthropology of Globalization*, Ina, Jonathan and Rosado, Renato, Blackwell Publishers, 2002, p. 233-234.

negotiations between various norms, lifestyles and values.<sup>41</sup> According to Rosado, the shift has taken place fast “leaving most people as confused bystanders, desperately hanging on to the past, which in part is dysfunctional to the present and in many ways irrelevant to the future.”<sup>42</sup> It can be argued that diversity management is not a new thing, but rather a set of policies and instruments which can also be found in the past, but which have not been deployed in a way same to serve values and norms which our contemporary societies are endorsing. Today, diversity management is used to foster multiculturalism which recognizes, respects and enables diversity within a society. Arguably it can be said that in the past, policies which today fall into the sphere of diversity management have been used to exclude and marginalize groups and individuals who did not fit into the dominant group. Historically speaking, examples of “exclusive diversity management” can be found in colonial states (Spain, Great Britain, France etc.). It can perhaps be pointed out, that in the same way the realization of human rights happened gradually over a long period of time. For instance, the founding fathers of the United States influenced by the ideas of philosophers of 18<sup>th</sup> century enlightenment were slave-owners themselves. Other often quoted example of gradual and progressive realizations of various human rights are the political rights of women which even in old Europe were not a norm until rather recently.<sup>43</sup> Later on during the era when the concept of nation states started to evolve, the leading political elite also showed, as a rule, little respect for diversity which did not fit in with the respective great narrative, or with the project of creating exclusive national identity. The latest dramatic phase occurred after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the eastern block leading to resurgence of ethical conflicts as a result of the creation of new competing (nation)states. The aim of diversity management today is to create inclusive society where no single group is set as a norm.<sup>44</sup> Diversity management is a holistic approach which tries to balance unity and diversity. It is evident that designing tools and implementing practices for this purpose is challenging. In case the focus is too much on uniformity and sameness, the process might lead to assimilation and exclusion and the society will not profit from the unique aspects of individuals and diverse cultures. If the focus is predominantly in celebrating the diversities,

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<sup>41</sup> Boecker, Malte, *Intercultural Competence – the Key Competence in the 21st Century*, Bertelsmann Stiftung and Fondazione Cariplo, 2006, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> Rosado, Caleb, *What do we mean by “Managing Diversity”?*, in *Workforce Diversity*, Vol. 3, Concepts and Case, Hyderabad, 2006, p.1, available at [http://www.rosado.net/pdf/Managing\\_Diversity\\_3.pdf](http://www.rosado.net/pdf/Managing_Diversity_3.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Finland, though an autonomous part of Russian empire by that time, was the first European country to introduce women’s suffrage in 1906.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

it can lead to magnified differences and separation at the cost of social cohesion worsening the possibilities of peaceful, satisfactory and sustainable mutual societal life.

The existing European policies have sometimes been divided in three categories: Non-differentiation, differentiation and separation. These policies are ideals and in reality none of the European countries are fully ignoring diversities. In spite of some initial resistance, most of the European countries have adopted at least to some extent policies containing elements of multi and/or interculturalism. The first model, non-differentiation, does not recognize difference as it holds group unity as the desired goal. Differentiation, on the contrary, fully recognized diversities within a society and creates diversified ways to deal with the various diversities. Separation model implies that a state is not interfering in the management of various groups and merely respects their autonomy.<sup>45</sup> Timisit makes a valid point stating that “policies that take account of diversity are designed to reflect existing diversity – not necessarily to promote it – as in the end of differentiation lies the risk of disintegration.”<sup>46</sup>

Taylor advocates the adoption of the politics of equal recognition comprising the dual political concepts of universalism and difference. The politics of universalism means the equality of all citizens ensuring the same rights and entitlements for all the members of the society, while at the same time, the politics of difference recognizes the unique identity of the individuals and/or groups that make up the society.<sup>47</sup>

Implementation of the politics of universalism by authorities and citizens within society affirms the multiple identities in societal context and recognizes that individual and collective identities have the ability to contribute to the enrichment and to positive development of the society in which they cohabit.

Diversity management can be described as a set of strategies, policies and concepts aimed at ensuring equal opportunities and inclusion in terms of social, economic and political life for all the members of the society and in particular for all the complex societies with distinct vulnerable groups and marginalised individuals.<sup>48</sup> Crises and conflicts are a normal phenomenon in asymmetric diverse societies consisting of individuals and groups with

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<sup>45</sup> Timis, Gerard, *Diversity Management in European Countries, Part II Strategies*, UN Expert Group Meeting on Managing Diversity in the Civil Service, New York, 33-4 May 2003, p.1.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Taylor, Charles, *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton University Press, 1992, p. 37-39.

<sup>48</sup> Zagar 2008, p. 17.

different identities and interests. Diversity management is a toolbox with a set of policies and practises which can and should be used in steering a possible conflict which demands constant and successful regulation and management. The most important phase of managing diversities is conflict prevention. If that fails, then follows conflict management and, finally, conflict resolution. It is possible that all this phases are overlapping in a conflict situation and need to be addressed simultaneously.

According to Zagar, diversity management is a permanent process that addresses all relevant issues of diversities and asymmetries in societies; it includes the regulation and management of socially relevant diversities – to which the considerably large IDP group in Georgia qualify. It consists of “prevention, management and resolution of crises and conflicts. It is a process that requires understanding, recognition, acceptance and respect of diversity, modes of coexistence and cooperation, sensitivity of people to all factors that might signal escalation of crises or conflicts and their capability to apply adequate activities and measures which would prevent such an escalation.”<sup>49</sup> Zagar also points out that symmetrical and hierarchical systems are possible sources of conflicts in diverse societies and should therefore be reconsidered and modified to more accurately address the existing social reality.<sup>50</sup>

The early detection and warning systems often prove crucial for the success of diversity management, but especially for the prevention, management and resolution of crises/conflicts where the role of the education is eminent. In the example of de facto Abkhazia, a lot could be achieved by investing in education to create conditions for intergroup recognition and respect. Also, the way in which schools have dealt with the IDP pupils (as well as covered the sensitive topics related to the loss of the territories in public schools) may have considerable impact on the durability of the conflict resolution. Any governance in a similar situation may inadvertently sow the seeds of future conflict or at least contribute to a long lasting threat of renewed hostilities. In the same way, governments can choose non-confrontation and seek to endorse inclusive pluralistic education policies offering also alternative interpretation of the roots and causes of the conflict.

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid, p. 20.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 21.

In my opinion, one of the key factors providing for recognition of different groups and the multiple identities within a society is education, even if it is only one of the elements in the fabric of diversity management policies addressing the ever-increasing multiplicity.

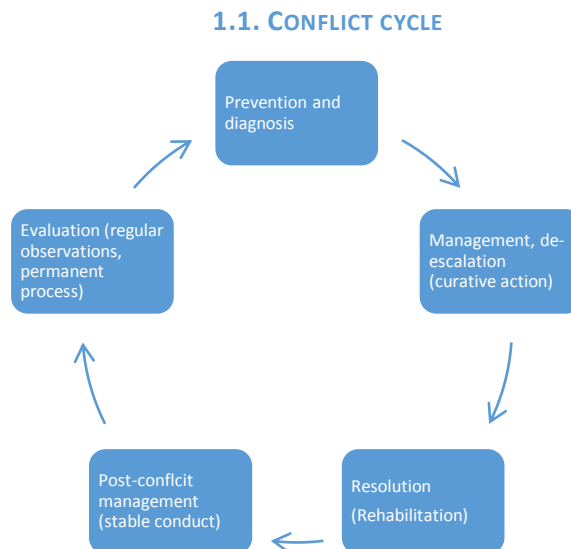


Figure 1.1. Conflict cycle. Figure according to Zagar who uses analogy to medical treatment of a patient. Prevention phase requires early detection of potential crises and conflicts and accurate analyses of their sources and on the available preventive means. Management and de-escalation is seen as a curative action using all possible tools with an aim to interrupt the ongoing conflict. Post-conflict management and prevention of new cycles of crises and conflicts are considered as a rehabilitation phase of the conflict.

The sample of interviews for this research is limited and provides material for a qualitative rather than quantitative assessment. Moreover, a limited survey can only provide a snapshot of the situation. In order to obtain an accurate and full idea of the importance and resistance of IDP pupils' identity and the importance of the element of IDP background in it, it would have been necessary to start to make similar studies right after the conflict to understand how the identities develop over time. Also, when applying the selected social group theory, the in-group findings should be assessed by triangulation where the perceptions of the outer group, the local non-IDP population, rest of the society and relevant international functionaries would also be asked to assess the identity of the IDP pupils. Only when these surveys are conducted on a regular basis over a long period of time the direction and speed



of change are visible. This was beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, this study focuses on the current situation of the IDPs and not the process leading to it.

Perhaps Georgian authorities, and other authorities in parallel situations, could use similar surveys to assess the impact of their (educational) policies on younger IDP population and use their results as a guide for possible policy changes.

The survey also tries to assess whether or not the members of the two groups, old and new caseload IDPs, feel a bond between each other. In order to have a more accurate understanding of the overall situation, the sample should be larger. Nevertheless, the author mainly uses the findings of the interviews as an empirical way to collect up-to-date inputs to support the broader considerations on the Georgian politics, in particular educational politics towards its IDPs.

## **CHAPTER II - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Studying the impact of education policies to identity formation of the IDP pupils in Georgia creates a complex starting point. It is difficult to identify certain theory which could be operationalized and meaningfully reflected against the findings. In order to grasp the situation in a satisfying manner and not over simplifying it, one would rather have to use several theories to build up a methodology, including conflict theories and various sociological theories (This would be called as theoretical triangulation which is discussed in the chapter on methodology in this work. In short, theoretical triangulation was not considered to be a feasible option due to scope and limitations of this work). After considering various options, I have chosen to mainly utilize social identity theory which will reflect the identity re(construction) of the IDPs. This theory seeks to explain how people create in-and out group theories, which define and explain inclusion and exclusion. This will describe or give an indication how diversity is dealt with in a society. This process will have an impact on the social cohesion and in certain cases challenge the concept of the (nation)state, calling for new definitions and corresponding normative changes.

## **2.1. Review on diversity management and applied theories**

### **2.1.1. Conceptualising diversity management in a post-conflict society**

Diversity management is a concept that traditionally has been linked to economy. The existing research is often focused on the effects of heterogeneity on the performance in workplaces. It commonly refers to the inclusion and management of people at the workplace who frequently are subject to discrimination due to their gender, race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation or disability. These characteristics are considered as primary dimension of diversity and they represent individual features or factors that can hardly be changed. These core characteristics of diversity affect the attitudes and behaviours of individuals and groups in the society. They affect how we perceive and deal with those who do not share our own individual characteristics. The secondary dimension of diversity consists of factors such as educational background, geographic location, income, marital status, parental status and religion.<sup>51</sup> Obviously, IDPs form a vulnerable group that differs from the majority. Diversity management approaches use an inclusive definition of diversity in which any and all kind of difference are considered as part of diversity project.

Conflict based displacement of people must be understood as a multi-faceted conflict issue as its impact is not only limited to the current affairs. The displacement also carries potential seeds for further conflicts, such as between the host and IDP communities. Phases of displacement rapidly deteriorate the situation of displaced persons, already traumatized by possible loss of life, break-up of families, loss of identity, territory and disorientation. Moreover, arrival into host communities creates a complex intergroup dynamics often characterized by prejudices, discrimination, and power relations dominated by the host group.<sup>52</sup>

#### ***Conceptualising identity***

There is a vast scholar literature dealing with the concept of identity. However, for the purpose of this work I chose not to dwell on it extensively. This is because in my view, detailed evidence based statements on the identities would have required different methodology – including participatory anthropology – used in this work.

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<sup>51</sup> Wrench, J., *Diversity Management, Discrimination and Ethnic Minorities in Europe: Clarifications, Critiques and Research Agendas*, Center for Ethnic and Urban Studies, Sweden, 2002, p. 13. Available at [http://www.isv.liu.se/remeso/publikationer/themes/themes\\_arkiv/1.160397/THEMES192002.pdf](http://www.isv.liu.se/remeso/publikationer/themes/themes_arkiv/1.160397/THEMES192002.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> Rajput, G., Sudha, *Internal Displacement: Simplifying a Complex Social Phenomenon, Beyond Intractability Project*, The Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, October 2013, available at <http://www.beyondintractability.org/>

Identity is not a permanent matter but it always in flux. It is a multidimensional process in order to associate oneself with, or attach oneself to, something or someone. Identity denotes the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their relations with other individuals and collectivities. 'Identification' is the systematic establishment and signification, between individuals, between collectivities, and between individuals and collectivities, of relationships of similarity and difference. Taken – as they can only be – together, similarity and difference are the dynamic principles of identification, and are at the heart of the human world.

According to Taylor and Spence, identity is intensely political. There are constant efforts to create and recreate perceptions of the other. Furthermore, groups that have suffered marginalisation become more aware of the political dimension of identity.<sup>53</sup>

The scholars have stated that the second generation immigrants – and I believe that it applies at least to a certain extent also to contemporary IPDs - are not just an extension of their “native lands” and their traditional roots. Instead, this people reassess, negotiate and define their collective identities separately from their ethnic and cultural citizenship. They borrow their identifying symbols from the contemporary global cultural elements, as well as from the distinctive features of their regions of origin and destination.<sup>54</sup>

### 2.1.2. Social Identity theory

Social Identity theory is part of social psychology, which has been interested in prejudice and discrimination since 1950. The scholars became particularly interested in intergroup research and theory when Tajfel presented his social identity theory in the late 70's early 80's.<sup>55</sup> In the 1990's, the political scientists showed interest and placed importance on historical identity building and nationalism.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Taylor, Gary and Steve Spence (eds.), *Social Identities, Multidisciplinary Approaches*, Routledge, 2004, p. 4.

<sup>54</sup> Hall, S., *New Ethnicities*, in Donald, J. and Rattansi, A. (eds.) *Race, Culture and Difference*, London, 1996, p. 60-252.

<sup>55</sup> Tajfel, Henri, *Human Groups & Social Categories*, Cambridge University Press 1981.

<sup>56</sup> See, i.e., Hobsbawm, Eric J., *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge University Press, 1990 and Smith, Anthony D., *National Identity*, University of Nevada Press, 1991.

Social identity is the part of individual's self-concept which stems from his awareness of his belonging to a social group(s) and the value and emotional importance attached to this membership.<sup>57</sup>

Tajfel discovered in his research that categorisation of any group of subjects seemed to make people creating perceptions about them. Turner, who developed Tajfel's ideas further to categorisation theory, concluded that feeling of belonging to a specific group opposed to another initiated under certain conditions intergroup discrimination and competition.<sup>58</sup> According to same authors, the intergroup comparison then created a social categorisation of subjects which in turn created a social identity for the group. In this process, the individuals accept the social group membership as a relevant self-definition of the circumstances. Social Identity, in other words, became a person's self-concept based on their group affiliation which was linked to certain values and emotional bonds (for example: we Georgians, we the citizens of Tbilisi).<sup>59</sup>

According to social theory, part of our identity is based on the social groups to which we belong. We base our sense of social identity not only on the characteristics of our own group, but we compare our own group with other groups. Moreover, according to social identity theory, we want to create and sustain a positive self-esteem. As a result, we tend to make these comparisons in a way which will give to our own group a certain positive distinctiveness compared with the out-groups. The comparisons are not necessarily always negative towards the outer group, but the comparisons can lead to favourable outcomes for both groups provided that they compare themselves against different criteria. Also, the framework of the comparison cannot be such that both groups are competing over the same scarce resources.

Social groups seek to provide a positive social identity for their own members by showing them positively distinct from other groups. Social categorization can also be divided in neutral and value connoted categories. Neutral categorization can, for instance, be based on certain dwelling area of livelihood. This categorization does not evoke emotions and values and can therefore be also revised and changed should the stereotyping not be accurate. The members of a certain group might live in a broader or different area unlike what the original

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<sup>57</sup> Tajfel 1981, p. 255.

<sup>58</sup> Turner, John, C., *Some Current Issues in Research on Social Identity and Self-categorization Theories*, in Ellemers, N., Spears, R. and Doosje, B. (eds.), *Social Identity: Context, Commitment, Content*, Blackwell, Oxford 1999, p. 8.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

belief was. Changing and correcting social categorization gets much more complicated when the process would involve value charged stereotyping, prejudices. For instance, an idea that all the members of a certain group are uneducated or trying to avoid working. The situation is more complicated when the changes would jeopardise the value system on which the differentiation of the groups is founded.<sup>60</sup>

The social comparisons between two groups creates a problem when at least one of the groups feel that the comparison does not yield a positive image of them and it is seen to be unfair. Additionally, it is necessary that a change in relations between the groups is seen to be feasible before any correcting action will take place. In accordance with the social theory, some groups could have perceived that their situation is unfair and vulnerable and that they cannot see positive attributes connected to their social identity. However, the group has not made an effort to change the situation as it has been perceived impossible.<sup>61</sup> This assumption can easily be projected to diverse vulnerable groups - such as IDPs. The groups which assess that there is a possibility to improve their status, that the group boundaries are not resistant, can adopt very different strategies to reach their objective. These strategies can include individual upward mobility or collective group based exclusive measures. In a same way, the group which possess higher status and sees this legitimate can behave increasingly discriminatory and ethnocentrically to maintain their status.<sup>62</sup> Tajfel claimed that as individuals' behaviours started to focus more on the intergroup, the attitudes within the intergroup towards to out-group started to be more homogenous. Correspondingly, the idea of the members of the out-group becomes more blurred and the individuals are started to be perceived as undistinguishable representatives of their social category.

Identity can also shift in terms of the centrality of the identity for the person. Someone can identify himself as a teacher for a long time, but the importance of this categorization is relative and other identities and can become more important for the person overtime – and this is what I believe has happened to the IDP groups.

As stated, this study can only provide a snapshot of the situation today. Precise assessment on how the social identity of the two distinct IDP groups have changed over time would require a long-lasting longitudinal study. Furthermore, for this work, I decided not to dwell in diverse academic discussion and theories of concept of identity. Also because in order to

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<sup>60</sup> Turner, John, C., *Social Influence*, Open University Press, Buckingham, 1991, p. 152.

<sup>61</sup> Gallagher, Tony, *Education in Divided Societies*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, p. 29-30.

<sup>62</sup> Turner 1999, p. 9.

be able to assess the subject meaningfully, it would have been necessary to carry out a time-consuming anthropological participatory research and yet even this would have provided only a subjective location related picture of the situation.

### 2.1.3. Self-categorization theory

Self-categorization theory is based on distinction between earlier presented social identity theory - which states that individuals self-define themselves based on the membership of social category – and personal identity where the self-definition is based on individual characteristics. According to Turner, there is evidence that in social identity can sometimes function to “relative exclusion of personal identity”.<sup>63</sup> The best way to predict how a person feels about another group is and based on this what his line of action can be, is to find out how the person interprets his/her own intergroup and its attitudes.<sup>64</sup>

The bond between the intergroup persons is not based on the attraction individuals might feel towards each other's. The (psychological) group formation that produces collective behaviour creates an identity-based bond between the group members based on the mutually perceived common features. Shared character such as shared threat, common fate, closeness, similarity, shared interests and goals can generate an understanding of shared social identity and lead to group formation.

In short, the more significant the shared social identity becomes, the less importance is given to personal identity leading to certain degree of depersonalization. In other words, the person start to see themselves more are as representatives of a certain shared social category. “Depersonalization of the self is the subjective stereotyping of the self in terms of relevant social categorization.”<sup>65</sup> A crucial element related to a person's willingness to use social category for self-identification depends on their situation and the level of their self-identification with the group. Categorization is dynamic and highly context related process. A person who is not assessed to be member of the intergroup in one context can be evaluated differently in another context. This can happen even if there would have not been in changes in his/her characteristics (for example, a member of an old case load IDPs can be seen as member of the same intergroup by new case load IDPs when met abroad). Self-categorization creates basis for our social orientation and our way to perceive the others,

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid, p. 10-11.

<sup>64</sup> Tajfel, 1981, p.130.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

whether or not we cooperate or confront the others. The theory stresses that our perceived similarities and differences become the driving force behind our behaviour towards the others. Group formation is not simply an outcome of interpersonal relationships, but it actively forms and changes peoples' perceptions and influence our way to deal with the others.

Turner states that group formation based on shared social category can also alter the objectives of individuals. If the social identity is prominent, it depersonalizes individualistic aspirations "transforming differing personal self-interests into a collective we-group interest creating a cooperative orientation within the group."<sup>66</sup> Incompatibility of the expected reactions among the intergroup can, however, raise questions and lead to uncertainty. Individuals constituting the group can start wondering if the shared social identity is accurate after all. Are there some profound differences? Do all the members of the in-group perceive our social reality in a same way?

Against this theory, stereotypes are social categorical judgements drawn based on perceptions individuals have linked to their group membership. This interpretations are dynamic and context bound and can be changed and/or redefined. In other words, the theory suggests that stereotypes are not rigid, but that they can change, be reformed or vanish entirely based on the relevant categorization. Social categorization can be defined as a system which helps individual to orientate and define his/her place in society. When an individual is determining his identity based on social identity, the theory holds the following assumptions: 1. the individual tries to stay in the intergroup and seeks membership of new groups in case they can provide positive aspects to his social identity. 2. If the group does not meet individual's requirements, he will try to leave the group unless it is impossible for some impartial reason or the leaving would conflict with some individual's core values. In case leaving the group would be difficult for the last reason, there are at least to ways to correct the situation. Firstly, to re-evaluate groups attributes in a way that the problematic connotations are justified or made acceptable through situational analyses. Secondly, to accept the attributes as they are, but to take measures which would change the undesired status. In reality, the corrective action can include both elements.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 254-256.

#### 2.1.4. Other selected applicable theories

##### 2.1.4.1 *Historical institutionalism*

The role of the past on the events is stressed in historical institutionalism, which is a method of social sciences emphasizing the role institutions play in structuring behaviour. The institutions affecting the process can be both formal and informal. The theory seeks to explain how the historical development of institutions in various countries can explain the current normative and non-formal situation in a given country. The way how the Georgian institutions and laws have developed can explain the policy carried out vis-à-vis IDPs. These can also provide hypothesis that comparing states' approaches to address IDPs with a goal of producing tangible policy recommendations can be complicated by the different nature of their institutions which due to their diverse structures can provide dissimilar entry and veto points to the IDPs and interest groups.<sup>68</sup> According to historical institutionalists, political events firstly happen in within a historical context, which has a direct causal effect on following developments. Secondly, historical perspective gives a possibility to understand processes and distil good practises from the past. Thus, the variables need to be adjusted to a specific context. A deeper understanding of the historical context will provide researcher with more accurate understanding of the causality of the events. When comparing the policies towards the two IDP groups in Georgia, historical developments surrounding these two groups, is obvious that historical context has dictated the events to a great deal.

##### 2.1.4.2. *Cultural approach*

The cultural approach stresses the importance of culture in explaining the actions of individuals and collectives in a rational way. "Cultural approaches help us to locate individuals in a social context in which their values, aspirations and associations are formed and in which their choices are given a meaning".<sup>69</sup> However, culture is not an overarching explanation of social and political behaviour. It can be used in combination of other sociological approaches to obtain more accurate understanding of the researched phenomena.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Steinmo, Sven, *Historical Institutionalism in Approaches*, in the Social Sciences by Donatella Della Porta and Michael Keating (eds.) Cambridge University Press, 2008., p. 123-14.

<sup>69</sup> Keating 2004, p. 103.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.



According to Smith and Vaux, the ability of a society to constructively deal with its inner diversity and heterogeneity can be seen in the way how the schools and other educational institutions deal with the identity issues, such as language, religion and culture. The strengthening of various hybrid identities and the development of inclusive democratic schools calls for recognizing and respecting differences without avoiding conflicts arising from cooperation between different groups.<sup>71</sup> Initial confrontation of diversities can and should lead to reevaluation of existing procedures and values. The outcome of this process is more accurate understanding of the diversity which exists in the society providing an opportunity to design more accurate and suitable policies. Davies uses a notion of collaborative diversity about schools that promote pluralism within the heterogeneous communities.<sup>72</sup> She also stresses the importance of pluralist forms of belonging which are not exclusionary or segregated but rather promote identities which respect and value hybridity rather than purity.<sup>73</sup>

## **2.2. Integration**

There is no single definition on what is meant by integration but is considered as context related. As a result, there is a vast scholar literature on the essence of integration. For the purpose of this work, I am mainly interested in social integration to which Zagar offers the following fitting definition:

“ Social integration is a continuous process of voluntary, equal and full inclusion of all individuals, especially those who are marginalized, such as immigrants, persons belonging to ethnic and/or other minorities or deprived (social) groups, as well diverse distinct communities (as collective entities) into societies where they live. The bases of this gradual and continuous process are human rights and the principles of democracy, solidarity, equality and (social) justice. The central aim is the (social) inclusion of all individuals, especially of (im)migrants and persons belonging to minorities, distinct and marginalized communities, as well as of these communities, into a democratic society that recognizes the existence of all diversities and pays adequate respect to them. Recognizing their different starting positions and their specific interests, the process of integration should not only ensure their equal inclusion into social processes and relations, but also establish their equal position.

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<sup>71</sup> Smith, A., Vaux, T., *Education, Conflict and International Development*, Department for International Development, London, 2003, p. 28.

<sup>72</sup> Davies, Lynn, *Education and Conflict. Complexity and Chaos*, Routledge, New York, 2004, p. 140.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, p. 223.

In this context, integration policies should focus on the individual, as well as collective, dimensions of inclusion and integration. Consequently, they should prevent and combat discrimination, social exclusion, isolation and marginalization of individuals, minorities and distinct communities/groups. Additionally, they should spell out, determine, develop and promote measures, programmes, activities and active policies that facilitate equal and voluntary integration without assimilation pressures. Founded on human rights, integration policies should be based on the highest standards of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including minority rights and the protection of minorities, multiculturalism and/or interculturalism.”<sup>74</sup>

There are three options to achieve sustainable solution for protracted displacement situations leading to IDPs social integration. The first is a possibility that the IDPs will return to their pre-conflict homes, second resettlement in more appropriate locations and better buildings and the third option is local integration/inclusion. The first option is not realistic in Georgia due to existing political realities. The second one serves as a solution for some of the IDPs, but it can also create new problems leading with concrete terms to second displacement. Local integration is probably the most likely option which in case of many IDPs have taken place since day one, regardless of any official activities or planning from the side of the authorities as the people have tried to survive and adapt themselves into existing realities the best they can. As regards the religion, integration or gradual acculturation becomes even more challenging in the situation where the newcomers have different religious affiliation. Usually, individuals are reluctant to convert their religion.<sup>75</sup> In case of Georgia this was not an issue as the persons displaced share very much the same cultural and religious make-up.

The report by Brookings Institution on IDPs lists tangible observations which are globally important, not only in Georgia, in terms of displacement and which also have a relevance in terms of local integration of IDPs.

1. “Most IDPs live in situations of protracted displacement, and over time, their needs and vulnerability may increase. Possible solutions to displacement may also change over time.
2. There is no data on the achievement of durable solutions for IDPs, who have chosen to return, integrate locally or settle elsewhere in the country.

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<sup>74</sup> Žagar 2008, p. 10-12.

<sup>75</sup> Parek, Bhikhu, *Integration Minorities in a Multicultural Society*, in Ulrich K. Preuss and Ferran Requejo (eds.), *European Citizenship, Multiculturalism, and the state*, Baden-Baden, 1998, p. 75.

3. The literature on integration of IDPs and refugees is constructive for the study of integration of IDPs at their current residence. However, more research is needed into the determinants of and obstacles to successful local integration of IDPs.
4. While the evidence seems to suggest that most IDPs hope to return to their communities, local integration is the preferred settlement option of some IDPs in most countries.
5. Return of IDPs to their communities of origin has been promoted over other settlement options by some governments, though equal emphasis should be put on all settlement options for IDPs. More reflection is needed on the concept of local integration as a transitional measure pending the possibility for return or resettlement elsewhere.
6. An increased number of governments have acknowledged local integration as a valid settlement option of IDPs, and in some cases they have actively supported IDPs to settle in their area of displacement
7. Local integration presents different challenges in rural and urban areas, though inadequate housing and lack of income-generation opportunities appear to be obstacles to local integration in both.
8. Some IDPs have no choice but to remain in their area of displacement, which does not constitute a genuine choice or progress towards durable solutions. Others have consciously decided to integrate locally and some factors that have influenced this intention include security, social networks, jobs, services and property ownership at their current residence.
9. Local integration is mentioned as a settlement option for IDPs in regional and country level documents, though UN documents mention this option inconsistently.<sup>76</sup>

In wider scale it can be stated that intolerance and discrimination pose a major challenge to states which are based on principles of equal rights and respect for the diversity – just like Georgia officially claims. In terms of social cohesion, it is essential that all diverse groups cohabitating within state territory are integrated into larger society enjoying full human rights and having access to legal system and services - including education.

There is not one concept on what is meant by the notion of integration, but scholars and policy-makers use it differently in different contexts. In terms of managing societal diversities, integration avoids the assimilation of various ethnic minorities and other distinct groups on the one hand and their segregation on the other hand. Integration can be described

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<sup>76</sup> Ferris, Elizabeth (ed), *Resolving International Displacement, Prospects for local integration*, The Brookings Institution – London School of Economics, 2011, p. 7-8.

as a two-way process which influences both the non-dominant groups as well as the majority population. The case of IDPs is less accentuated in a sense that their identity is similar to dominant Georgian population and as a result does not create such strong potentials for confrontation with the locals.

From the historical perspective, the role of the state as the target of integration has diminished its importance.<sup>77</sup> In several European countries, the national identity was embedded in the idea of a homogeneous population that shared a common language, history and culture. Education was used as a tool to enhance this image through language teaching<sup>78</sup> and teaching of the (invented) national historiography. Often this did not correspond to the reality on the ground.<sup>79</sup> Today, regional and transnational identities stretching over the state borders have started to play an ever-growing role as entities to which integration is targeted and promoted through education policy.<sup>80</sup>

If we try to consider IDPs for a in a broader scale as a one element of the diversity in a societal mosaic, then it is interesting to have a look on immigrants and refugees, of which the latter have even left for similar reasons from their home region. In the case of immigrants, earlier research has shown that as a general rule immigrant groups have disappeared as different, easily recognizable groups after one or two generations.<sup>81</sup> However, there are signs in Europe that could be interpreted to demonstrate that the increased immigration together with growing sensitivity towards minorities has changed the pattern.<sup>82</sup> Minority identities

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<sup>77</sup> Clearly, the historical process in Europe has been different. The questionnaire answers from the IDP students showed that the primary object of identification was Georgian state.

<sup>78</sup> For an example, the linguistic landscape of France was anything but homogenous until the state in the 17<sup>th</sup> century started to imply assimilative standard language.

<sup>79</sup> Gellner, Ernest, *Nations and Nationalism*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1983, p. 6-7.

<sup>80</sup> As an example, we can name the indigenous Saami people in North-Europe who promote integration of diverse Saami groups under the pan-Sámi organisation, Saami Council, beyond the state borders. Education policy plays an important role in this, see the web site of the Saami Council at <http://www.saamicouncil.net/?deptid=1116>

<sup>81</sup> Pennix, R, *Immigrants and the dynamics of social exclusion – Lessons for antidiscrimination policies*, in Flip Lindo and Mies van Niekerk, *Dedication and detachment*, 2001, p. 198-199. However, there are examples (like within the Turkish immigrant community in Germany, that no integration has taken place and that even language proficiency of the immigrants is weak.

<sup>82</sup> In the European level, two different Minority protection instruments were adopted in 1998. As a consequence, countries like Sweden and Norway recognized officially to have several national minorities in their territory and took up obligations to provide for their different needs – this was clear change in the national policy., See the first State Reports by Sweden and Norway to the Council of Europe's Secretariat of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities at [http://www.coe.int/T/E/human\\_rights/minorities/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/minorities/) Another concrete example on increased acknowledgement toward the minorities is the question of Roma, “Since 1993, the Roma and Travellers issue has been at the heart of three of the Council’s top priorities: protection of minorities, the fight against racism and intolerance and the fight against social exclusion.”, CoE, see at [http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/Default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/Default_en.asp)

have become more resistant and aware of their rights under the international human rights regime. Additionally, it has been observed that different immigrant groups residing in the same state in similar socio-economic conditions follow different pattern of integration. Hence, the culture, values and traditions of the respective group play a role in the integration.<sup>83</sup> Since both the background of the new minorities and the structures of the receiving societies play a significant role in terms of integration, defining a one size fits-all solutions does not appear viable.

According to Bhikhu Parekh, citizenship consists of three dimensions: status of civil and political rights, participation to public affairs and finally the historical relationship which reflects the individual as a member of a community, making him/her aware of its past and feel responsibility for its future.<sup>84</sup> Here education has a significant role as a mediator. The moral values are mainly absorbed through education and especially through primary and secondary education. In the past, educational systems have also been misused to cultivate narrow minded and discriminatory national politics. However, the importance of education is essential as it generates virtues attached to citizenship.<sup>85</sup>

In short, to summarise for the purpose of this work, integration can be conceptualized to mean a process where the IDPs with their own consent are helped to fully amalgamate with local institutional and civic structures, including schools and other educational institutions. This process recognizes the rights of all and seeks to prevent assimilation in one extreme end and segregation/exclusion in the other. For the IDPs, the integration will have to lead where sustainable solutions have been found on the consent of the IDPs themselves. Integration will also have to lead in a situation where IDPs' political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights are recognized, protected and fulfilled like the rights of any citizens of the country. Moreover, like will be discussed in the course of this work, integration of IDP students into educational institutions should be tackled effectively.

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<sup>83</sup> Pennix 2001, p. 199.

<sup>84</sup> Parek, B., *Integration Minorities in a Multicultural Society* in Ulrich, K., Preuss and Ferran Requejo (Edit.), *European Citizenship, Multiculturalism, and the state*, Baden-Baden, 1998, p. 82-83.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER III – INTERNATIONAL NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

### 3.1. Introduction

In order to prepare the ground for the later analyses, it is necessary to turn to see international obligations stipulating the right to education. In this context, I am interested to see what kinds of obligations are laid down in international instruments and most of all, what is their scope: how can they be applied on IDPs? In doing so, I am trying to set the scene for the following case studies rather than providing a solid chapter which would be fully comprehensive even if would be taken off form its context in this work. This is due to reason that I wish to discuss certain developments in chronological order in the chapter dealing with the case studies. An attempt to describe Georgia's integration plan without placing it in its historical context would not be meaningful. Thus, the catalogue is not complete as provisions referring to education can be found as well in other conventions.<sup>86</sup> Moreover, like explained I shall not discuss the national normative framework in this context. The integration polices spelled down in the documents from 2007 and 2010 will also be discussed in the Chapter V – case studies.

The normative part covers two rather different avenues. This is due to fact that the author has chosen to discuss the situation in the de facto Abkhazia in more detail in this work. This creates a challenge as de facto Abkhazia is not widely recognized entity and as a result it not a legal entity able to join international conventions and so on. Therefore, it is arguable and a subject to legal debate what all instruments can be claimed to constitute international customary law. Only the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (and perhaps ICCPR and ICESCR) can be seen to form international customary law (SOURCE). However, as de facto Abkhazian Constitution makes reference to Human Rights and implicitly to linguistic rights, I felt it necessary to provide an overview to some other international standards related to protection of linguistic/ethnic minorities which creates part of diversity management instruments. Like stated earlier, this work will not try to discuss in detail the legitimacy of the status quo. Obviously, the international community predominantly recognizes only the international borders of Georgia which existed prior to conflict in 2008. This is also the

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<sup>86</sup> To limit this presentation I do not discuss instruments, for instance, such as Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965).

guiding line of the EU monitoring mission (EUMM) which has been observing the implementation of the six-point agreement which stopped the hostilities between the parties for the conflict in August 2008. EUMM does not have access to de facto Abkhazia or South Ossetia.<sup>87</sup> The reasons for the Russians' actions, its recognition of the independency of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, are linked to its frustration for the West's acceptance of unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo in 2008 against the will of Russia's historical ally, Serbia. This has a relevance in normative context as Georgia's authorities have been stressing, especially during the era of Georgia's previous president Mikhail Saakashvili and his political party United National Movement, that the presence of estimated 11 000 members of Russian military forces and border guards in de facto states have no legal mandate and thus they violate international law. Subsequently, according to Georgian authorities, Russian forces form the de facto occupation forces who effectively control the area. Therefore, they are responsible for protection of people under their effective control in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.<sup>88</sup> Russian Federation is a party for all the covenants and conventions presented in this chapter.

As regards the legal situation of the IDPs in Georgia, it is clearer as there are only few international treaties making explicit reference to IDPs. These provisions are to be found in International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Apart from that, IDPs' position is internationally guided through legally nonbinding UN document Guiding Principles on International Displacement<sup>89</sup> which reaffirm and compile human rights and humanitarian law relevant to internally displaced persons.

In spite of the fact that the legal framework plays a crucial role in consolidating pupils' right to education, I acknowledge the criticism towards education as a human right. Also, as because I am not trying to provide detailed legal analyses of the topic. I am more interested in the factual impact education had on IDP pupils' lives in the context I have described. Amartya Sen has criticised the concept of human rights from three different perspectives. According to him, no right is pre-societal but the society itself creates the normative framework and a legal system with respective laws and enforcement. Sen's second point concerns implementation of the right. If every right does not have a corresponding law and

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<sup>87</sup> More information on EUMM and its tasks is available at <http://eumm.eu/en/>

<sup>88</sup> This approach is stated, e.g., in the second State Report of Georgia related to CoE Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities, ACFC/SR/II(2012)001, 30 May 2012, p. 10. The document is available at <http://www.smr.gov.ge/docs/doc227.pdf>

<sup>89</sup> UN, Economic and Social Council, Commission on Human Rights, E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2, available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IDPersons/Pages/Standards.aspx>

a duty bearer, it is very difficult when not impossible to enforce as it is not possible to identify who can be held accountable for the specific law. To which extent this can be done with right to education in a complex interdependent society? Finally, Sen's last point deals with cultural relativism. According to him, there are considerable cultural differences which challenge the concept of universal right.<sup>90</sup> Samuel Moyn stresses the need to understand the historical process behind the human rights concept. According to him, it seems often to be forgotten how human rights concept evolved over time and how it did not have an important role in internal politics for decades after UDHR. The deliberate picturing human rights as rigid and a religion like an ideology which have sound and long basis in legal theories, is not accurate interpretation and does not necessary serve to purpose to improve peoples' lives.<sup>91</sup>

The focus of this work lies on development phase of post-conflict society. Some development actors have criticized the sometimes limited approach that normative Human Rights based approach can have.<sup>92</sup> According to some scholars, there is a litigation deficit: those with the sharpest elbows are the ones who are able to demand for their rights. Moreover, the vulnerable persons are normally not participating in decision-making. Some states with less recognized democratic track record are also sensitive for the human rights approach. As a result, some actors prefer to use the notion of rights approach with has less political connotations. In spite of the fact that Human Rights remain applicable during the humanitarian emergencies, scholars have expressed their scepticism with regard to potentials of human rights based approach.<sup>93</sup> Paulson, instead, has a different view in her paper on (Re)creating Education in Post-conflict Contexts. According to her, precisely choosing a normative approach, drawing from legal internationally recognized standards, is perhaps better option than trying to find solid empirical causal justification for investing in education in post-conflict context.<sup>94</sup>

Compared with the legal protection of the refugees, IDPs have a much weaker standing. Currently, there are 144 state parties for UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees

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<sup>90</sup> Sen, Amartya, *The Idea of Justice*, Belknap Press, Cambridge, 2011.

<sup>91</sup> Moyn, Samuel, *The Last Utopia, Human Rights in History*, Belknap Press of Harvard University, Cambridge 2010, p. 212-227.

<sup>92</sup> "A human rights-based approach is a conceptual that is normatively based on international human rights standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights. It seeks to analyze inequalities... and redress discriminatory practices and unjust distributions of power that impede development progress.", UNICEF, Human Rights-based Approach to Programming, available at <http://www.unicef.org/policyanalysis/rights/>

<sup>93</sup> Smith, A., Vaux, T., *Education, Conflict and International Development*, Department for International Development, London, 2003, p. 13.

<sup>94</sup> Paulson, Julia, *(Re)creating Education in Postconflict Contexts: Transitional Justice, Education and Human Development*, International Center for Transitional Justice, November 2009, p. 9.



from 1951. In the case of the IDPs, there is no specific legally binding instrument protecting the rights of IDPs. As internally displacement refers to the in-state dynamics, it remains as a domestic matter of a sovereign state. This is in spite of the fact that the very state itself can be responsible for the displacement and therefore be reluctant or incapable to be active in finding sustainable solutions for the problem. The state might also be unwilling to make measures to find sustainable solutions for displacement for political reasons, as it wants to display the outcome of the displacement seeking support and empathy from the international community to find ways to obtain the control over the regions in which the displacement occurred.

Additionally, the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Katarina Tomaševski, pointed out that the right to education must be interpreted in a broad sense. Attributes given to the right to education include freedom of choice for parents and a related governmental obligation to respect the exercise of that freedom. Similarly, the definition of education only in terms of state-provided obligatory schooling is limited. Tomaševski, stated (so called four As) that states have an obligation to make education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable.<sup>95</sup>

It is important to stress that particularly in regions where minorities exist, the implementation of measures to protect their identity – education being a major part in it – promote the peaceful multicultural coexistence and stability of the society.

States' responsibility to provide education progressively is laid down in international law. However, there is no single set of applicable standards, but states' responsibility is more to guarantee that the educational opportunities are adequate, available and appropriate.<sup>96</sup>

Georgia has ratified all the most important international treaties referring to right to education. The fact that the primary duty bearer for protection of the IDPs is a state and the fact that Georgia has had, and still has, political aspiration to regain the breakaway regions under its control has been translated on political decisions on how the conditions for the IDPs have shaped – including educational aspects.

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<sup>95</sup> Tomaševski, Katarina, *Human rights obligations: making education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable*, Right to Education Primers no. 3, Gothenburg 2001, p. 8-13, available at [http://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Tomasevski\\_Primer%203.pdf](http://www.right-to-education.org/sites/right-to-education.org/files/resource-attachments/Tomasevski_Primer%203.pdf)

<sup>96</sup> Wilson, Duncan, *Minority rights in education: Lessons for the European Union from Estonia, Latvia, Romania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, 2002, p.6.

## 3.2. International instruments

### 3.2.1. UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

The first international instrument to prescribe education as human right was the UDHR from the year 1948. Its article 26 spells out that the objective of education is “promotion of understanding, tolerance and friendship among nations and racial and religious groups.” The declaration refers to elementary schooling as compulsory. Furthermore, it calls upon states to provide access to technical and higher education on basis of merit. Finally, the UDHR declares that parents have a prior right to education that their children will be given.<sup>97</sup>

According to the Declaration, member states of the UN are pledged to promote respect for the rights and freedoms manifested in the UDHR by progressive measures to secure their effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of the state and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.<sup>98</sup> UDHR does not make any kind of distinction between individuals and hence provisions that education can be interpreted to encompass both old and new minorities. However, due to its nature as a legally non-binding declaration, there are no bodies able to enforce UDHR.

### 3.2.2. Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has particular authority being the most universally ratified international human rights treaty. The Convention, nevertheless, does not make explicit reference to IDPs. Moreover, breakaway region of Abkhazia cannot be a treaty party to any international Convention. However, Abkhazia has indicated in its Constitution to

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<sup>97</sup> UDHR, article 26 (1), “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all based on merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. “Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.”

UDHR, article 26, Human Rights, a compilation of International Instruments, Volume I, United Nations, Geneva, 2002, p. 5.

<sup>98</sup> UDHR, preamble, available at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

comply with the International Human Rights standards.<sup>99</sup> As an addition, Russian Federation which support for the establishment of *de facto* Abkhazia has been decisive is, just like Georgia, treaty party to CRC.<sup>100</sup> The leading principle of the Convention is the best interest of the child.<sup>101</sup> The Convention stipulates clearly its scope in the two first articles which basically say that the Convention applies to each child (person under 18 years) within jurisdiction regardless of his/her race, sex, language, religion, national, ethnic or social origin, disability etc. In other words, the Convention thus prohibits thus direct discrimination of non-citizens in education.<sup>102</sup>

Furthermore, what is relevant for the part of this work describing the situation in Abkhazia, the convention declares that state parties are obliged to recognize the right of a child to education and to encourage making different forms of secondary and vocational education available and accessible to every child.<sup>103</sup> “The convention touches explicitly the question of protection and development of identity: ”State parties agree that education of the child shall be directed to the development of respect for the child's parents, his/her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which she or he may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own.”<sup>104</sup>

Furthermore, the article 30 of the Convention provides that: “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.” This can be read to refer, even though implicitly, to right to use language in the education settings.

The convention obliges all the states who have ratified the Convention to allow all children living in their territories to access education without any discrimination – including IDPs.

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<sup>99</sup> Constitution of *de facto* Abkhazia, Chapter two, para 11. The document is available at <http://apsnypress.info/en/constitution>

<sup>100</sup> United Nations Treaty Collection, available at [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-11&chapter=4&lang=en)

<sup>101</sup> CRC, article 3(1), the text of the Convention is available at <http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

<sup>102</sup> CRC, article 1 and 2

<sup>103</sup> CRC, article 28 (1b).

<sup>104</sup> CRC, article 29 (1c).

The best interest of a child being a member of a minority is to have the possibility to learn his/her mother tongue as it facilitates learning the official language. This means in my eyes that a state has to guarantee at least some application of language teaching, be it bi- or multilingual school setting, or simply provide for language teaching outside of the school curriculum.

The Convention clearly forbids discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, language, gender or disability. The Convention does not mention family income or living area as basis that could amount to discrimination. Public schools are also not forbidden to charge from the tuition, except for primary schools, which according to CRC must explicitly be free.<sup>105</sup> The OECD report proposes a clear definition for educational equity stating that educational opportunities should be open to pupils on the grounds of giftedness, aptitude and hard work rather than on basis of geography, money or connections.

The contracting states are under the obligation to implement the provisions progressively, paying respect to the indivisibility of the rights.<sup>106</sup>

Ratification of the CRC makes a state publicly and internationally accountable for its actions through the process in which States report on the Convention's implementation. The implementation of the Convention is monitored by the Committee on the Rights of the Child<sup>107</sup> that was established in 1991 in accordance with the article 43 of the Convention.

Participating states have to submit regular, detailed reports on the national situation of children's rights to the Committee for examination.<sup>108</sup> The Committee assesses how well the respective governments have implemented the Convention and based on this assessment, the Committee issues concluding observations. The Committee's mandate does not cover assessing claimed individual complaints.<sup>109</sup>

The Committee seeks first of all to engage the state in a constructive dialogue rather than judge its activities. Finally, the Committee drafts concluding observations, which are public

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<sup>105</sup> Micklewright, John, *Education, Inequality and Transition*, UNICEF Innocenti Working papers, Economic and Social Policy Series no. 74, January 2000, p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> The Convention on the Rights of the Child, Introduction, available at <http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm>

<sup>107</sup> The Committee on the Rights of the Child consists of 18 members from different countries and legal systems that are of 'high moral standing' and experts in the field of human rights. The Committee aims to examine reports within one year of receipt. Because the Convention has more States Parties than any other human rights treaty, the current Committee is running behind its intended schedule. The available reports/documents available at [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Countries.aspx) do not contain any additional up-to-date information on the situation of IDPs.

<sup>108</sup> CRC, article 44.

<sup>109</sup> The Convention on the Rights of the Child, Introduction, available at <http://www.unicef.org/crc/crc.htm>

documents including recommendations for action. Recurrently, the concluding observations request that UNICEF provide technical assistance to the State in implementing the Committee's recommendations.<sup>110</sup>

The weakness of the convention's monitoring system lays in the fact that it does not contain a complaint mechanism.<sup>111</sup>

### 3.2.3. UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was adopted in 1976. It defined the importance of the education in the following way:

Article 26: "...education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all *persons* to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace."<sup>112</sup>

The obligations of the state has been described precisely by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which is the treaty monitoring body of the Convention, in the general comment on the nature of States parties obligations.<sup>113</sup> The Committee states, inter alia, that relevant rights "will be exercised without discrimination." Furthermore, the Committee recognizes that in many instances it may be difficult to combat discrimination effectively – mentioning explicitly education – if a sound domestic legislative foundation is not in place. Therefore, contracting parties are responsible in implementing effective legislation forbidding discrimination.<sup>114</sup>

The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, has released a General Comment No. 13, in reference to article 13 of the ICESCR spelling out that education is not only a right, but also an essential tool for realising other human rights. It is a means by which

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> The Committee cannot consider individual complaints, although child rights may be raised before other committees with competence to consider individual complaints on human rights violations.

<sup>112</sup> See Article 13(1) of the ICESCR.

<sup>113</sup> The nature of States parties obligations (Art. 2, par.1), 14/12/90, CESCR General comment 3, available at [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(symbol\)/CESCR+General+comment+3.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(symbol)/CESCR+General+comment+3.En?OpenDocument)

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, para 3.

socially and economically marginalized individuals, like IDPs, can escape from poverty and participate fully in his or her community.<sup>115</sup>

The weakness of the ICECSR is the missing complaint procedure. Nevertheless, contracting states are obliged to submit regular state reports.<sup>116</sup>

### 3.2.4. UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education

The UNESCO convention has relevance mainly to diversity management policies addressed to national and linguistic minorities and not on IDPs in Georgia. In this context, it sheds light on the general standard influencing states' actions vis-à-vis existing diversities. It can also be assessed to have relevance to the situation in de facto Abkhazia. The Convention was adopted in 1960 and it touches upon the core of the education in minority language. It refers to all types and levels of education including access to education, the standard and quality of education, and the conditions under which it is given.<sup>117</sup>

Article 5 ... (c) It is essential to recognize the right of members of national minorities to carry on their own educational activities, including the maintenance of schools and, depending on the educational policy of each State, the use or the teaching of their own language, provided however:

- (i) That this right is not exercised in a manner which prevents the members of these minorities from understanding the culture and language of the community as a whole and from participating in its - activities, or which prejudices national sovereignty;
- (ii) That the standard of education is not lower than the general standard laid down or approved by the competent authorities; and
- (iii) That attendance at such schools is optional.

The states are under the negative obligation not to prevent minorities to establish their own educational settings. It is noted, however, that it does not mean that members of the minorities are obliged to attend these schools nor should they be isolated from the rest of the

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<sup>115</sup> Available at [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(symbol\)/E.C.12.1999.10.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(symbol)/E.C.12.1999.10.En?OpenDocument)

<sup>116</sup> ICESCR, article 16.

<sup>117</sup> Convention against Discrimination in Education, adopted by the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, on 14 December 1960, text available at [http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/d\\_c\\_educ.htm](http://www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/d_c_educ.htm)

society. However, the article entails the idea of minority school as separated and parallel that I see as problematic and to which I will return in the analysis dealing with *de facto* Abkhazia.

A ratifying state is under the obligation to develop and apply a national policy which will promote equal treatment of various groups, including IDPs, in terms of different type of education in all levels. The state parties are bound to submit a periodic report to UNESCO.<sup>118</sup> The Convention includes a provision with regard to litigation. In case the dispute cannot be found between the states parties, it can be taken – at the request of the parties – to the International Court of Justice.<sup>119</sup> Up until today, this provision, however, has not been invoked.

### 3.2.5. UN declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities

The Declaration spells out that minorities have a right to protect their culture and identity. The language of the declaration encompasses various minorities and thus provides a wide margin to its scope:

Article 4 (4), “States should, where appropriate, take measures in the field of education, in order to encourage knowledge of the history, traditions, language and culture of the minorities existing within their territory. Persons belonging to minorities should have adequate opportunities to gain knowledge of the society as a whole. ...”<sup>120</sup>

The UN Declaration is a legally non-binding political statement. Moreover, it uses such wording as *where appropriate* - and does not contain monitoring nor enforcement mechanism.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> The monitoring of the Convention was enhanced in 2001 by establishing the Joint Expert Group UNESCO (CR)/ECOSOC (CESCR) on the Monitoring of the Right to Education.

<sup>119</sup> UN declaration on the rights of persons belonging to national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, article 8.

<sup>120</sup> UN Declaration On the Rights of Persons Belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities (1992), article 4, para 4.

<sup>121</sup> Only implication of its scope and application is the article 9, which reads as follows: “The specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system shall contribute to the full realization of the rights and principles set forth in the present Declaration, within their respective fields of competence.”

### 3.3. European instruments<sup>122</sup>

#### 3.3.1. European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

The European Convention for Human Rights was adopted in 1950. All the members of the European Council are members to the treaty and they were/are expected to ratify the Convention at the earliest convenience. Thus, both Russia and Georgia have ratified the Convention. The right to education laid down by the ECHR<sup>123</sup> entails two elements: prohibition to deny the right to education and respect for the parent's right to ensure education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical beliefs. There are no explicit provisions with the regard the rights of IDPs (or national minorities). Article 2 of the ECHR guarantees the right to access existing education. But sovereign states have a wide margin of appreciation as it comes to allocated resources and the structure of the educational system.<sup>124</sup>

The wording of the ECHR with the regard to the right to education is weak compared to instruments like the CRC and the UNESCO Convention. The strength of the instrument lays in the fact that in the case of a violation of the convention, individuals can file a case and seek a remedy in an independent Court.<sup>125</sup> In its jurisprudence the Court stated that the negative formulation of article 2 of the ECHR meant that there is no obligation for the contracting parties to establish at their own expense or to subsidise, education of any particular type or at any level (para 3 of the judgement under the heading B; interpretation adopted by the Court.)<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Like in the case of UN instruments, only the most relevant European instruments with the regard to education will be discussed, leaving out for instance, the antidiscrimination directive (Directive 2000/43/EC) which contains reference to education in its article 12. There are two reasons for this: 1. focus of the chapter is in the structure of the instruments., 2. So far the instrument is not always implemented into national level and thus its impact is yet to be seen.

<sup>123</sup> European Convention on Human Rights, (1950) (The right to education is furthermore repeated in accordance with the wording of ECHR in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (article 14) which has only limited application until the Treaty of Lisbon came into force in December 2009., The Charter is available at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf) )

<sup>124</sup> Ovey, Clare and White, Robin, C.A., *European Convention on Human Rights*, Oxford 2002, p. 322-323.

<sup>125</sup> The Court has a large number (ca. 2400) of pending cases related to Georgia. In year 2013 the Court processed 569 applications related to Georgia. There are two pending cases related to war in Abkhazia and one to the August 2008 conflict in South Ossetia. The latter was filed by the Georgian government against Russia. ECHR, Press Country Profile, January 2014, available at [http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/CP\\_Georgia\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/CP_Georgia_ENG.pdf)

<sup>126</sup> In the Belgian linguistic case, Judgment of 23 July 1968, Series A, No.6, the Court found that state had right to determine the language of education in public schools. The concern behind was that otherwise everybody would have right to claim instruction in language of their choice creating unsustainable situation for state authorities.



The interpretation of the Court establishes that there is a right for persons to establish private schools.<sup>127</sup> Again, there is no obligation on the state to provide special education,<sup>128</sup> schools offering education in the context of particular religious affiliation<sup>129</sup> or for individuals with special educational needs.<sup>130</sup>

However, in 2005 the Court ruled in the case of *Leyla Şahin v. Turkey*<sup>131</sup> that the negative wording/interpretation used in the article two is not in line with the Convention. “The first sentence of Article 2 essentially established access to primary and secondary education, there was no watertight division separating higher education from other forms of education. In a number of recently adopted instruments, the Council of Europe had stressed the key role and importance of higher education in the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the strengthening of democracy. Consequently, it would be hard to imagine that institutions of higher education existing at a given time did not come within the scope of the first sentence of Article 2 of Protocol No 1.”<sup>132</sup>

The ECHR is a living instrument and the interpretation of its scope can be revised by the Court. According to the article 19 of the FCNM, all the measures taken under the Convention have to be in line with the ECHR.<sup>133</sup> Therefore, the states should comply with its antidiscrimination clause, article 14. Furthermore, more recent human rights treaties, especially the CRC, have readjusted the object and purpose of the interpretation in terms of education. For instance, at the time of the Court ruling of Belgian linguistic case the CRC did not exist. At the moment, the general interpretation of the ECHR in terms of minorities’ right to education is that contracting states are under negative obligation not to prevent minorities to establish their own school establishments. The article 2 (1) of the Convention creates a positive obligation for a state to establish schools and guarantee access to education to *everybody*<sup>134</sup> but according existing interpretation this does not lay down positive obligation for the states to establish *special* schools for its minorities.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> *Kjedsen, Busk Madsen and Pedersen v. Denmark*, Judgement of 7 December 1976, series A, No. 23.

<sup>128</sup> Apps. 10228/92 and 10229/82, *W and others v. UK*, Decision of 6 March 1984.

<sup>129</sup> App. 14688/89, *Simpson v. UK*, Decision of 4 December 1989.

<sup>130</sup> App. 14688/89, *Simpson v. UK*, Decision of 4 December 1989.

<sup>131</sup> Judgement of ECHR, 29 June 2004 (the case was referred to Grand Chamber which delivered its judgement on 10 November 2005, available at

[http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx#{"dmdocnumber":\["699739"\],"itemid":\["001-61863"\]}](http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx#{)

<sup>132</sup> Grand Chamber judgment *Leyla Sahin v. Turkey* 10.11.05, Available at

[http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx#{"itemid":\["003-1503367-1572572"\]}](http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/sites/eng/pages/search.aspx#{)

<sup>133</sup> Wilson, Duncan, *Minority rights in education: Lessons for the European Union from Estonia, Latvia, Romania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, 2002, p. 14.

<sup>134</sup> Grabenwarter, C., *Europäische Menschenrechts Konvention*, Verlag C.H. Beck, Wien 2003, p. 246-247.

<sup>135</sup> Wilson 2002, p. 15-16.

### 3.3.2. Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities

The reason why FCNM is presented in this context is that it is here to inform the reader about the perhaps most important legally binding treaty with regard to diversities present in Georgian society as a whole, national minorities. Georgia ratified the convention in 2005, which implicitly indicated also a shift in Georgia's policies related to diversity management (this issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter five – case studies). Additionally, if following the same line of thinking which is presented in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, applicable customary law (at least the bill of rights) is valid irrespective of the legal status of the authorities effectively controlling the area. Consequently, the Georgian IDPs who have spontaneously returned to Gali-district in de facto Abkhazia form a national minority in Abkhazia. Secondly, international community – with few exceptions – respects Georgia's internationally recognized borders. As a result, a claim can be made that the FCNM applies also in the breakaway regions.

The only legally binding instrument focusing on minorities is the Council of Europe Framework Convention for Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter FCNM) which was adopted in 1998. The FCNM prescribes a set of rights the contracting states recognize and guarantee for their minorities. Article 14 of the FCNM explicitly stipulates the parties recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language.

Article 14 (1). “The Parties undertake to recognise that every person belonging to a national minority has the right to learn his or her minority language.

2 In areas inhabited by persons belonging to national minorities traditionally or in substantial numbers, if there is sufficient demand, the Parties shall endeavour to ensure, as far as possible and within the framework of their *education systems*, that persons belonging to those minorities have adequate opportunities for being taught the minority language or for receiving instruction in this language.”

The relatively weak wording of the FCNM waters down to a certain extent the object of the framework convention. State parties enjoy a wide margin of appreciation in defining whether there is sufficient demand for teaching or whether there are means to provide for it. Here the

problem of defining national minority surface as international law calls for objectivity in defining a minority and according the FCNM it is left for the states.<sup>136</sup>

The FCNM includes a monitoring mechanism. The state is under an obligation to file a report containing full information on legislative and other measures taken to give effect to the principles of the Framework Convention, within one year of the entry into force. Further reports will have to be made on a periodical basis (every five years) and whenever the Committee of Ministers so requests. The evaluation of the adequacy of the implementation of this Framework Convention by the Parties shall be carried out by the Committee of Ministers, which shall be assisted by an Advisory Committee.<sup>137</sup> The weakness of the FCNM is the lack of an enforcement mechanism.

Interestingly, the Advisory Committee of the FCNM which plays an important role in the monitoring mechanism of the Convention has declared several times in its published opinions that the ratifying states enjoy a wide margin of appreciation in determining which groups fall under the scope of the FCNM.<sup>138</sup> The Advisory Committee, in fact, allows states to apply the FCNM articles one by one when appropriate. The authorities were advised furthermore to consider the issue in consultation with those affected by the articles.<sup>139</sup>

### 3.3.3. The European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages

The European Charter on for Regional and Minority Languages of the CoE obliges the ratifying states to promote mutual understanding between the *language groups* of the country.<sup>140</sup> The Charter names explicitly the promotion of education as one of the areas where appropriate positive measures must be taken. The focus of the Charter is in on protection of languages and not on groups per se.<sup>141</sup> In addition, the instrument is weak in giving the ratifying state the possibility to pick and choose the articles suitable for them.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid, p. 13-14.

<sup>137</sup> FCNM (monitoring), see at [http://www.coe.int/T/E/human\\_rights/minorities/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/minorities/)

<sup>138</sup> The Advisory Committee's opinion on Austria from the year 2001, ACFC/INF/OP/I/009, paras 19-20. Another example is the opinion on Germany from the year 2002, ACFC/INF/OP/I/008, paras 17-18 and 40.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Available at <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/148.htm>

<sup>141</sup> Dunbar, R., *The Framework Convention Within the Context of the CoE – Comments with Reference to the European Charter for Regional or minority Languages*, available at [http://www.coe.int/T/E/human\\_rights/minorities/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/minorities/)

<sup>142</sup> "For the purposes of this Charter: "regional or minority languages" means languages that are: traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population; and different from the official language(s) of that State;

Georgia is not interested in signing the Charter. The critics says that it was expected to do so as it joined the Council of Europe.<sup>143</sup>

The contracting states undertake to promote, by appropriate measures, mutual understanding between all the linguistic groups of the country and in particular the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance in relation to regional or minority languages among the objectives of education and training provided within their countries and encouragement of the mass media to pursue the same objective. Article 8 of the Charter lays down a number of measures to be taken in order to make education available in minority language “according to the situation of each of these languages, and without prejudice to the teaching of the official language(s)”. In practical terms the contracting state is able to select anything between providing entire spectre of education setting in minority language or just “favour and encourage” its use.<sup>144</sup>

The Parties shall present a report that is later on made public periodically to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. The Charter cannot be enforced. Only after the change of the political leadership in Georgia, the negotiations regarding ratification of the Charter have been renewed.<sup>145</sup>

### 3.3.4. European Social Charter (ESC)

The preamble of the European Social Charter<sup>146</sup> (ESC) sets out rights and freedoms and establishes a supervisory mechanism guaranteeing their respect by the States Parties. It spells out that the social rights should be secured without discrimination on grounds of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin. The Charter entails, inter alia, following aims in terms of education: free primary and secondary education; free and effective vocational guidance services; access to initial training (general and vocational

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it does not include either dialects of the official language(s) of the State *or the languages of migrants.*”, The text is available at <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/148.htm>

<sup>143</sup> “On being formally admitted to the Council of Europe (CoE) in April 1999, Georgia pledged to sign and ratify the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) within a year of its accession. Until today, Georgia has not signed or ratified the Charter, Wheatley, Jonathan, Georgia and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, ECMI Working paper #42, June 2009, p. 4.

<sup>144</sup> The European Charter on Regional and Minority Languages, article 8.

<sup>145</sup> Interestingly, the very influential head of Georgia’s Orthodox church, Patriarch Ilia II, has been opposing the renewed discussions: “... we think it is unacceptable, because it will cause strengthening of separatist movement and creation of new grave problems for the country.”, Civil.ge, 31 March 2013, Online News, available at <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=25908>

<sup>146</sup> European Social Charter (1961), Following its revision, the 1996 revised European Social Charter, which came into force in 1999, is gradually replacing the initial 1961 treaty.

secondary education), university and non-university higher education, vocational training, including continuing training.

When read in conjunction with its non-discrimination clause, the guarantee to all nationals and foreigners legally resident and/or working that all the rights set out in the Charter apply regardless of race, sex, age, colour, language, religion, opinions, national origin, social background, state of health or association with a national minority.

The states are under an obligation to submit every year a report<sup>147</sup> indicating how they implement the Charter in law and in practice. The European Committee of Social Rights determines if the reports are in compliance with the obligations states have undertaken.

The scope of the ESC is clearly individualistic and cannot be read to support any specific collective rights. Georgia has ratified the Charter.

### **3.4. Humanitarian law**

International humanitarian law protects those who do not take part in the hostilities, including civilians, medical and religious military personnel. The instruments relevant to this work include fourth Geneva Convention from the year 1949; the protection of civilians in time of wars.<sup>148</sup> The Convention stipulates that in the event of military occupation the occupying forces need to make sure that facilities are provided to protect and educate the children. The convention states that education must be maintained in all circumstances. The additional protocol I, adopted in 1977 and ratified by Georgia in 1993 and by Russia in 1989, states that schools (and other buildings which serve civil purposes) are to be granted absolute protection from military attacks. The additional protocol II extends the essential rules of the law of armed conflicts to internal wars.<sup>149</sup> 3. According to the protocol II, Article 4 para 3, children shall be provided with the care and aid they require, and in particular:

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<sup>147</sup> 7nd National Report on the Implementation of the European Social Charter Submitted by the Government of Georgia for the cycle 2014, available at

[http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/reporting/statereports/Georgia7\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/reporting/statereports/Georgia7_en.pdf)

<sup>148</sup> Text available at

<http://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl.nsf/Treaty.xsp?action=openDocument&documentId=AE2D398352C5B028C12563CD002D6B5C>

<sup>149</sup> Text available at <http://www.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/475?OpenDocument>

- (a) they shall receive an education, including religious and moral education, in keeping with the wishes of their parents, or in the absence of parents, of those responsible for their care.

#### 3.4.1. Geneva conventions

Due to its linkage to conflict, international humanitarian law has a particular importance for refugee children. The Geneva Conventions make specific reference to protections related to education at times of war. These provisions stipulate the parties to a conflict ensure that children under fifteen, orphaned or separated from their families are provided with appropriate education.<sup>150</sup> Occupying powers have a duty to facilitate the maintenance of education delivery<sup>151</sup> Education should be provided for interned children and young people<sup>152</sup> The most relevant provision with regard to IDPs are found in the second protocol of the convention which states that education should be provided for children throughout non-international conflicts.<sup>153</sup>

Smith and Vaux points out that main weakness of Geneva conventions was the fact that provisions were drafted just after the Second World War and as a result they were related to situations where a formal state of war had existed between internationally recognized states. Later on, UN declarations, resolutions and other soft laws have tried to renew and amend accepted legal basis to accommodate the complex nature of modern conflicts, where conflicts occur between groups within countries, creating unclear situations with regard to accountability to international authorities. Hence, the disregard of the values and norms represented by the Geneva Conventions.<sup>154</sup>

#### 3.4.2. The Guiding Principles in Internal Displacement

The guiding principle in internal displacement is a UN document laying down the core of international standards on how states and other actors are expected to deal with the IDPs.

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<sup>150</sup> Fourth Geneva Convention, Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, 12 August 1949, Article 24, available at

<http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/385ec082b509e76c41256739003e636d/6756482d86146898c125641e004aa3c5>

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, Article 50.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid, Article 94.

<sup>153</sup> Geneva Conventions, Protection of Victims of Non-International Conflicts (Protocol II), 8 June 1977, Article 4(3)(a)

<sup>154</sup> Smith and Vaux 2003, p. 13.

The principles are addressed to the representative of the UN Secretary-General on internally displaced people, states when faced with the phenomena of internal displacement, all other authors, groups and persons in their relations with internally displaced people, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations<sup>155</sup> as the Guiding principles are also designed to provide guidance for international development and humanitarian agencies.<sup>156</sup> The Guiding Principles themselves are not a legally binding international convention which could be enforced on a state. However, it creates political pressure on a state to comply with the international norms. The Guiding Principles in Internal Displacement are based on international customary law, humanitarian law and human rights and are therefore it can be seen to apply universally.<sup>157</sup>

The most relevant part of the Guiding principles with respect to this work is the Principle 23 which reads as follows:

1. Every human being has the right to education.
2. To give effect to this right for internally displaced persons, the authorities concerned shall ensure that such persons, in particular displaced children, receive education which shall be free and compulsory at the primary level. Education should respect their cultural identity, language and religion.
3. Special efforts should be made to ensure the full and equal participation of women and girls in educational programmes.
4. Education and training facilities shall be made available to internally displaced persons, in particular adolescents and women, whether or not living in camps, as soon as conditions permit.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> UN, *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*, Official document number E/CN.4/1998/53/ADD.2, 2004, p. 13.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid, p. 5., Moreover, a reference is made to Guiding Principles, i.g., in CoE Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1877 (2009), Europe's forgotten people: protecting the human rights of long-term displaced persons, available at <http://assembly.coe.int/Mainf.asp?link=/Documents/AdoptedText/ta09/EREC1877.htm>

<sup>157</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Living in Limbo. The Rights of Ethnic Georgian Returnees to the Gali district of Abkhazia*, 2011, p. 27.

<sup>158</sup> UN, *Guiding Principles*, p. 35.

According to the guiding principles, the responsibility to provide protection, and assist the IDPs lies in the hands of the national authorities. The level of commitment to this principle varies considerably among the states.<sup>159</sup>

According to Human Rights Watch, Georgia has reflected the Guiding principle in its domestic legislation.<sup>160</sup>

### **3.5. Summary of the international obligations**

As stated in the introductory part of this chapter, this part shed light on the international standards with regard to minority protection as well as the legal status of the IDPs. The first part was done to introduce the reader the elements influencing Georgia's diversity management policies having implicitly also impact on IDPs life. Moreover, it was useful to introduce the standards as a backdrop for the section discussing the de facto Abkhazia and the situation of Georgian IDPs who have returned to the Gali district, located on the ABK side of the ABL. According to international instruments, states should take necessary measures to protect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities. The wording of the international human rights instruments referring to minority language education is nevertheless vague and general.

In general terms, increased mobility of the population together with growing significance of international agreements, particularly with regard to human rights, has limited the role and moral right of a state to exclusively define the rights of persons living in their territory.

Duncan Wilson, a specialist on minority education, argues that it is not the obligation of individuals to adapt to the existing educational system, but the educational setting should be adaptable to the needs of the individuals. Hence, minorities should have the right to establish schools which would suit their culture and language. The states hold an uncontested right to imply requirements to guarantee a certain amount of teaching in state language. Wilson then states, that this is legitimate and imperative in order to avoid segregation of the different

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<sup>159</sup> Smith, Christine and Smith Alan, *Education and Internally Displaced Persons. Education as a Humanitarian Response*, Bloomsbury Academy, London, 2013, p. 17.

<sup>160</sup> Human Rights Watch 2011, p. 27.



linguistic and ethnic groups which could not be integrated without sharing a mutual language.<sup>161</sup>

According to Asbjørn Eide, former chair of the UN Working Group on the Rights of Minorities, all the minorities are entitled to freedom of discrimination and other fundamental rights. Nevertheless, the set of rights which constitute positive obligations – including the right to education in minority language – are more reasonably retained for old minorities.<sup>162</sup>

The right to education is a notion that combines both first generation political and civil rights on the one hand and the second generation social and economic rights on the other hand. Still, there is no common understanding about what it really means. How to define exactly when the right to education is violated and how a remedy for a violation should be imposed?<sup>163</sup>

It seems that basic education is more institutionalised in terms of Human Rights norms than secondary, vocational and tertiary studies.

Sometimes critics have pointed out that the wording in international treaties and conventions is vaguer somehow conveying an impression that the universal right to education is relative and its realizations depends in available economic resources. This is also against the Universal Millennium Goals<sup>164</sup> which target 2 calls states to: “Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling”.<sup>165</sup> According to UNESCO Education For All (EFA) monitoring report, the pupil/teacher ratio in primary education decreased by at least 20% in 60 countries less developed countries between 1999-2011, including Georgia.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>162</sup> Asbjørn Eide, *The Rights of the Old Versus New Minorities*, in European Yearbook of Minority issues (ECMI), vol. 2, 2002/2003, Leiden 2004, p. 379.

<sup>163</sup> Tomaševski, Katarina, *Education denied – costs and remedies*, New York 2003., p. 65., Ms Tomaševski was the first Special Rapporteur on the right to education, appointed in personal capacity by the Chairman of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in September 1998 on the basis of the Human Rights Commission resolution 1998/33 in April 1998. The mandate of the Special rapporteur included, *inter alia*, to report realization of the progressive right to education, promote assistant to governments and promote the elimination of all forms of discrimination in education.

<sup>164</sup> The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) address extreme poverty. One of the goals is to ensure universal primary education by 2015. These goals were agreed by all the world's countries and world's leading development institutions in 2000. More information available at <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview/>

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> EFA Global Monitoring Report, 29 Jan 2014, p. 87. Report available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002256/225660e.pdf>

In short, the right to education applying to the minorities can be found in several major instruments. The extent of the right to education is more solid on the level of the basic education and blurs on the secondary and tertiary levels. Examined legal instruments provide for minorities' right to education as a mean to preserve their identity. The instruments articulate as well minorities' responsibility to integrate and participate in larger society by learning the official language of the state. However, the international human rights instruments referring to minority language education are fairly vague. They do not spell out which level of education should be available in minority languages and how this should be realised – through public or private schools? In co-operation with the possible kin-state? Furthermore, there is a significant difference to learn minority language or learn through minority language and I cannot see this being stressed in sufficient amount in the international treaties.

Of course, the national laws on education provide the tangible framework in which the different stakeholders are operating within any given state. I will make a reference to relevant laws when presenting the Georgian educational system. Moreover, the important documents drafted by the Georgian authorities in 2007 (State strategy for IDPs) and 2010 (GEO MRA Integration Plan) providing guidance for the state policy towards the IDPs will be discussed in the Chapter five - case studies.

## **CHAPTER IV - GEORGIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM**

The following chapter will set the scene for the conducted case studies illustrated in Chapter six. This chapter will present the relevant historical framework as well as political factors in relation to the Georgian educational system. The chapter will also touch upon topics of modernisation and identity, as they are relevant for the study increasing the complexity of the examined situation further.

### **4.1. Context – Georgian state**

The contemporary Georgia has a long history which has created and shaped its diversity. The region of present day Georgia consisted of the ancient kingdoms of Colchis and Kartli-Iberia. The area came under Roman influence in the first centuries A.D., and Christianity

became the state religion as early as in the 330s. The region was conquered and dominated by Persians, Arabs, and Turks for centuries. The Georgian golden age in the 11<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> centuries was brought to its end by the Mongol invaders in 1236. Later on, the Ottoman and Persian empires fought against each other for the domination of the region. Georgia was incorporated gradually into the Russian Empire during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Georgia declared independency in 1918 which only lasted for three years until 1921. As a consequence of the process which started from the Russian revolution, Georgia was incorporated by force into the Soviet Russia in 1921. Georgia regained its independence after the collapse of Soviet Union in 1991.<sup>167</sup>

The population of Georgia in 2014 is 4.5 million.<sup>168</sup> The demographic composition of Georgia is demonstrated in the graph below.

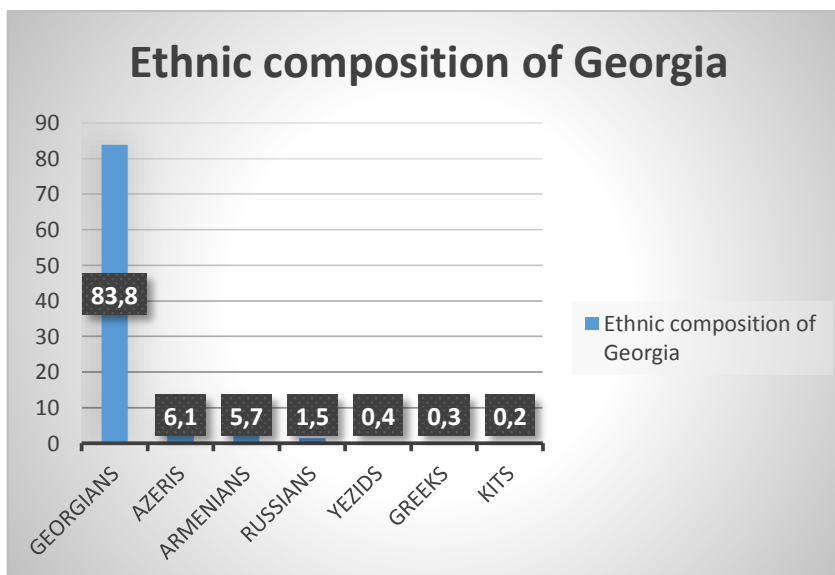


Figure 5.1. Ethnic composition of Georgia

The latest country-wide population census was conducted in 2002 by the Department of Statistics of Georgia, which excludes the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia and the Autonomous Region of South Ossetia. According to the census, the ethnic composition of Georgia is as follows: Georgians 83.8%, Azerbaijanis 6.1%, Armenians 5.7%, Russians 1.5%, Ossetians 0.9%, Yezids 0.4%, Greeks 0.3%, Kists 0.2%, Ukrainians 0.2%, Jews 0.1%,

<sup>167</sup> Ascherson, Neal, *Black Sea. The Birthplace of Civilisation and Barbarism*, Vintage Books, London, 2007, p. 244-247.

<sup>168</sup> National Statistics Office of Georgia, available at [http://www.geostat.ge/?action=page&p\\_id=32&lang=eng](http://www.geostat.ge/?action=page&p_id=32&lang=eng)

Abkhazians 0.1%, Assyrians 0.1%, Kurds 0.1%, others 0.1%. The next census will take place in 2014.<sup>169</sup>

#### 4.1.1. Modernisation

Modernisation is a process that coincided with the displacement particularly in 1991 in the badly needed post-Soviet era modernization. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, education became fundamental to the transition in Eastern Europe as well as in the Caucasus. Education had a decisive role in steering the economy away from the planned system towards market economy based development. The transition actually had, in some cases, a detrimental impact on the delivery of education in former Soviet states. Innocenti working paper points out the weakness of many educational surveys, which only report the attendance rate of schools or universities, which leaves out a lot of essential data. The enrolment rate does not reveal the socio-economic background of the pupils nor the quality of the education. Moreover, non-formal education as well as the relevance of the education is left out of the (quantitative) measurement.<sup>170</sup>

The democratic modernization process which started after the collapse of the USSR in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, has come to be associated by most of the local population with poverty. Due to shortcomings in the process, the state of democracy has been understood as “a façade that imitates democracy and a show of elections.”<sup>171</sup> The poverty in the region is different from that in other parts of the world. Rapid and indiscriminating privatization brought about the concentration of financial resources in the hands of a selected few that led to unequal distribution of wealth. The gap that appeared then has not diminished in the course of time. The particularity of this region is that the people have a relatively high level of education. This is because in the Soviet Union, even though the political and civic rights were suppressed, people enjoyed considerable social and cultural rights. “The new rules of neo-liberalism and the open, unregulated free-market economy brought quick and unjust

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Micklewright, John, *Education, Inequality and Transition*, UNICEF Innocenti Working papers, Economic and Social Policy Series no. 74, January 2000, p. 2

<sup>171</sup> Large, Judith and Sisk, Timothy D., *Democracy, Conflict and Human Security: Pursuing Peace in the 21st Century*, IDEA, Stockholm 2006, p. 29-30.

social stratification and significant societal polarization, which these states have not been able to overcome during the years of independence.<sup>172</sup>

SIDA<sup>173</sup> assessment continues rather pessimistically, that the majority of the population in South Caucasus – Georgia included – has no real access to power. According to law, everyone has equal social, cultural and economic rights. However, these rights have been exercised by the people and the laws have not been enforced effectively and respected in public policies.<sup>174</sup>

According to Innocenti study, Georgian enrolment figures reflecting the change after collapse of the Soviet Union for primary and lower secondary schools fell 8-11 % during the time period of 1989–1996. Georgian GDP took a horrible blow after the independence. It has been assessed that Georgia's GDP diminished by 75% in 1990–1994. As regards the state expenditure on education as per cent of GDP the collapse in the case of Georgia was tremendous: 96% during the time period of 1989–1996<sup>175</sup> indicating the catastrophic situation where Georgia found itself.

The additional element which has influenced IPDs positioning in the complex Georgian societal fabric is modernization. A survey among school-aged displaced children concluded that in 1994 25% of the children did not attend school regularly or did not attend it at all. Fortunately, some improvement has been evident in spite of the fact that there was a second conflict and wave of IDPs after the survey was conducted.<sup>176</sup>

#### 4.1.2. Identity

Georgia has historically been a multiethnic state which has additionally been conquered by the neighbouring Persia, Mongols, Ottomans and more recently in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Russians. Even the capital Tbilisi was mainly inhabited by Armenians and Azeris. After Georgia was gradually taken over by Russia during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Russians formed one third of the population of Tbilisi in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. During the era of the Russian Empire, Georgia experienced rapid modernization. Russia built a railway

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid, p. 30.

<sup>173</sup> Swedish International Development Cooperation (SIDA), information available at <http://www.sida.se/English/>

<sup>174</sup> Large and Sisk 2006, p 30.

<sup>175</sup> UNICEF 1998, *Education for all, The Money Project, Regional Monitoring Report No. 5*, UNICEF International Child development Centre, Florence, figure 2.11. and Annex Table 7.

<sup>176</sup> Micklewright 2000, p. 27.

connecting Baku in Azerbaijan with Batumi by the Black Sea coast (which it had only gained from Turkey in 1878) in order to transport oil. The Georgian society and especially the elite were influenced by European societies and ideas which they often gained while studying in Russia. The rural population was predominantly Georgians who were owned by the landlords until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when slavery was abolished in the Russian Empire. During the communist era there was an attempt to abolish the status of the Georgian language. This led to unrest and demonstrations in Tbilisi which were violently crushed by the Soviet forces in 1989 leaving some 20 Georgian demonstrators dead. After the independency, the role of the Orthodox Church and the Georgian language became fundamental parts of the identity. This exclusive concept of nation state fits rather poorly the historically multiethnic and multi-religious make-up of the population residing in the area of contemporary Georgia. However, there are signs that Georgia is trying to reconstruct its identity in the sense that Georgia has effectively taken steps to accommodate its national minorities and enhance integrative measures. The government has created civil integration programmes, including multilingual instruction support programme. The goal of the Georgian Language Program is to promote popularization of Georgian as a state language and simultaneously preserve linguistic and cultural identity of national minorities through special educational activities.<sup>177</sup>

James Taylor among other thinkers has demonstrated that an individual's identity depends vitally on his dialogic relations with the others. Hence, the identity of any group in a minority position is always interrelated to the majority. Therefore, the law has to impose obligation to the majority to respect and protect the rights of the minority<sup>178</sup> - or other vulnerable groups.

The Georgian elite consider themselves European. This tendency was obvious right after the independency in 1991, but it was further strengthened after the deterioration of the relations and after the conflict with Russia in 2008. The Georgian academics and political leaders, especially during the era of Mikheil Saakashvili, have stressed Georgia's cultural, political, geographical and historical ties with Europe. After the Rose revolution in 2003 a law was adopted stipulating that all the public buildings in Georgia need to display an EU flag. The idea that Georgia can only flourish as a part of the European Union has been endorsed by

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<sup>177</sup> Ministry of Science and Education in Georgia, information on the programme is available at <http://www.mes.gov.ge/content.php?id=547&lang=eng>

<sup>178</sup> According Mehedi, Mustapha, *Multicultural and Intercultural Education and Protection of Minorities*, Working paper, UN, Economic and Social Council, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Working group on Minorities, E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/1999/WP.5, p. 3-4.

Georgian academics. However, the EU orientation was not that strong during 2003–2008 during which the US became Georgia’s closest and most important ally. After 2008 there was again a shift as the Georgian elite started to approach the EU while they became more sceptical towards NATO. The Eastern Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was an attempt by the EU to engage strategically with EU’s external neighbours and to bring them closer to EU structures which would increase the stability without EU promising any concrete steps towards actual integration process. The Georgian leadership felt that ENP was not materialising Georgia’s aspirations.<sup>179</sup> Since the Eastern Partnership policy and more recently the signing of the EU association agreement have sped up Georgia’s march in the direction of the EU.<sup>180</sup>

Association Agreements are international agreements that the European Union has signed with third countries with the object to set up a wide-ranging framework to conduct bilateral relations. These agreements usually provide for the progressive liberalisation of trade.

As regards social capital, there were interesting analyses in this respect. First, according to the World Bank, “Social capital refers to the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions.”<sup>181</sup> According to a survey conducted by Legatum Prosperity in 2012,<sup>182</sup> Georgia’s social capital was ranked as number 140 out of 142 states covered by the survey. The World Bank states that “increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable. Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society – it is the glue that holds them together.”<sup>183</sup>

According to a study by Caucasus Research Resource Centres (CRRC) in 2010, Georgians demonstrate strong solidarity towards in-group networks (bonding, discussed in theoretical framework). Bridging social cohesion is instead scarce even when compared globally. The Soviet legacy is given as an explanation for this. It is stated that during the Soviet era, people

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<sup>179</sup> Rinnert, David, *The Eastern Partnership in Georgia. Increasing Efficiency of EU Neighbourhood Policies in South Caucasus?*, The German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Working Paper FG 5, 2011/No. 1, March 2011, p. 15-16.

<sup>180</sup> Euractiv.com, *EU puts Georgia, Moldova on fast track to association*, 20 December 2013, article available at <http://www.euractiv.com/europes-east/eu-puts-georgia-moldova-fast-tra-news-532544>

<sup>181</sup> The World Bank, *What is Social Capital?*, available at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTTSOCIALCAPITAL/0,,contentMDK:20185164~menuPK:418217~pagePK:148956~piPK:216618~theSitePK:401015,00.html>

<sup>182</sup> The Legatum Prosperity Index is an annual ranking developed by the Legatum Institute. The latest survey is available at <http://www.prosperity.com/#/>

<sup>183</sup> The World Bank, *What is Social Capital?*

depended on trust between close friends and relatives. Consequently, bridging was not taking place at all or it was controlled by the state and as a result it was not genuine and durable. Therefore, due to the legacy of the communist era people are suspicious about joining public institutions of any type. This creates an additional challenge to Georgia which is trying to modernise its economy. Economy based on free market economy requires bridging as it is not possible to operate an economy based on connections between individuals and relatives.<sup>184</sup> In a society where connections and financial resources play a decisive role, social mobility, ensuring better socioeconomic conditions than those your parents had is even more difficult for marginalised and vulnerable people – including IDPs.

#### 4.1.3. Georgian policies towards IDPs – focus on education

After the displacement of the Georgians from Abkhazia in 1992, the situation in entire country was chaotic. Georgia had just become independent and the country cut itself from the Soviet economic structures which lead to a disastrous economic situation in the country. Furthermore, the political leadership was convinced of the return of the IDPs back to the lost territories or at least this was the political discourse. As a result there were no clear and coordinated overall policies towards the (old caseload) IDPs until 2007.<sup>185</sup>

The IDP schools were established rather soon after the conflict in Abkhazia in 1990's. Initially 36 schools were established. The schools predominantly opened in the western part of Georgia. The reason for opening the schools was the flow of IDPs (around 240 000). There were several reasons for establishing the schools. First of all, most of the IDPs remained in the western part of the country. This was because the majority of Georgians living in Abkhazia were from the same Georgian sub-group, Mingrelians. Consequently, they very often had family in the region of Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti. The increase of pupils would have been too big a burden to the recipient communities. Opening particular schools for the IDPs also provided working opportunities to displaced teachers. By doing so, pupils (as well as the parents) also had familiar teachers who had lived in Abkhazia and were able

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<sup>184</sup> Financial News, *Khachapuri-index*, 6 May 2013, Tbilisi, p. 2, available at [http://iset-pi.ge/index.php?article\\_id=912&clang=0](http://iset-pi.ge/index.php?article_id=912&clang=0)

<sup>185</sup> "It should be noted that to date there has not been a state document in Georgia reflecting the general vision of IDPs' problems and the approach towards solving them. In planning and implementing IDP programs, the Georgian government, international organizations and local non-governmental organizations have experienced a lack of a coordinated and comprehensive approach to addressing IDPs' problems. This has resulted in insufficient attention paid to IDPs' interests and needs, and made it difficult to develop durable and sustainable solutions to their plight.", Georgian State Strategy on IDPs, Tbilisi 2007, p.1.



to maintain pupils' knowledge and interest on the topic. In 2009, there were 14 IDP schools with roughly 5 000 pupils. The schools operate under the administration of the Abkhaz Ministry of Education and Culture in Exile. This is a part of the Georgian parallel administrative structure which has been sustained to serve the needs of the Georgian IDPs from Abkhazia and ensure that upon the return of the breakaway regions to Georgia proper, the functioning administration will be ready. The IDP schools were normally established within or nearby settlement which had been allocated to the IDPs.

Some people involved with the IPDs have stated that IDP schools can even be traumatic to the pupils. After the protracted displacement none of the pupils actually have their own experiences of Abkhazia and of the war that lead to the displacement. The fact that they are educated in IDP schools might lead to a feeling that they are temporary citizens as they are supposed to return soon to Abkhazia.<sup>186</sup>

After the displacement, Georgia adopted a law on Forcibly-Displaced Persons – Persecuted Persons in 1996.<sup>187</sup> According to this law, a person who was forcibly displaced can apply for an IDP status. Upon the approval of the application, the person will be given an identification card demonstrating his status. The law stipulates that a persecuted person (IDP) has a right to live in his temporary place of residence and use public utilities free of charge (Article 3, para 3). In accordance with this, Article 5, para 2(d) of the law states that the law “ensures the constitutional right to education of persecuted persons and free education in schools of general education at the expense of state.”<sup>188</sup> Moreover, the IDPs obtained a right to monthly allowance and targeted social assistance.

In 1995, a parallel structure called Abkhazian government in exile was set up by Tbilisi to ensure that Georgian administration will be in place when returning to the breakaway region will become possible. Moreover, the administration offered scarce working opportunities to IDPs.<sup>189</sup> In the beginning, the Ministry of Education section administrated 45 IDP schools. By the year 2008, the number of the IDP schools had reduced to 23. Today, there are some

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<sup>186</sup> Corso, Molly, *Georgia's Abkhaz IDP Schools Keep Dream of Return to Abkhazia Alive*, in Eurasianet, 27 September 2009, available at <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav092809.shtml>

<sup>187</sup> The law on Forcibly-Displaced Persons – Persecuted Persons is available at [http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session10/GE/NRC-IDMC\\_NorwegianRefugeeCouncil-LawonIDPs-Annex2-eng.pdf](http://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session10/GE/NRC-IDMC_NorwegianRefugeeCouncil-LawonIDPs-Annex2-eng.pdf)

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> In the year 2010, Government in exile in employed 338 IDPs. During the triangulation phase of the questionnaire results on June 2014, a representative of Government in exile mentioned that an additional reason had been to keep teachers' professionalism and pedagogical knowledge up to date to ensure functionality of Georgian schools until returning to breakaway regions will become possible and the schoolwork will return to normality.

14 IDP school with around 2 700 pupils and 300 teachers. These segregated schools have been criticized for not serving the best interest of the children. The second reason was to offer working opportunities in a society suffering from high unemployment. As the standard Georgian public schools are operating under Ministry of Education and Science, the IDP schools under Government in exile received their fund from the parallel ministry which also supports schools in terms of pedagogy.<sup>190</sup> The educational reforms which started in 2005 also concerned IDP schools. However, the schools ran by the government in exile remained distinct. Yet, many of them were closed as they did not meet the new quality standards, they were operating in two shifts or the settlements where they were operating were closed down.<sup>191</sup>

The former president, Mikheil Saakashvili, and the Georgian government initiated the composing of State Strategy in February 2006. A governmental degree no. 80 foresaw creating a state committee with a task to review the problems IDPs were facing and to elaborate recommendations and take care of their implementation.<sup>192</sup>

The strategy had two major goals: to create conditions for dignified and safe return of IDPs and to support decent living conditions for the displaced population and their participation in society. The state strategy consisted an action plan. The foreword of the strategy described the situation rather realistically:

“The lack of material resources of many IDP families and their poor living conditions hinders access by IDP children and youth to quality education, which cannot be fully provided in schools located in collective centers - buildings that had another function in the past. On one hand, this has a negative influence on children’s opportunity to receive a quality education and on the other hand it enhances the feeling of exclusion among IDP children. Special attention should be paid to the schools in Abkhazia, where in addition to the low quality of education, attempts of repression of the Georgian language by the de-facto administration is a concern.”<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> Internal Displacement Centre, *Moving Towards Integration. Overcoming segregated education for IDPs*, September 2011, p. 12.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia, *Georgian State Strategy on IDPs - Persecuted*, Tbilisi 2007.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, point 1.4.

The strategy stated that “It is necessary to create, or to eradicate the hindering factors, for IDPs to enjoy legal, political, living and socio-economic conditions like other citizens of Georgia. Furthermore, IDPs have all the rights as other citizens of Georgia; despite this, however, they are not fully integrated in the society.”

#### “Chapter III - Goals and Objectives

...3. Strategic priorities are divided into three phases according to timeframe, the terms of which depend on the continued progress of resolution of the internal conflicts:

##### 3.1. First Phase

3.1.1. Support to ensure safety and provision of basic living conditions for the IDPs who have spontaneously returned to Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region;”

3.1.2. Initiation of the process for closing the collective center

##### 3.2. Second Phase

3.2.1. To vacate the collective centers gradually;

3.2.2. To improve the situations of vulnerable IDPs, to provide support for their integration;

3.2.3. To support the safe and dignified return of IDPs before the final resolution of the conflicts.

##### 3.3. Third Phase

3.3.1. To ensure the safe and dignified return of IDPs after the resolution of conflicts

3.3.2. To integrate those IDPs who will not return to their places of permanent residence after resolving the conflicts.”<sup>194</sup>

#### Chapter V – integration of IDPs

...3. Improvement of socio-economic conditions of IDPs

3.1. Improvement of living conditions of IDPs depends upon access to adequate social services, first of all in the spheres of healthcare and education

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<sup>194</sup> Ibid, p. 8.

c) Segregated schools affiliated with collective centers should be closed once these collective centers are vacated and IDP teachers should be included in the national program for upgrading their qualification;

3.3. a) It is necessary to provide support, within state educational programs, for vocational education for IDPs, which can become a tool for the social integration of IDPs, to encourage their motivation for participation in vocational training and to increase IDPs' access to such programs; also, to raise their awareness about vocational training, professional skills-development or other learning opportunities

There have been two additional documents guiding the IDP policies which are amendments and reviews of the state strategy described above. The first one is Decree of the Georgian Government No. 575 on 11 May 2010. The second one, and still applicable, is the Action Plan for the Implementation of the State Strategy on IDPs during 2012-2014.<sup>195</sup>

However, the document simply makes a reference to education as one item in a list of things under point 3.2., socio-economic integration without really elaborating on it.

The Georgian Public defender (ombudsman) points out in his report that Georgia is one of the 16 countries in the world to have legislation explicitly touching upon IDPs. In the conclusion the Public defender concludes that “in the field of internally displaced persons, Georgian legislation is more or less complete.”<sup>196</sup>

The State Ministry for Reintegration was renamed into the State Ministry for Reconciliation and Civic Equality starting from January 1, 2014. This decision was welcomed by the EU Delegation to Georgia, stating that EU encourages Georgia to pragmatic cooperation with the breakaway regions, and that the delegation appreciates the efforts of all parties aimed at peace and reconciliation.<sup>197</sup>

In spite of the fact that gradual closing of IDP schools was included in the Integration plan in 2007, 14 of them still operate. Moreover, as long as a considerable part of the IDP population is living in IDP settlements the pupils in schools can in reality be almost entirely

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<sup>195</sup> Georgian Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, *Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia*, available at <http://www.mra.gov.ge/eng/static/49>

<sup>196</sup> Public Defender of Georgia, *Report on the Human Rights Situation of Internally Displaced Persons and Conflict-Affected Internally Displaced Persons and Conflict-Affected Individuals in Georgia*, July 2010, p. 12, available at [www.ombudsman.ge](http://www.ombudsman.ge)

<sup>197</sup> Civil ge Online News, *State Ministry for Reintegration Renamed*, 2 January 2014, available at <http://civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=26842>

IDPs. The segregated schools can prevent integration and thus should not be a permanent solution.

#### **4.2. The structure of educational system**

In order to understand the educational context of IDP pupils, it is necessary to present briefly the structure of the Georgian educational system. Statistically, Georgians are one the most educated people in CIS: in 2009, 28.3% of the adults in active working age hold tertiary education degree and 61.2% have completed upper secondary education. However, there is a declining trend as the number of students enrolled to upper secondary school has decreased over 25%. At the same time, the figure for pupils enrolled for compulsory schools has declined 7.4%.<sup>198</sup> In other words, a demographic change cannot explain the situation. What is the matter then?

The Georgian Constitution guarantees the right of all citizens to education.<sup>199</sup> Educational system in Georgia has been changed and modernized rather recently. These changes are linked both on domestic political aspirations linked to Georgia's aspirations to approach European and western systems as well as Bologna process to which Georgia became a member of in May 2005.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> European Union, European Training Foundation, *Torino Process 2012: Georgia*, the report is available at [http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/TRP\\_2012\\_Georgia](http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/TRP_2012_Georgia)

<sup>199</sup> The Constitution of Georgia, Article 35(3); The state guarantees pre-school education. Primary education is mandatory for all. The state provides free primary education for all. Citizens have the right to free secondary, professional and tertiary education at state institutes within the framework and by the rules established in law. Available at [http://www.parliament.ge/files/68\\_1944\\_951190\\_CONSTIT\\_27\\_12.06.pdf](http://www.parliament.ge/files/68_1944_951190_CONSTIT_27_12.06.pdf)

<sup>200</sup> Since its beginning in 1999, the main goal of the Bologna Process - as a part of the creation of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) - has been to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe. Bologna process is a joint activity where both public and private stakeholders participate. More information on Bologna process is available at [http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/bologna-process\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/higher-education/bologna-process_en.htm)

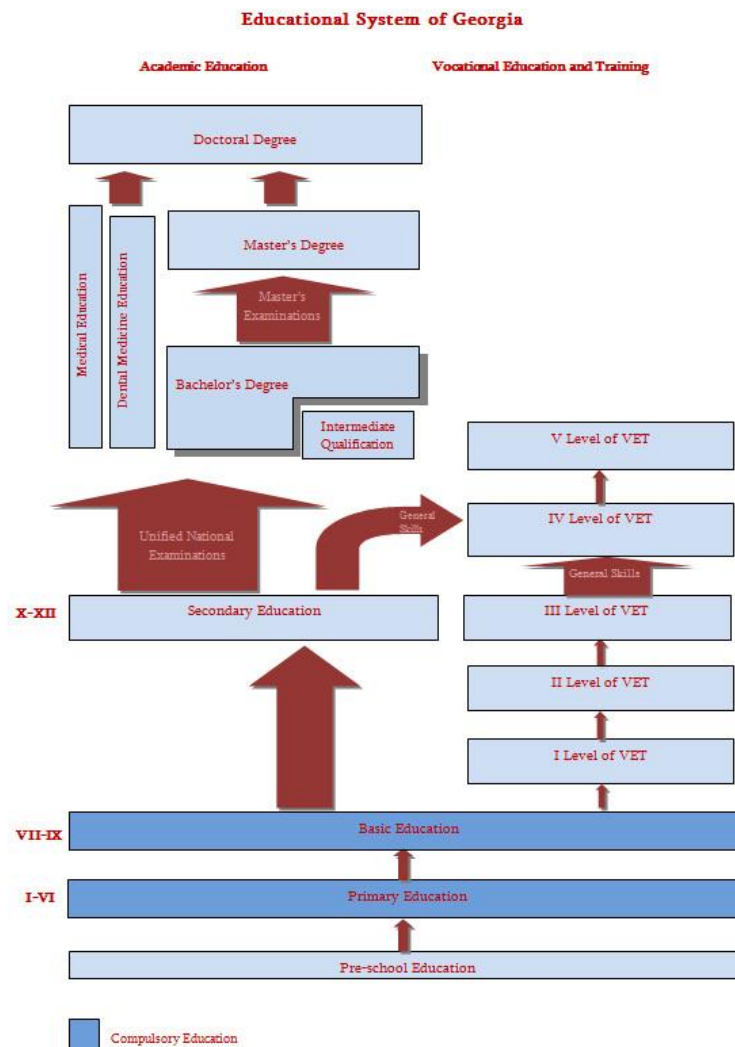


Figure 4.1. Educational system of Georgia, source: Georgian National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement, available at <http://eqe.ge/eng/education>

After Georgia became independent, one of its priorities has been reform of educational system and development of new legal framework for education.<sup>201</sup> The law stipulated that the state will provide free secondary education to all pupils by the year 2003. A number of degrees were issued in the coming years related to education dealing with, for instance, regulation of secondary schools and criteria on licensing schools and accreditation boards of higher education institutions.<sup>202</sup>

<sup>201</sup> UNESCO, International Bureau of Education, *World Data on Education*, VII Ed. 2010/2011, available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002113/211301e.pdf>

<sup>202</sup> European Union, European Training Foundation... at [http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/TRP\\_2012\\_Georgia](http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/TRP_2012_Georgia)

The identity and state building of Georgia after gaining its independency was very much based on exclusive nation state mode stressing the importance of Georgian language and orthodox religion of the titular nation. Only in 2005 Georgian parliament adopted a new law on general education. The law had a different approach towards the minorities stipulating that all the citizens of Georgia other than Georgian enjoy the right of receiving a full-course general education in their native language in compliance with the national curriculum. The new law also established 12-year-cycle of education out of which 1-9 grades were compulsory.

Administration of the educational system in Georgia is carried out by the Ministry for Education and Science (MES). MES is responsible for implementing unified state policy in educational sector. It decides the curriculums and supervise their implementation. Furthermore, it decides upon the criteria and licensing of educational institutions, validations of pupils and students as well as of standards of pedagogical staff. MES is also responsible for creation and approval of used textbooks. Within the structures of MES there are three relevant national centers functioning under the Department of General and Vocational Education Development. These three centers are: National Curriculum and Assessment Center, National Examination Center and Teacher Professional Development Center all established in 2006. Additionally, in 2010 under a law on Educational Quality Enhancement, a National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement was established as an independent entity. According to the law, all the educational institutions were subjects to external assessment on whether or not they meet the established national standards in order to be authorized to perform as educational institutions. The assessed points included the goals of the teaching, learning outcomes and verification if the programme were in coherent with the set goals, management of the school and used methodologies and adequacy of the executed assessments.<sup>203</sup> This new regulations seemed to have an impact on some IDP-schools at least in western part of Georgia among the IDP schools meant for the old case load IDPs. A representative of Georgian run Abkhazian government in exile stated during a conversation in July 2012 that some of the IDP schools in Samegrelo have not reached the set standards in the course of recent accreditation visits by central authorities. As a result, some of the schools will be closed in the future and the pupils will be start attending standard public schools. The same interlocutor commented that the reason behind is mainly the insufficient

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<sup>203</sup> Ibid, p. 3-5.

financial resources of the IDP schools which do not allow them even fix even the gravest problems in school infrastructure.<sup>204</sup>

As part of the reforms, the educational institutions have been transformed to autonomous legal entities of public law which receive their financing directly from MES. Each school has an elected body Board of Trustees. This body consists of teachers, parents, student representatives and can occasionally also include local-government civil servant. The Board of Trustees elects school director and decides how the budget is use. In Georgia, there are 72 Education Resources centers which provide support locally the schools but do not control the decision taking within the schools.

### **4.3. Secondary schooling**

Secondary schooling in Georgia since 1998 consist of two tree years phases which both last for three years. The first phase is mandatory basic secondary training and it covers grades 7-9. The upper secondary education – 10-12 grades – is provided free of charge.

In order to access a vocational training center, a student must have had completed the basic secondary education. Like in many European countries, it is possible to follow both upper secondary and vocational training simultaneously. According to the Law on Vocational Education from the year 2007, vocational training is divided in two. The first part, initial vocational training is provided by the vocational training centers. The higher vocational training is in turn provided by higher educational programmes.

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid.



The tables below show the weekly lesson timetables for basic and general secondary education in 2010:

**Georgia. Basic secondary education (lower secondary): weekly lesson timetable (schools teaching in Georgian)**

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade		
	7	8	9
Georgian language and literature	5	5	5
First foreign language	3	3	3
Second foreign language	4	4	4
Mathematics	4	4	4
History and history of Georgia	3	3	4
Geography	2	2/1	2
Civic education	–	–	2
Biology	3	2	2
Physics	–	2	2
Chemistry	–	–	2
Arts and crafts	2	3/0	0/3
Music	2	0/3	3/0
Physical education and sports	2	2	2
Civil protection	–	0/1	–
<b>Total weekly periods</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>35</b>

Source: Ministry of Education and Science. *National study plans for general basic education 2010-2011*. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.

Table 4.1. Basic secondary education weekly lessons. According to UNESCO-IBE report, *World Data on Education, 7th Edition, 2010/2011*, p.12.

**Georgia. General secondary education (upper secondary): weekly lesson timetable**

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade		
	10	11	12
Georgian language and literature	5	5	5
First foreign language	2-3	2-3	2
Second foreign language	2-3	2-3	2
Mathematics	5	5	4
History and history of Georgia	2	3	3
Geography	2	3	1
Biology	2	–	2
Physics	2	3	2
Chemistry	2	3	2
Physical education and sports	2	2	2
Civic education	4/0	–	–
Arts and crafts	0/2	–	–
Music	0/2	–	–
Civil protection	–	–	1/0
One subject to be chosen among: Economics; State and citizenship; Law; Geography of global problems	–	2	–
One subject to be chosen among: Music; Arts and crafts; History of Arts; Technical drawing; Drama	–	–	–
One subject to be chosen among those included within the 2 groups above, or among: Biology; Physics; Chemistry	–	–	2
<b>Total weekly periods (max.)</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>28–27</b>

Source: Ministry of Education and Science. *National study plans for general basic education 2010-2011*. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.

Table 4.2. General upper secondary education weekly lessons. According to UNESCO-IBE report, *World Data on Education, 7th Edition, 2010/2011*, p.12.

The syllabus of the Georgian secondary schools, both in the compulsory and in the upper secondary schools appears very much similar to the contemporary European ones. At the first glance, there is nothing that could be considered to contribute to the maintaining of the identities of the IDP pupils. Obviously, the national curriculum does not tell anything how the schooling is carried out in the schools in reality and whether or not a school have a hidden teaching agenda or not.

The general education qualifications Framework defines learning outcomes through six criteria which are 1) knowledge and understanding, 2) applying knowledge in practise, 3) making judgements; to understand problems by utilizing practical and cognitive skills, 4) learning skills, 5) values – ability to respect national and common values. The document goes on then listing the criteria the graduates should meet. All the points are on general level dealing with con cognitive learning. There is no reference to any measures which could be interpreted to make a reference to pupils with IDP background.

In short, the structure of contemporary Georgian educational system appears modern and to be very much in line with respective structures in EU countries. The decentralised management of educational institutions could offer room for diverse local solutions – including accommodating IDP pupils’ special needs within the schools, if this would be seen desirable.

#### **4.4. Higher education**

The target group of this work are secondary school pupils. As most of the students wish to pursue their studies further, it is relevant to shortly present the situation with regard to tertiary education. Moreover, it is especially the question of equal access to tertiary studies (as higher education is expected to lead to better working opportunities with higher status and income) which has seen problematic for the IDPs residing in Georgia proper. However, in assessments with regard to realization of IDPs right to education by impartial actors (living in Limbo? moving towards integration) is has been stated that all in all there is no *significant* statistic difference with regard to number of IDPs continuing their studies at the universities compared with the rest of the population. The slight difference is explained by the vulnerable situation of many IDP families due to difficult socio economic in which a large part of them are living. In other words, the possible exclusion would be indirect and not based on their IDP status or stigma.

The structure of the Georgian higher education was restructured as a part of implementation of Bologna process in 2005 (see the figure 1.4.1.).<sup>205</sup> Completing a Bachelor's degree takes three to four years (240 credits). The exceptions are veterinary and dentistry in which studies last for five years and medicine where the studies will last for six years. Master's degree studies require two years of additional studies after completing Bachelor's degree (120 credits). A doctoral degree programme (180 credits) lasts at least for three years

A considerable amendment with regard to university entrance exams took place in 2005. Georgian authorities have defined the reform as a “one of the most successful reforms in the country.”<sup>206</sup> The new system is seen as a major improvement from the Soviet era system shadowed by nepotism and corruption. “The system is based on fair, transparent, unified, meritocratic principles enabling selection of the best entrants for institutions of higher education.”<sup>207</sup> Since 2005, all the entrants need to sit three mandatory exams: Georgian language and literature, foreign languages and ability test. Since 2008 the ability test has been available also in Armenian and in Azeri languages. There have been several amendments in the regulation but overall the system has remained the same. In 2013, the government amended the rules regarding scholarships. A limited number of funding is available for the students based on the results of the entrance exams. The Georgian government is offering different type of funding. It is possible to win a scholarship which covers 100%, 70% or 50% percent grants. This development towards a meritocratic system must be welcomed. However, there are concerns. The decisive entrance exams have become paramount to ensure possibility for social improvement for many socially vulnerable people, including IDPs. As the exams are demanding and the quality of education provided in schools in Georgia is not always standard (the quality being lower in particularly in rural remote areas and schools attended by large number of IDP pupils) due to insufficient financial resources preparing and revising for the exams have become important to obtain good results in the exams. As a result, there are signs of similar development which has taken place in number of European countries: in order to ensure good results, the pupils need to take additional training against a payment. Therefore, it has become important that the parents or families have capital to finance the additional training of their pupils. Needless to

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<sup>205</sup> Georgian Law on Higher Education does not make explicit reference to IDPs. What is relevant in terms of diversity management is that the law prohibits in Art.2, para h) all forms of discrimination based on ethnical or social origin. The law is available at

[http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Georgia/Georgia\\_Law\\_of\\_Georgia\\_on\\_HE.pdf](http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/upload/Georgia/Georgia_Law_of_Georgia_on_HE.pdf)

<sup>206</sup> Extract from the website of National Examination Center under GEO MSE available at

<http://www.naec.ge/unified-entry-examinations.html?lang=en-GB>

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

say, many IDP pupils cannot afford it<sup>208</sup> and there are concerns that social mobility will be blocked at least to some extent by the existing reality creating a vicious circle making IDPs low socio economic status as a sort of predestiny.

#### 4.5. Challenges

In spite of the rather high education rates, it has been the quality of education which has created problems in Georgia. And this has been in particularly the case with pupils coming from vulnerable groups, including IDPs. During the era of president Shevarnadze in 1990's the educational levels in Georgia were sinking in a way which was "un-presented in modern Europe".<sup>209</sup> Jones states that the de-centralisation of education did not work out as the local government had no means to raise tax revenue. The salaries were not competitive and the status of teaching profession - which had never been very high- became even less attractive especially for men who traditionally saw them as primary providers for families. The laws on General Education and Higher Education introduced considerable changes aimed at erasing the dysfunctional and corrupt Soviet legacy. Financing of the higher education was not free anymore, but its expenses for the students were to be covered with a system of scholarships and vouchers. The Implementation of the changes has, however, not been efficient due to lacking resources. The national centralised exams for university applicants have diminished corruption in admissions considerably. But as a result, pupils in the last two grades of school – two last grades – commonly do not attend school regularly. This is because the national examinations, for unclear reason, are not connected to the Georgian school curriculum. Students who want to pass the exams and succeed in entering university will often prefer to study independently. Those students who (or whose parents) can afford it, attend special exam classes privately. The situation is such that system allows schools to ignore that some of the students are not present. Schools that engage in this practice can often attract pupils to their school and yet receive the funding from the authorities. This

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<sup>208</sup> This was also pointed out in interviews conducted among the IDP students: "The only negative thing is that when you are an IDP, you can't afford private classes, some pupils get state scholarship some don't. This is quite difficult and we are not equal.", Ketii, 22-year-old University student from Tserovani settlement interviewed in June 2014.

<sup>209</sup> Stephen Jones, *Georgia – a Political History since Independence*, New York 2013, p 211.

practise penalises schools which fulfil their obligation and take measures to ensure pupil attendance.<sup>210</sup>

The government investment in education has increased, but it is still insufficient and considerably low.<sup>211</sup>

## CHAPTER V – METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this work is qualitative. The work can be divided into two parts: in a normative/desk study part, and in a factual comparative case studies part including empirical interview elements. The work is based on information and insight the author collected 2010-2013 while working for the EU monitoring mission in Georgia. It is based on literature review and on articles and news collected from various sources. It has to be acknowledged that the used literature is somewhat limited as it mainly consists of sources written in English. There is no absolute truth of any traumatic historical event involving different groups or nations and thus any sort of analyses using various or alternative sources composed by different parties of the conflict would offer a different interpretation. However, as the topic has been interesting for the international community and for western countries, the body of literature related to Georgia is extensive and many of the sources tend to be rather objective not trying to serve any one truth on the events that lead to the current status quo. The survey was conducted through semi-structured interviews. The preparation for the surveys was started during the desk study phase, after discussions with a number of interlocutors in Georgia who were knowledgeable of the themes covered by this study. The actual systematic interviews were carried out as a final stage of these preparations in May and June 2014 together with the assistance of the selected Georgian interpreters in Zugdidi, in Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region<sup>212</sup> in the western part of the country and in Mtskheta-Mtianeti region close to the Georgian capital, Tbilisi.

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<sup>210</sup> The Transparency International's report, *Setting Georgia's Schools Free?*, available at [http://transparency.ge/sites/default/files/post\\_attachments/School%20Reform-ENG\\_0.pdf](http://transparency.ge/sites/default/files/post_attachments/School%20Reform-ENG_0.pdf)

<sup>211</sup> Ibid, p. 212.; The Transparency International's report on Georgian school reform in 2005 also concludes that decentralisation has not achieved the goals as hoped. Consequently, the government is planning to recentralize educational functions. The report: *Setting Georgia's Schools Free?* is available at [http://transparency.ge/sites/default/files/post\\_attachments/School%20Reform-ENG\\_0.pdf](http://transparency.ge/sites/default/files/post_attachments/School%20Reform-ENG_0.pdf)

<sup>212</sup> Western part of Georgia is still home for the most of the old caseload IDPs stemming from the conflict with Abkhazia in 1992-1993 (and to lesser degree in 2008). Most of the new caseload IDPs are, instead, to be found close to the administrative boundary line with South Ossetia and Georgia.

The fact that the IDPs are vulnerable persons often living in difficult socio-economic conditions created some challenges for the survey. Their situation is well documented and still for the most of them there are no fast and easy solutions for their problems in sight. Conducting interviews with frustrated IDPs as a private person would have been difficult if not impossible without skilled and knowledgeable local support helping to navigate and using his/her personal contacts to arrange everything within the given timeframe.

In order to carry out comparative assessment between the members of old and new caseload IDPs, it is necessary to provide a definition and classification for the groups in question, with a description of their similarities and differences. These will be given in Chapter six on the case studies.

### **5.1. Research problem**

The interviews seek to verify how the executed education policies affected the two IDP groups in Georgia and how this affected their identity reconstruction. The semi-structured interviews aimed to find out how the schooling was organized, and if the parents' opinions were heard on the matter. Did the school support pupils and created a feeling for them that they belonged to the local community? Were both IDP groups segregated as their presence was meant to be only temporary and they were supposed to go back to their home regions. What kind of problems did this create? Did they have outgroup contacts? It could be anticipated that the accounts from the IDPs would be highly subjective and negative. Therefore, collecting data also from the teachers would be helpful (Teacher organisation in Kutaisi). Finally, the results of the survey could be given for selected national authorities to be commented on.

An additional problem in carrying out this sort of survey is that the IDPs are rather demotivated and, which is fully understandable, reluctant to answer questions on the matters they feel very frustrated about. Some of the international organisations (as well as national authorities) are unenthusiastic or not prepared to make statements on sensitive topics/policies which could be considered to be critical towards the state of Georgia.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Additionally, International Red Cross which is dealing with the IDPs is known not to provide any type of information as their work is based on absolute impartiality. Internal Red Cross is one of the rare organizations who has an access to and is operating both in Abkhazia and in South Ossetia.

As in the case of immigrants, the existence of segregated schools can hardly be seen as a vehicle to generate social cohesion. However, in some specific circumstances it might be the only viable solution. Particularly in a multiethnic post-conflict setting there is hardly any other option than creating segregated schools as after traumatic experiences and distrust there are no bases to establish shared schools.<sup>214</sup>

Tertiary education has had an important role in the past in regenerating the elite within the minorities. This elite has played an important role in maintaining the cohesion of the collective and as opinion leaders. The right to tertiary education has been seen, and still is, for a number of minorities a very sensitive and crucial issue.<sup>215</sup> However, today it is increasingly common to leave the country of origin to pursue tertiary studies and this tendency is strongly promoted in several countries and by the EU. Globalisation and extended free market area has created pressure to treat education as a good which can be purchased where the conditions – be it quality of teaching or financial motives – are the most convenient.<sup>216</sup> Hence, the role of the tertiary education as a tool to educate elite and to guarantee the continuity of educated elite for the traditional minorities has shifted.

The survey is reflected against the social identity and categorisation theories of social psychology, which are used to compose a contemporary political analysis. The findings are presented and assessed in the context of diversity management, and finally put in a form of policy recommendations. When discussing the particular situation of the IDPs in western Georgia, the author is providing a rather detailed account of the situation in the breakaway region de facto Abkhazia in terms of the education and beyond. The reason for this is firstly the unresolved complicated situation that continues in the region affecting the life of a

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<sup>214</sup> This was the case in South Tyrol after WWII. After decades of peaceful co-existence the sensitive question one could ask today is whether the region would be ready and willing to consider moving from parallel segregated reality towards shared multiethnic society including integrated bi- or multilingual schools? This looks very unlikely due to the lack of political will and economic success of the current status.

<sup>215</sup> To give an example, the question of Hungarian University in Romania. The situation was tensed in the 90's, currently the dispute is concentrating on the issue of establishing own *state* University for the Hungarian minority. For an overview, see Constantin, Sergiu, *Linguistic policy and national minorities in Romania*, Noves SL. Revista de Sociolingüística, 2004, available at <http://www6.gencat.net/llengcat/noves/hm04tardor/docs/constantin.pdf>

<sup>216</sup> The initiatives in the EC area to foster the international mobility of the students, by creating, for instance creation of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), has furthermore made it easier to take up studies abroad. The Bologna Declaration from the year 2003 set as its goal creation of European Higher Education Area. One of its goals was explicitly to be strengthening social cohesion. Furthermore, the signatory states indicated they will to further develop scholarship programmes to student from third countries. This can gradual have a strong effect on Georgian tertiary education (or on Georgians pursuing tertiary studies and, subsequently, on nature of individual identities as well as on national identity).

number of people creating an unstable situation compromising human security<sup>217</sup> and development in the region. Secondly, the progress in Abkhazia has been highly interesting, and continues to stay topical due to the recent developments in the Black sea region in Crimea (in spring and summer 2014), and also in terms what role education plays in state-building and identity constructing. The original research interest of the author laid particularly in the role the educational model selected by the respective state or local authorities plays in a multiethnic post-conflict society. In spite of the increasing literature, the topic will require more research. The complexity of the subject makes it hard to be operationalized. Especially designing a meaningful comparison is challenging which partially made the author to give up the topic as a primary theme for this research. However, the conflict in Abkhazia has a relevance to each element of this research. Furthermore, there is no sustainable solution and closure in sight for the problem affecting people on both sides of the administrative boundary line (ABL). Consequently, I wish to include a chapter on Abkhazia in this work even if this might be questionable in terms of creating well-balanced structure for this study. The independence of Abkhazia has been recognized only by a few states of which the Russian Federation is the only internationally powerful actor. Most of the international community, UN and EU do not recognize the independence of Abkhazia or South Ossetia. My intention is not to discuss the legitimacy of these breakaway regions in this work even though the political and judicial implications of the situation are interesting and challenging for the balance of the international relations for years to come.<sup>218</sup>

Due to the links between ethnic fragmentation, inequality and conflict education plays a crucial role in mending attitudes and shaping identities to make societies more robust and

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<sup>217</sup> The term Human Security was first popularized by UNDP in the early 1990s. The concept gained more international attention as it was used in the UNDP's 1994 Human Development Report. According to the UNDP and the Commission on Human Security, human security means protecting the fundamental human values from severe and wide-spread threats in a manner that promotes the freedom of people and the fulfilment of human life. The UNDP defined the different security threats into seven categories: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security. Human security is defined as a dynamic and practical policy framework for addressing widespread and cross-cutting threats facing Governments and people. More information on Human Security concept is available on a UN web site at <http://unocha.org/humansecurity/>

<sup>218</sup> Often quoted document in this context is the Inter-American Convention on Duties and Rights of the State from the year 1933. This document known also as Montevideo Convention stipulates in its article 1 that: The state as a person of international law should possess the following qualifications: a ) permanent population; b ) defined territory; c ) government; and d) capacity to enter into relations with the other states. The text is available at: [http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/mandate/basic\\_documents.asp](http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/mandate/basic_documents.asp) Other classical sources of political science offering theoretical considerations, just to name a couple, include: Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities*, Verso, 1991; Gellner, Ernest. *Nations and Nationalism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983.



less vulnerable for conflict.<sup>219</sup> According to some critics, authorities are failing to respond to IDP situations worldwide due to their short-term focus and because the taken measures are not connected to wider peacebuilding processes. Moreover, conflict-prone regions often suffer from chronic lack of resources. Due to the fact that education is as a rule considered to be a valuable asset, lack of education or problems to access it are seen as symptoms of non-functioning unequal society.<sup>220</sup>

The work is very much linked to sociology. However, in order to obtain more accurate understanding of the complex situation, it has been necessary and natural to utilize other fields of research as well, such as international law, history, political science and anthropology. The topic can be approached from various angles trying to explain either the actions and motives of the state or only focus on the IDPs. The author wanted to focus on the IDPs and the factual outcomes the events had shaping their lives particularly via educational settings. However, this process goes hand in hand with the larger picture and thus it has been necessary to present the root causes of the current conditions of the IDPs in order to set the scene for the later discussion and analyses.

The study sheds light on the ways in which the education of the displaced persons was organized in difficult conditions and unpredictable political circumstances. The UNDP Human Development report stressed in 2005 that:

“...education is one of the building blocks of human development. Education is not just a basic right, but a foundation for progress in other areas, including health, nutrition and the development of institutions and democracy. Conflict undermines this foundation and contributes to the conditions that perpetuate violence. Violent conflict destroys education infrastructure, reduces spending on schools and teachers and prevents children from attending classes. Schools are often a target for groups hostile to the government because of the association with state authority.”<sup>221</sup>

The conflict itself can inflict psychological disturbance, including depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) which can have a long lasting impact on the IDP

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<sup>219</sup> Smith Ellison, Christine and Smith, Alan, *Education and Internally Displaced Persons*, 2012, p. 20.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

<sup>221</sup> UNDP, *Human Development Report 2005, International Cooperation at a Crossroads. Aid, Trade and Security in an Unequal World*, p. 10, 2005, available at [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/266/hdr05\\_complete.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/266/hdr05_complete.pdf)

pupils.<sup>222</sup> According to scholars, lack of social networks and resulting deprivation of social support may lead to greater post-disaster distress. IDP pupils' ability to cope with the post-conflict situation varies and depends on both inner and outer sets of skills. Pupil's inner skills include empathy, caring, equity and social justice, safety, restraint and resistance skills, planning and decision-making ability, self-efficacy, self-esteem, acceptance, cultural awareness and spirituality. Outer skill include caring family, family communications, family support, high expectations, achievement, family role models, school engagement, parental involvement with school, high expectations schools, bonding to school, community values, positive peer relationships. A fundamental factor in resilience is a belief that an individual has influence in his/her life. To obtain this sentiment, the individual must have opportunities to learn and apply decision-making and problem solving skills whereby schools play an important role.<sup>223</sup>

The importance of the education as a part of reconstruction of a society after a conflict has become an evident and internationally recognized element. Education has an important role in creating sustainable peace in a society, generating social cohesion and facilitating economic recovery. Social cohesion ties various ethnic or social groups. In a diverse society it forms an important connection building material. Social cohesion has two different dimensions: bonding and bridging. Bonding takes place within a (social or ethnic) group increasing trust and cooperation in the in-group. It can be defined as horizontal social cohesion. Bridging stands for increasing the intergroup social cohesion (vertical social cohesion) which is a crucial element in pluralistic democracies<sup>224</sup> – or in diverse and fractured post-conflict societies. According to one study, a reason for underperformance of students with vulnerable background (members of minority, impoverished) is absence of productive social capital. As a result, one way of supporting under performing schools has been endorsing the community to link more effectively both parents and other community members to school.<sup>225</sup> According to Putnam, one strategy to do so is the use of mentors. Mentors are individuals with special expertise, skills, experience and commitment to bridge

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<sup>222</sup> Isidori, Maria Vittoria, *Emergency and post-emergency situations - educational and teaching model*, in *Ricerche di Pedagogia e Didattica – Journal of Theories and Research in Education* 8, 2013, p. 2.

<sup>223</sup> Ahangar, R.G., *Cognitive transformation as a marker of resilience. Substance Use Misuse*, N. 39 (5), 2004, p. 769-788.

<sup>224</sup> Putnam, Robert D., *Education, Diversity, Social Cohesion and "Social Capital"*, Discussion Note in meeting of OECD Education Ministries, Dublin 2004.

<sup>225</sup> Shirley, Dennis, *Community Organizing for Urban School Reform*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1997.; Warren, Mark R., *Dry Bones Rattling: Community Building to Revitalize American Democracy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001 and Fung, Archon, *Empowered Participation: Reinventing Urban Democracy*, Princeton University Press, 2004.

schools and pupils better to the society. Putnam gives an example from the US where the so called Experience Corps were created among knowledgeable retired experts. These experts were often members of vulnerable groups themselves, which endorsed their regular mentoring work with pupils from disadvantaged groups.<sup>226</sup>

Another relevant example from the US is the so called service learning. These are projects which combine activity within community with academic reflection (such as biology course combined with an environmental project). Evidence shows that pupils involved in service learning are civically more involved in the coming years.<sup>227</sup>

It is obvious that the way in which the social capital influences educational results varies in different countries and contexts. However, the existing knowledge suggests that educational policy makers who want to improve educational standards must pay attention to the social context of the education – both within and outside of the schools.

Pedagogy that encourages active teamwork seems likely to be more effective in inculcating social skills than pedagogy that promotes purely individual achievement.<sup>228</sup>

The development of educational institutions after a conflict in a multiethnic society creates a challenge, but also provides an opportunity to seek to eradicate the very reasons that lead the society in the conflict. The focus of this study is on the analyses of the outcome of the educational institutions in terms of identity reconstruction rather than focusing on the (legal) normative framework.

Interestingly, according to the Save the Children Study (Education's role in conflict prevention and peacebuilding) the peace accords studied during the 90's and this millennium have contained very few provisions with regard to education after the conflict. In the same way, the conflicts covered in this work are no exception: there are no provisions dealing with education. In order to foster peace and stability, more focus needs to be placed on the education as a part of the conflict resolutions, humanitarian assistance and reconstruction phase on which this work is focusing on. In fact, there has been a shift and a number of actors operating in emergency respond have increased their efforts with regard to education. A

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<sup>226</sup> Putnam 2004, p. 4-5.

<sup>227</sup> Putnam 2004, p. 6.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

concrete example of this is International Network on Education in Emergencies (INEE) which was established in 2000. It has taken up a key-role in promoting access to and completion of education of high quality for all persons affected by emergencies, crises of chronic instability.<sup>229</sup> INEE forms an umbrella organization for diverse relevant actors. Moreover, at least the governments of Canada and Norway have added education as the fourth pillar of humanitarian response (traditionally, humanitarian aid has consisted of three elements: food and water, shelter and healthcare).<sup>230</sup>

This work tries to respond to research questions: a) what sort of educational opportunities were created for the displaced people., b) how this arrangement facilitated or prevented IDPs' integration to the society and c) what sort of impact this process had on the identity (re-)construction of the IDPs? In this context, the research seeks to further elaborate on how the educational settings and opportunities or lack of opportunities affected both old and new caseload IDPs.

Based on the findings, is it possible to identify the best practices from the selected cases? What might be the pitfalls to be avoided when designing the educational setting after a conflict? As stated, the interest of the international community has been increasing towards the role of the education in fostering peace and stability in post-conflict situations. However, it seems that the full capacity of the educational institutions creating social cohesion and nurturing identity building has not been utilized.

## **5.2. Research hypothesis**

The old caseload IDPs from the first conflict were not offered sustainable solutions for political reasons and due to the internal chaos in the country, which had re-gained its independency. Especially the old caseload IDP students have suffered from insufficient educational opportunities. Moreover, their protracted displacement in very difficult situations must have affected their social integration (social identity theory). In the beginning, Georgian authorities tried to find a short-term solution for the acute problem of the IDP education. The insufficient short-term solutions became insufficient long-term

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<sup>229</sup> More information on INEE is available at <http://www.ineesite.org/en/>

<sup>230</sup> Crisp, J., Talbot, C., Cipollone, D.B., (Eds), *Learning for a future: Refugee Education in Developing Countries*, UNHCR, Geneva 2001, p. 2., available at <http://www.unhcr.org/4a1d5ba36.pdf>

solutions. As a result, IDP pupils were segregated and, in the worst case, excluded limiting their future opportunities and generating low self-esteem and pessimism.

Based on the theoretical part discussed in the previous chapter, this study is drawing on the following assumptions:

- 1) The schooling organized for the IDPs in the initial phase was not well planned. Its organization was based on the fast developing events and needed to find pragmatic solutions for the pressing needs of the displaced people to find and continue some normality.
- 2) The two IDP groups do have certain sub-identity which is recognized also by the out-group, the local population. However, it is not very resistant and will very likely be merged and reconstructed in line with the local regional identities.
- 3) The education system has not been designed robustly to preserve the distinct identity of the IDPs and they are not able to preserve the distinct collective identity of the IDPs.

These assumptions together with the existing political situation leads one to think that on political and factual level the urge and moral imperative to ensure the return of IDPs to the lost territories has diminished considerably. Moreover, the identity reconstruction of the IDPs has already occurred guided by the need to find local solutions for everyday life rather than by any planned and structured policies conducted by the Georgian authorities.

As a heritage of the Soviet era, education has had high value for Georgians. As a result, no considerable shortcomings can be detected in terms of the school performance in Georgia. Objective and what I consider trustworthy studies have been conducted by impartial actors concluding that in terms of the school performance, IDPs are not performing significantly worse than average Georgian pupils. The slightly worse statistics are explained to be linked to the difficult socio-economic situation of the IDPs coupled with the fact that several IDP collective centres are located in remote places where the schools are attended mainly by the IDPs. The situation for the IDPs who returned to the Gali district in Abkhazia (Georgian authorities maintain the IDP-status for these persons) is particular and it is assessed in detail in section 6.5. The Georgian schools neither tried nor managed well to uphold and preserve any distinct identity of the pupils with IDP background.

### **5.3. Research design**

The method used in this research is qualitative. In the given framework, the number of interviews conducted was 24. The sample collected is not statistically valid and thus quantitative deductive reasoning cannot be used. However, combined with other sources the data collected through qualitative interviews provide a good tool for reflecting the more descriptive parts of this work and to test the hypothesis.

The survey can only provide a snap shot of the current situation. In order to analyse and estimate the direction and speed of the development and change, it would have been necessary to carry out the same survey ever since the displacement (I shall touch upon this in the final Chapter seven – conclusions). Obviously, this study was not designed in such a way. Entirely different design and timeframe would be needed to evaluate the long term shift in mentalities and identity building in this respect. Nevertheless, it is possible to extract a rather good understanding of the current situation based on the conducted interviews. The study seeks to analyse through this limited sample the described hypothesis. The theoretical framework against which the findings are reflected is based mainly on social identity theory and self-categorization theory developed from the social identity theory.

The research seeks to shed light on topics which are twofold. Firstly, the work seeks to define how the IDPs see themselves as a part of the Georgian population. Do they perceive that they have their own strong resistant identity which they value and wish to preserve? Do the old and new caseload IDPs feel that they belong to a same group and if not, how do they perceive themselves as a part of the Georgian society.

Secondly, the interviewed individuals are asked to assess how they perceive the role of the education in their life. Has the schooling been organized in a way that has fulfilled IDP pupils' right to education and equal possibilities to access further education? How has the way how the schools have been organized affected their group membership? Have the schools, at least implicitly, facilitated IDP pupils to preserve their distinct identities or have the schools mainly lead the pupils to integrate with their local peers?

#### **5.3.1. Triangulation**

In qualitative study, the validity of the research calls for two things. First, the results need to reflect the observed situation accurately. Secondly, all the research findings need to be

supported by evidence. In order to enhance the conclusions process, I have used triangulation to test and verify my findings composed from the interviews conducted with IDPs. Triangulation is a method used by researchers to measure the validity of a qualitative research from different directions. According to Patton, triangulation should not be seen simply as an attempt to come up with solid evidence supporting the original assumptions and hypothesis. Instead, triangulation can offer an additional way to gain deeper understanding of the sampled data.<sup>231</sup>

Guion, Diehl, and McDonald present five triangulation methods that can be used in a qualitative research:

1. Data triangulation
2. Investigator triangulation
3. Theory triangulation
4. Methodological triangulation
5. Environmental triangulation

**Data triangulation** is based on the usage of multiple sources to increase the validity of the research. This is probably the most common form of triangulation using usually diverse stakeholders relevant to the research.

**Investigator triangulation** implies using several researchers in the analyses phase. In this method, the researchers usually use the same qualitative tools (interviews, case studies etc.) Their findings will be then compared which will either confirm the individual findings or lead to reassessment of the research methods and their possible further development.

**Theory triangulation** means a system where researchers, ideally, from different disciplines are examining the same events/phenomena by using their own methodological tools typical for their own discipline. According to this approach, if the findings of the various researchers points to the same direction, then the validity of the research has increased.

**Methodological triangulation** uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in its research approach. An example could be to interview the IDP pupils on the results of their studies compared with the rest of the pupils in other parts of the country. The interview results would

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<sup>231</sup> Patton, M.Q., *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002, cited according to: Lisa A. Guion, David C. Diehl, and Debra McDonald, *Triangulation: Establishing the Validity of Qualitative Studies*, University of Florida, 2011, p. 1, available at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/FY/FY39400.pdf>

then be compared with the results of the quantitative study which would then consolidate the findings of the qualitative findings – or raise a need to readjust the research elements.

**Environmental triangulation** uses different locations and different research settings which are linked to the environment where the survey is conducted.

Triangulation can support the research by helping to increase confidence in research data. It can also create and reveal unconventional ways to restructure theories and help to better understand the research data. Obviously, applying triangulation requires more work and complicates the research design. Moreover, the possibly contradictory results can also complicate processing and organising the research data.

In this research, I have used several triangulation methods when it has been applicable. Data triangulation has been involved as the interviews have been carried out with diverse interlocutors and while using sources provided by different actors (Georgian authorities, local interlocutors, reports produced by the impartial international actors, to name some). The environmental triangulation has been taken into account by conducting interviews with the IDPs in various locations. In terms of theory triangulation, the research itself is interdisciplinary and thus debatably a certain amount of theory triangulation is included in the research design.

### 5.3.2. Questionnaire layout

The research design was not rigid as the idea was that the semi-structured interview would allow deepening of data through a dialogue and focusing follow up questions. The interview was covering a rather limited topic related to identity formation, school teaching and intergroup bonds. Therefore, the questions were not grouped under any specific sub-headings which would have been necessary in a larger survey covering a range of different topics.

The questionnaire consisted of 19 points (see annex 1) including both multiple choice and semi-structured points. The number of questions for the fairly young pupils had to be kept limited to ensure that they would see the trouble of answering all the questions.

Questions 1-2 simply verified that the pupils had an IDP status.



Questions 3-5 were designed to find out if the schools in the region already had mixed student core consisting of both IDPs and local pupils.

Questions 6-7, 12-13, 15 sought to collect information on the affiliation of the pupils to assess if a tangible division into in- and out-groups could be detected.

Questions 8-9, 11 dealt with the schools' ability to address the topics related to lost territories and thus forge/sustain elements influencing the students' identity construction.

Questions 10, 12 assessed again the perception of IDP pupils regarding their group membership. Do they feel that they are part of a larger society or do they feel excluded.

Questions 14-16 were mapping the pupils' self-identification as a member of a distinct IDP group.

Questions 17-19 were investigating the pupils' attitudes on policies conducted by the authorities vis-à-vis IDPs as well as their opinion on what sort of solution they would like to have for the protracted displacement.

## **CHAPTER VI – CASE STUDIES**

This chapter forms the empirical part of this work. The interviews conducted among a group of both old and new caseload IDPs will be presented in detail. I shall first give an account on how, where and among whom the interviews were conducted. I shall illustrate the strengths and delimitations of the survey and then provide a detailed overview of the replies received from the interviewees. At the end of each section dealing with the respective IDP groups, I shall provide a summary and analyses of the interviews.

In Chapter 6.5., I shall present in more detail the particular situation among the IDPs who have spontaneously returned to the Gali district in de facto Abkhazia.

In the very end, I shall compare the results and test them against the research hypotheses. The findings will be reflected in the conclusions chapter against the points presented in earlier descriptive parts of this work.

## 6.1. Old caseload IDPs

### 6.1.1. Background of the conflict/displacement

A long simmering armed conflict in Abkhazia burst out in summer 1992 between the Georgian army and the Abkhaz forces. The reason for the open conflict was linked to Georgia's new independence and Abkhazians mistrust towards Georgian policies as their new master. The violent ethnic conflict forced Georgian civilians to flee to the south, to Georgia, and to seek refuge there. A ceasefire agreement<sup>232</sup> was signed in May 1994 and it held until 2008. The conflict in 2008 started off in South Ossetia, but spread over to Abkhazia as Russian forces opened the second front against Georgia in west. During this conflict, Abkhazian forces occupied the Godori gorge, which had been the last area in Abkhazia still controlled by Georgia. Russia recognized the independence of Abkhazia and later vetoed against prolonging the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG)<sup>233</sup> which had been observing implementation of the ceasefire agreement since 1994. The Six point agreement which ended the conflict in 2008 was brokered by the European Union. The agreement included a 200 strong EU monitoring mission to be placed in Georgia proper. This mission has been observing closely the situation of the IDPs.<sup>234</sup>

As a result of the conflict in Abkhazia in 1992–1993, over 220 000 registered IDPs have been living in precarious conditions in Georgia proper. The IDPs left their homes due to insecurity and ethnic violence, destruction and ongoing confiscation of their property by force. The government allocated hotels, schools, hospitals and other public buildings for the IDPs as temporary shelters. Often, these buildings were in very bad shape and located in distant locations. Many of the houses and apartments were only planned and suitable for temporary presence.<sup>235</sup> A large number of old caseload IDPs in Georgia are still, twenty years after, living in these buildings.

These IDPs fled conflicts in the two break-away regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the early 1990s. The second wave of displacement occurred in Georgia in August 2008 as

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<sup>232</sup> Agreement on Principles of Settlement of the Georgian - Ossetian Conflict (Sochi Agreement), available at <http://peacemaker.un.org/georgia-sochi-agreement92#>

<sup>233</sup> Information on the mission available at <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/past/unomig/>

<sup>234</sup> The Six-point-agreement and information on the EU monitoring mission can be found at <http://www.eumm.eu/>

<sup>235</sup> Internal Displacement Centre, Moving Towards Integration. Overcoming segregated education for IDPs, September 2011, p. 11.

an armed conflict broke out between Russia and Georgia over South Ossetia. Allegedly, the total number of the persons displaced during the August conflict reached 138 000 out of which around 108 600 persons returned to their places of origin while approximately 30 000 remained to face the possible long-term displacement without any solutions in the near future.<sup>236</sup>

Georgia established the Abkhazian government in exile after the conflict. The government in exile was created to ensure a smooth return of the Georgian administration to the lost territories soon as it would be possible. The government in exile is responsible for running the remaining 13 IDP schools (in 2014) in Georgia. Furthermore, they are providing school materials for the still operating Georgian schools in Abkhazia (this topic will be covered in section 6.5.). The government in exile pays the salary for the teachers working in Georgian schools in Abkhazia. It also organizes university entrance exam preparation courses free of charge for the Georgian students graduating from the Georgian schools in Abkhazia during the summer months in Zugdidi.

Some sources mention that due to the much smaller size of South Ossetia, there was no need to establish parallel administrative structure for the new caseload IDPs from South Ossetia. Yet, there is one. The temporary administration was established in 2007 as “temporary administrative-territorial entity on the territory of former South Ossetian Autonomous Republic.” (Presidential Decree #297).<sup>237</sup> The administration carries out some education related activities. These include special theme days, organising a school bus and English classes free of charge.<sup>238</sup> According to a Georgian interlocutor, the administration also provides support for the Georgian school in Akhagori, in South Ossetia. Furthermore, they give economical support to those Georgian students from Akhagori who continue their studies in Georgia (which in my view is an effective attempt and incentive to try preserving Georgian identity among educated members of the local society – given that they will return one day). These activities are carried out with low profile in order not to upset de facto South Ossetian authorities.

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<sup>236</sup> UNHCR, *Protection of Internally Displaced people in Georgia: a Gap Analysis*, July 2009, p. 5.

<sup>237</sup> Public Defender of Georgia, *Report on Human Rights situation in Georgia 2007*, p. 98, available at <http://www.ombudsman.ge/uploads/other/1/1345.pdf>

<sup>238</sup> Administration of South Ossetia (in Tbilisi), more information available at <http://www.soa.gov.ge/eng/about-us/1/>

## *Abkhazia*

The other party for the conflict (together with Russia) was Abkhazia, located on the eastern shore of the Black Sea, in the mountainous Caucasus region. The precise origin of the Abkhaz people is unknown. In 1810, Abkhazia was first incorporated and then officially annexed (1846) into the Russian Empire. Many Muslim Abkhazians fled or were expelled from Abkhazia to the Ottoman area as they had aligned themselves with the Ottomans, who were Russia's enemy and rival. However, a part of the Abkhazians remained in the area. During the Ottoman rule, prior to the annexation into Russia, Abkhazians had been converted to Islam. Consequently, they were also seen as an alien element in the Orthodox Russian Empire. To fill the vacuum, many Russians and Georgians immigrated to Abkhazia. Furthermore, Abkhazians also rebelled against the Russian rulers which increased Russia's dislike and mistrust towards Abkhazians.<sup>239</sup>

The region gained some political clout under Stalin – becoming an autonomous republic in 1931. However, Abkhaz self-governance was extremely limited: the people were incorporated under Georgia and they were forced to speak Georgian. After Stalin's death, the Soviet regime adopted a substantially more pro-Abkhaz policy, encouraging the people to maintain a separate, non-Georgian identity.<sup>240</sup>

Despite the differences between ethnic Abkhazians and ethnic Georgians, the Georgians maintained their claim to Abkhazia largely because the Georgian society was perceived to be more developed in terms of culture and language. Abkhaz language did not have an alphabet. Consequently, the educated elite in Abkhazia normally spoke Georgian and they were assimilated into the Georgian society. Georgia's claim on Abkhazia was enhanced by its demographics: many ethnic Abkhazians had fled their territory during the Stalin years. Before the beginning of the Georgian–Abkhazian war in 1992, the total population of Abkhazia was about half a million out of which some 45% were Georgians, only some 18% native Abkhazians, about 15 % were Russians, almost the same number of Armenians and the remaining 9-10 % were Greeks, Jews, Estonians and members of other smaller groups. Over half of the Abkhazian population was displaced during the civil war in 1992–1993. Most of them were ethnic Georgians who have been dwelling in Georgia proper ever since

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<sup>239</sup> Gahrton, Per, *Georgia - Pawn in the New Great Game*, London - New York 2010, p. 63-65., Ascherson, Neal, *Black Sea, The Birthplace of Civilisation and Barbarism*, Vintage Books, London, 2007, p. 100., Trier, Tom; Lohm Hedvig and Szakonyi, *Under Siege, Interethnic Relations in Abkhazia*, London 2010, p- 23-25.

<sup>240</sup> Ascherson 2007, p. 10.

as internally displaced people (IDPs). Abkhazia unilaterally declared its independence from Georgia in 1999. No state recognized Abkhazia until the conflict in August 2008. The unilateral declaration of Kosovo and its partial recognition of by the international community changed the power-politics and triggered the Russian Federation to recognize Abkhazia.<sup>241</sup>

Both chambers of the Russian Federal Assembly recognized the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia unanimously on 25 August 2008. Later on in the fall, Russia appointed ambassadors to de facto states and ratified an agreement on friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance.<sup>242</sup> In 2010, de facto Abkhazia and Russia signed a treaty which gave Russia an opportunity to establish a military base in Abkhazia.<sup>243</sup>

### 6.1.2. Conducting interviews

The question of languages is always crucial in surveys where translation and interpretation is needed. Additionally, cultural differences can create obstacles. Most importantly, interviewing vulnerable people on topics which might be considered sensitive either for political or personal reasons is a delicate matter. Even more so as the IDPs can sometimes be frustrated and annoyed by international workers who have been visiting and asking questions from them without any visible improvement in the situation. The survey, in spite of its limited scope, provided reliable data as the interviews were conducted by three Georgian academic persons with solid, a year-long experience in dealing with the IDPs as well as interpreting and translating accurately from Georgian to English for international organisation(s). The interviewers are from the region and one of them also has an IDP background herself which helped to connect with the interviewees and helped to conduct the interviews for a great deal. Finding and the interviewers was easy as the author has personally worked with each of them during 2010–2013.

In the case of old caseload IDPs, the school director of the public school number 1 located in Zugdidi, in western part of Georgia close to ABL was happy to assist in conducting the interviews after having been explained the purpose of the survey. The interviews were carried out on 6 June 2014 with secondary school pupils identified by the teacher at the

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<sup>241</sup> Trier, Tom; Lohm Hedvig and Szakonyi, *Under Siege, Interethnic Relations in Abkhazia*, London 2010, p. 2, 17.

<sup>242</sup> Information the agreement is available at the web site of de facto Abkhazian MFA at <http://mfaapsny.org/en/policy/agreements.php>

<sup>243</sup> Human Rights Watch 2010, p. 17.

school after the classes. The group consisted of nine pupils: five girls and four boys. Unlike in the case of the new caseload IDP pupils, the interview was conducted in a group and as a result it did not generate as much additional information which was the case with the individual interviews among the new caseload IDPs. The second group of interviewed secondary school pupils were selected in the IDP school number one<sup>244</sup> also located in Zugdidi. This school was chosen to have a sample of pupils answering to questions also about the IDP school. As in the case of the public school in Zugdidi, the schoolteacher was very helpful after being explained the purpose of the interviews.

### ***Triangulation***

In order to verify and collect comments regarding the information obtained from the interviews carried out with the students, a selected number of persons knowledgeable about IDPs and/or education were identified and requested to assess the collected data. The selected group for triangulation consisted of one representative of the Abkhazian government in exile, an IDP school director, a civil servant working in an educational resource center, and an experienced member of the international diplomatic mission in Georgia. The resource persons were very helpful and cooperative. Basically, they were asked to comment on the survey findings in order to double check if the information extracted from the interviews corresponded with the perception of the resource persons on the situation. Triangulation offered a possibility to ensure that there were no considerable problems within the research design and the related initial analyses. Had the triangulation showed any inconsistencies, it would still have been possible to revise the survey. In addition, the resource persons also provided additional information supporting the analyses. In reality, also the interviewers as academic and well informed members of the local Georgian society were able to comment on several points of the interview results and help in providing additional information based on their personal experiences during the conflict(s).

#### 6.1.3. Questionnaire replies

The questionnaire (see annex 1) was designed to collect information that would either support or question the research hypothesis. An overview of replies collected from the

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<sup>244</sup> Public school number one (1-12 grades) in Zugdidi has 1205 pupils and 103 teachers. The IDP school number one in Zugdidi (1-12grades) has 270 pupils/students.

students is displayed in the tables below, and when applicable, in graphic figures. The replies are illustrated starting from the point three as the two first questions were set only to verify the profile of the interviewed student.

Additional information, when relevant, has been inserted below the tables of respective questions.

3. What sort of school you attend/attended

a) IDP school	12
b) standard public school	8

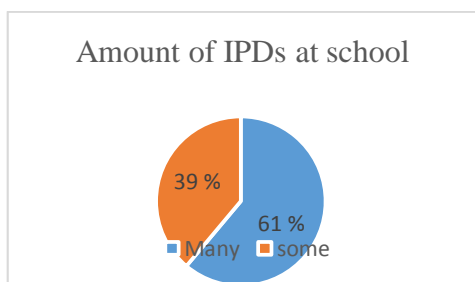


Figure 6.1. Amount of IDPs at school – old caseload IDP replies

4. If you are/were attending a public school, are/were there also IDP pupils?

a) Many	11
b) some	7
c) Only few	0
d) none	0
e) comments	This was an entirely subjective question about their perception of their peers. It is not likely that the pupils would know accurate figures. However, it seems based on collected sample that the pupils are aware of their peers IDP background and thus it cannot be indifferent and have no impact on their categorization.

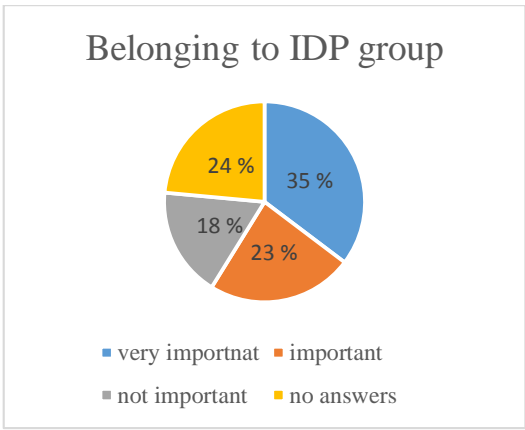


Figure 6.2. Belonging to IDP group - Old caseload IDPs students

6. Is the fact that you are IDP important for you?

a) very important	6
b) important	4
c) not important	3
d) no answers	4

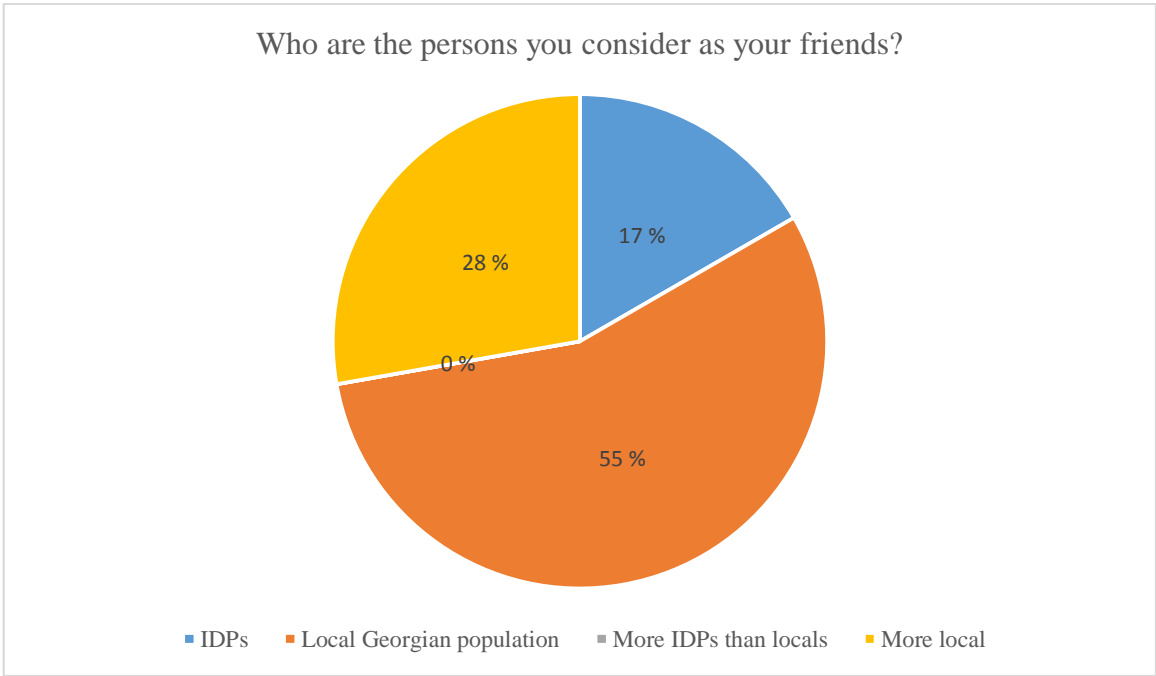


Figure 6.3. Who are the persons you consider as your friends? – Old caseload students’ replies

7. Who are the persons you consider as your friends?

a) IDPs	3
b) Local Georgian population	10
c) More IDPs than locals	0
d) More local	5



8: Do you feel it is/it was important to teach and talk about Abkhazia/South Ossetia in your school?

“it is important to remember our territories, they are still Georgia”	17
No answer	1

9. Is/was this being done in your school and if yes, in which format? (Special history classes? Special classes on geography? In some other way? Please explain.)

a) pupils who named history lessons	10
b) pupils who named geography lessons	8
Comments: Pupils were obviously not aware if these classes were part of the Georgian standard curriculum or additional classes. During the triangulation it became clear that these were standard classes. No additional teaching on sensitive topics were reported except for the thematic days and week in IDP schools.	

10. Do you feel that because you are an IDP, non IDP-people treat you differently?

yes	0
no	18

11. Did or does your family have a say in school matters at your school? Did the parents have an opportunity (as in the format of parents’ council) to influence how the teaching was carried out?

a) yes	0
b) no	18

12. How do you feel about the separate schools for IDPs?

a) it’s good	1
b) it’s bad	4
c) it has no impact	14

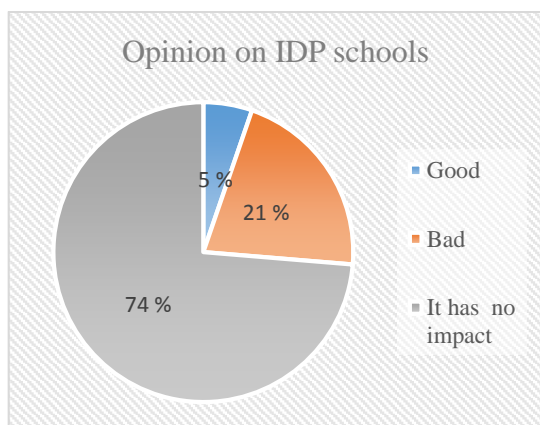


Figure 6.4. Old caseload students’ opinions on IDP schools

13. What is most important/valuable for you from the following list:

a) Georgian state	13
b) Your region in Abkhazia or South Ossetia	1
c) The region where you currently live in Georgia	4

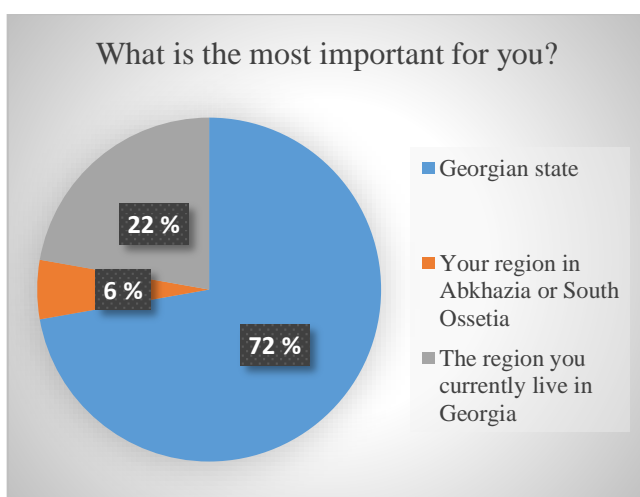


Figure 6.5. Old caseload students' primary object for identification

14. How do you think the education should be organized for the pupils with IDP background in Georgia?

a) Exactly like for the other Georgian pupils	17
b) Some measures need to be taken to preserve the distinct Georgian Abkhazian or Georgian South-Ossetian identity (for example, special history teaching with regard to lost territories)	-
c) Other measures, please explain:	1

15. Do you feel that you belong to the same group with

a) All the IDPS (both from Abkhazia and South Ossetia)?	1
b) Only to IDP group from Abkhazia or South Ossetia?	2
c) You are a member of the local population in region in Georgia where you live now, the rest is unimportant?	15

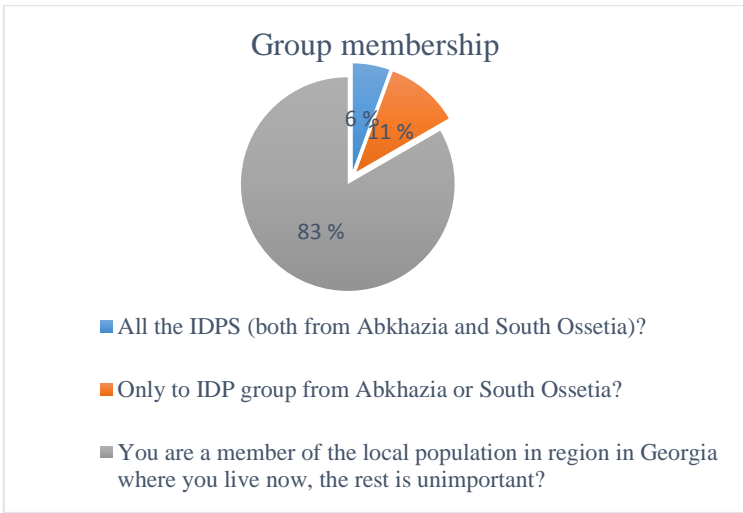


Figure 6.6. Old caseload IDPs' group membership

16. Please list three positive things that best describe the group you belong to:

Common answers were:
1) same traditions 2) same languages 3) kindness, freedom
comment: It would have been necessary to explain the object and purpose of this question better for both interviewers as well as interviewees as well to obtain some meaningful information

17. How would you like the IDP situation to be resolved?

a) You would like to return to your home in lost territories	8
b) You want to move elsewhere	9
c) You want to stay where you are, connect with the local population and focus on your life there	1

How would you like to IDP situation to be resolved?

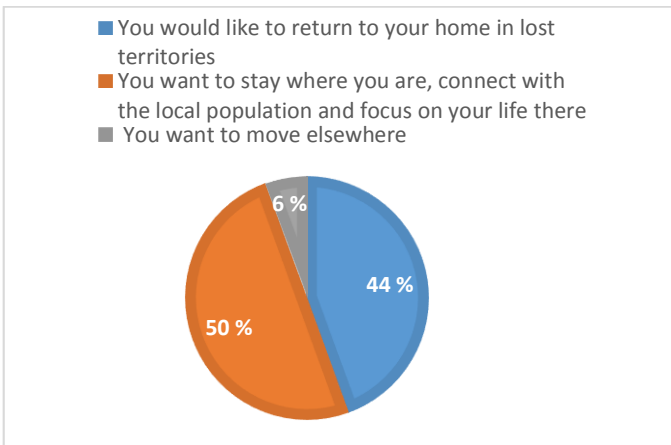


Figure 6.7. How would you like to resolve displacement – old caseload students’ replies

18. How in your opinion the education of IDPs should have been organized after the conflict(s)?

a) It was organized in a right way	17
b) It should have been done otherwise,	1
Comment: particularly in the case of old caseload students the question should have been explained and discussed with the pupils to obtain meaningful information	

19. Do you feel that you can influence your current situation as an IDP somehow? How? please explain (for instance, through political participation, civic engagement?)

a) political participation	
b) other civic engagement	5
c) no answer	12
Comment: the question should have been explained both to interviewers as well as to students better	

#### 6.1.4. Analysis – summary of the findings

The questionnaire results were presented in previous section. Triangulation was carried out by a representative of Ministry for education of Abkhazian government in exile and a school director. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, the interviewers – both having in-depth regional knowledge and experience on education related issues through their own families – were commenting the interview results they had consolidated. As the topic can be sensitive for some due to its political nature at least when taken out of the context, the respondents were told that no direct reference to their identity will be made.

The school director mentioned that there are five IDP schools still operating in western Georgia. All the commentators confirmed that already for several years IDP pupils have been attending standard public schools or local pupils have been enrolled to the remaining IDP schools. In reality, the criticized segregated schooling is not taking place. It was stressed that students (parents) can decide whether or not a pupil is sent to an IDP school – it is not mandatory.

The commentators mentioned the obvious: virtually none of the students interviewed was born prior to the conflict in Abkhazia and thus there is no real difference between them and the local pupils. Regardless of what sort of attempt the government has made with regard to their integration it has not had an important role in the process. Life has gone on and the IDP families have found their own coping mechanisms and adapted in their new surroundings by their own means.

According to the commenters, the schools started fairly soon in 1992 for the IDPs after they have arrived from Abkhazia. According to one interlocutor, there had been some sort of a gap in schooling for pupils due to the fact that the entire country was in state of confusion, but the schools had started without any major gap. In the beginning, the IDP pupils had been located in standard Georgian public schools. In 1995, the IDP schools were established and the IDP pupils could swap to those together with their peers. The core of teachers also consisted of teachers from Abkhazia.

Interestingly, the school curriculum followed by the IDPs has been a standard Georgian curriculum. Considerable attempt was not made – especially with the so called sensitive subjects; history, geography and religion – to sustain and support the particular identity of the pupils with IDP background. Clearly, families and homes probably have a more decisive role in this respect. However, taking into account the Georgian official discourse about returning to the lost territories, one could have thought that there would have been some pedagogical support for this end.

As regards the group identity, it seemed that for the majority their IDP identity was either very important (35%) or important (23%). This would give an indication that there still is some sort of group cohesion and identity, even though it does not seem to be decisive and for instance, future political mobilisation along these lines seems unlikely.

The students also confirmed that in the public school(s) they have attended there were usually many or some local students as well. The elements of different groups have also diversified the group preventing the IDP background to be an exclusive attribute defining the group. However, the fact that the pupils (very likely) were aware of their peers IDP status indicated that is not totally indifferent, but functions as objective/subjective marker.

Regarding their social network, the majority clearly have more contacts with the local people rather than only with their own group (even though already these figures suggests that one cannot really talk about the IDP in-group in the case of young secondary school pupils

anymore. This was further confirmed with question 12 on separated schools for IDPs. According to 74% it does not have any impact to have separate IDP schools. Moreover, 21% commented that it is actually detrimental. In another words, according to the students the integrated school model is the best option even though that is a rather strong statement in a situation where a strong group identity described in the social group theory is missing.

Instead of a less predominant identity as an IDP student or as an IDP from a specific area in lost territories, this sample of students strongly identify themselves with Georgian state (72%), followed by the region where the student lives in Georgia. Along the same lines, 17 out of 18 old caseload IDP students felt that the education should be organized exactly the same way for them as the rest of Georgians. With respect to group identity, answers to question 15 indicate that 83% of the pupils consider themselves to be part of the local community. Again, it was not possible to find in-group formation which would have been in line with social identity theory. Question 16 was designed to test what sort of positive attributes the group members would have been able to name to their own group (in relation to social categorization). The students mentioned same traditions, same language, freedom and kindness. These answers should have been followed up for more detailed information – unfortunately this was not possible within the time frame of the research.

Regardless of the type of school the pupils attended, the majority of the pupils answered to question 17 that they prefer to stay in their current regions rather than return to the lost territories if that would become possible. Interestingly, 44% of the pupils instead indicated that they wished to return. This does not appear very accurate based on the other indicators showing a high level of local integration – at least among the young IDP pupils. The local interviewer commented on the result on her own initiative saying that this is not what the students actually want, but rather, it is a dogma they have learned at home and felt it necessary to express it here.

Question 18 was probably futile and should have been revised. It is very unlikely that the pupils would know about how the schooling was organized back in the 90's.

Also questions 19 would have required more guidance and follow-up questions. However, the upper secondary school students were aware what was meant with the question. Some students felt that they do have possibilities to influence their situation through engaging in political or NGO work.

The triangulation confirmed the trends presented above. According to the commentators local integration has already taken place for years. They also felt that the IDP students have and have had effectively the same educational rights as the rest of the population. A comment was made regarding the activities in IDP schools aimed at increasing students' knowledge on Abkhazia. The mentioned activities included Memorial Day and Week of Abkhazia representing the Georgian history of the territories. Moreover, there are special history classes dealing with Abkhazia. The school director stated that in her opinion, they all are Georgian citizens who are temporarily in Zugdidi and will return to Abkhazia one day. She further stated that the pupils are well integrated in the local society. They still do visit their grandparents and relatives mainly during the summertime in de facto Abkhazia (as a rule, this means Gali, the district closest to Georgia. The return of the Georgian population to other parts of de facto Abkhazia is not tolerated and travelling to the Abkhazian capital Sukhumi or further up to north remains risky for ethnic Georgians).

Very interestingly, the IDP school in Zugdidi is providing Abkhazian language classes. According to the director, this is the only school in Georgia doing this (it was not possible to verify this). Her reasoning for the activity (which must take place with consent of the parents) was as follows: By learning Abkhazian, the students will be able to contact their peer in Abkhazia via social media and make a positive friendly impression by using their language. According to her, Abkhazians and Georgians belong to same family after all. She believes that eventually the students will make friends and this will facilitate their return to lost territories one day as they will be able to communicate with Abkhazians.

## **6.2. New caseload IDPs**

### **6.2.1. Background of the conflict/displacement**

A conflict between South Ossetians and Georgians broke out in 1992-1993 as the South Ossetians' claims for more autonomy increased the tensions. South Ossetians are their own linguistic/ethnic group whose language is related to Farsi (Persian language). After Georgia declared independence, South Ossetians became concerned of their fate as a part of Georgia – since 1989 there had been intolerant voices in Tbilisi demanding limiting the autonomy South Ossetia from which it had been enjoying as part of Soviet imperium since 1921. In 2001, South Ossetia's new president Eduard Kokoity started to guide South Ossetia's policy towards unification with North Ossetia which is part of the Russian Federation. President

Saakashvili offered improved autonomy to South Ossetia in 2005 which it refused because it was concerned with Georgia's military build-up with the support of the USA. In July 2008 Georgia claimed that South Ossetians had shelled Georgian peacekeepers and considered this as a violation of the ceasefire agreement. Georgia started warfare on 7 August 2008 with an aim of restitution of "constitutional order".<sup>245</sup> According to Georgians, Russian forces had by that time already entered South Ossetia. The superior Russian forces quickly defeated the Georgian military forces. The EU brokered a ceasefire, the Six-point agreement, which was signed on 12 August 2008.<sup>246</sup> Later on in August, Russia recognized the independency of South Ossetia.<sup>247</sup> Subsequently, Russia vetoed the continuation of the OSCE mission in Georgia in December 2008.<sup>248</sup>

The figures regarding the number of the Georgians who fled the conflict in South Ossetia are slightly controversial. According to the UN estimation in August 2008, some 15 000 Georgians had been displaced in Georgia proper.<sup>249</sup> Another estimation from 2011 sets the figure between 17 000 – 22 000.<sup>250</sup>

### 6.2.2. Conducting the interviews

As in the case of old caseload IDPs, the interviews were conducted by an interpreter/translator who has a long experience on the thematic of the survey as well as on conducting and interpreting semi-structured interviews. Consequently, the challenges related to language, cultural awareness and sensitivity of the topic were approach in a best available way.

The interviews were conducted among IDP school students in Tserovani in early June 2014, in the region of Mtskheta-Mtianeti, some 20 km northwest from Tbilisi. Additionally, one

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<sup>245</sup> Roponen, Ville, *Repeilevä Pantterintalja*, in Berglund, Krista; Ikonen, Susan; Laitila, Teuvo; Roponen, Ville, *Löytöretkiä Georgiaan*, University Press of Eastern Finland, Tampere 2014, p. 184-185, 189-190.

<sup>246</sup> The Six-point agreement is available at [http://www.eumm.eu/en/about\\_eumm](http://www.eumm.eu/en/about_eumm)

<sup>247</sup> The other states, which have recognized South Ossetia by June 2014, are: Nicaragua, Venezuela and Nauru. (Vanuatu withdrew its initial recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia in 2014.)

<sup>248</sup> The OSCE mission had been monitoring the joint peace keeping forces in the zone of Georgian-South Ossetian conflict since 1992. Information on the mission can be found at <http://www.osce.org/georgia-closed/43383>

<sup>249</sup> UN News Centre, *Georgia: UN continues to press for humanitarian access to victims*, 15 August 2008, available at [http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=27710&Cr=Georgia&Cr1=#.U5nDivl\\_tjU](http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=27710&Cr=Georgia&Cr1=#.U5nDivl_tjU)

<sup>250</sup> Internal Displacement Centre, *Moving Towards Integration. Overcoming segregated education for IDPs*, September 2011, p. 13.; Public Defender of Georgia, *Report on the Human Rights situation of the Internally Displaced Persons and Conflict affected Individuals in Georgia*, July 2010, p. 20-21.



interview was conducted in the Prezeti IDP settlement close to Bazaleti Lake 45 km west of Tbilisi. Tserovani is perhaps the most well-known new caseload settlement in Georgia.

The three secondary school students were identified through the already existing contacts of the interviewer without approaching school directors or teachers. Moreover, the interviewer conducted the same survey also with a young university graduate from Tserovani working for an NGO in the settlement simply knowing that the person in question was going to provide additional helpful information regarding the topic. Her responses were included into the interview results. Three Georgian teachers of different subjects and a head of a local NGO were involved in conducted triangulation.

All the interviewees were very helpful and provided additional information to varying degrees . The interviews were conducted one-on-one in the settlement of Tserovani. An individual interview took around 30–40 minutes. As a result, compared with the old caseload IDP interviews, they provided more detailed information. The picture these interviews created of IDP pupils from the last conflict is somewhat different compared with the situation among the old caseload IDPs in the western part of the country.

### 6.2.3. Questionnaire replies

In the following, I shall present an overview of the survey results. I shall discuss and analyse the questionnaire responds further in the following section (6.4.4. Analyses – summary of the findings) Due to the small sample, I have used graphs when reasonable. The replies are illustrated starting from the point three as the two first questions were set only to verify the profile of the interviewed student

#### 3. What sort of school you attend/attended

a) IDP school	3
b) standard public school	1 (both public and IDP)

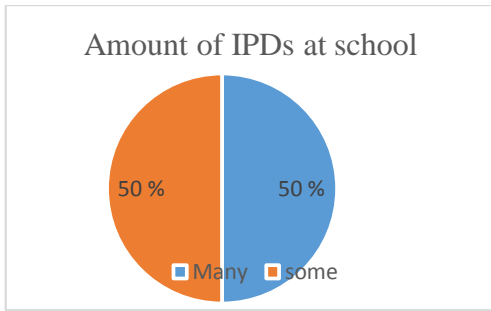


Figure 6.8. Amount of IDPs at school – new caseload IDP replies

4. If you are attending public school, are/were there also IDP pupils?

a) Many	0
b) some	2
c) Only few	2
d) none	0
e) comments	This was entirely subjective question about their perception of their peers. It is not likely that pupils would know accurate figures. However, it seems based on collected sample that the pupils are aware of their peers IDP background and thus it cannot be indifferent and have no impact on their categorization.

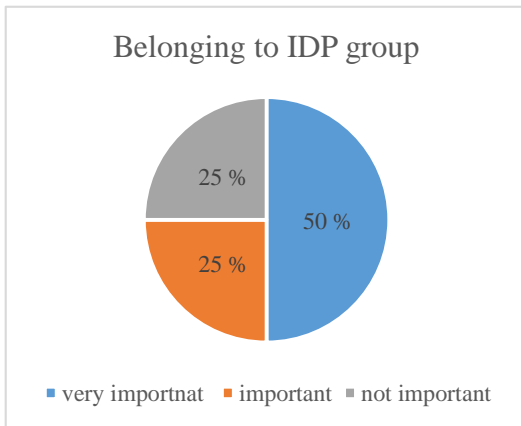


Figure 6.9. Belonging to IDP group – new caseload IDP students

6. Is the fact that you are an IDP important for you?

a) very important	2
b) important	1
c) not important	1
d) no answers	0

7. Who are the persons you consider as your friends?

a) IDPs	0
b) Local Georgian population	0
c) More IDPs than locals	4
d) More local	0

8: Do you feel it is/it was important to teach and talk about Abkhazia/South Ossetia in your school?

Yes, it would have been good	4
No answer	0
Comments	“Some time ago one of the NGOs made a questionnaire with 20 questions about our district. We, children, could only answer to few questions. That time I realised that we had not enough knowledge about our area.” Ketii, 11th grade student.

9. Is/was this being done in your school and if yes, in which format? (Special history classes? Special classes on geography? In some other way? Please explain.)

a) pupils who named history lessons	0
b) pupils who named geography lessons	0
Comments: Interviewees specified no classes on the topic. Yet again, the standard Georgian curriculum does touch upon the subject.	

10. Do you feel that because you are an IDP, non IDP-people treat you differently?

yes	4
no	0

11. Did or does your family have a say in school matters at your school? Did the parents have an opportunity (as in the format of parents’ council) to influence how the teaching was carried out?

a) yes	
b) no	4

12. How do you feel about the separate schools for IDPs?

a) it is good	1
b) it is bad	2
c) it has no impact	1

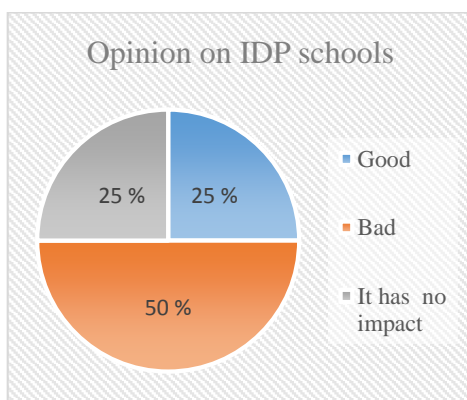


Figure 6.10. New caseload students’ opinions on IDP schools

13. What is the most important/valuable for you from the following list:

a) Georgian state	4
b) Your region in Abkhazia or South Ossetia	0
c) The region where you currently live in Georgia	0

14. How do you think the education should be organized for the pupils with IDP background in Georgia?

a) Exactly like for the other Georgian pupils	4
b) Some measures need to be taken to preserve the distinct Georgian Abkhazian or Georgian South Ossetian identity (for example, special history teaching with regard to lost territories)	0
c) Other measures, please explain:	0

15. Do you feel that you belong to the same one group with

a) All the IDPS (both from Abkhazia and South Ossetia)?	4
b) Only to IDP group from Abkhazia or South Ossetia?	0
c) You are a member of the local population in region in Georgia where you live now, the rest is unimportant?	0

16. Please list three positive things which best describe the group you belong to:

Common answer were:
1) New friends 2) Training opportunities 3) Self-development
Comment: It would have been necessary to explain the object and purpose of this question better for both interviewers and interviewees to obtain some meaningful information. The answers were less subjective compared with the old caseload students. One of the interviewed also identified possibility to obtain a scholarship for university studies as the only positive point for her as an IDP: "I can't really think of anything more", she said.

17. How would you like the IDP situation to be resolved?

a) You would like to return to your home in lost territories	3
b) You want to move elsewhere	1
c) You want to stay where you are, connect with the local population and focus on your life there	0

How would you like to IDP situation to be resolved?

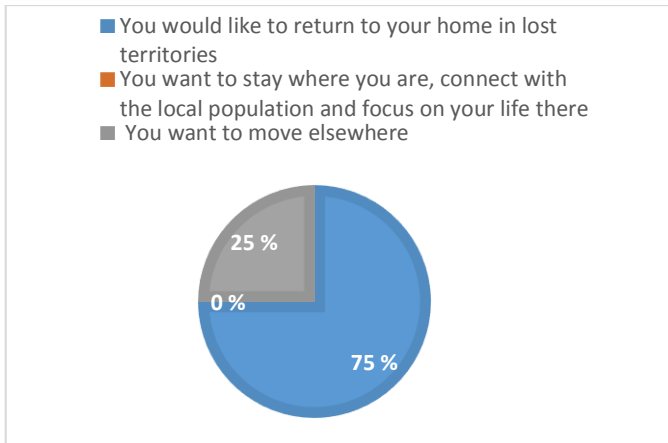


Figure 6.11. How would you like to resolve displacement – new caseload students’ replies

18. How in your opinion education to IDPs should have been organized after the conflict(s)?

a) It was organized in a right way	3
b) It should have been done otherwise,	1
Comment:	

19. Do you feel that you can influence your current situation as an IDP somehow? How? Please explain (for instance, through political participation, civic engagement?)

a) political participation and other civic engagement	2
b) no answer	2
Comment: 2 felt that they cannot influence anything	

It becomes obvious that the relative vicinity of the conflict in 2008 has shaped the life of the young new caseload IDP pupils in a very different way compared with the second generation IDPs in western Georgia. The students have been affected by the conflict personally as well experienced first-hand the post-conflict confusion. The interviewed students also had personal experience from Georgian public schools as some of them had been placed into a

public school prior to the establishment of the IDP school in Tserovani.<sup>251</sup> Daro, the 11<sup>th</sup> grade student, said: "My village is completely burned, my house also. The only thing I really would wish is to visit my uncle's graveyard."

It is good to have IDP schools: "Because the neighbours; the village children we live together, accordingly we go to the same school and all this resembles the previous life."

Keti 22, University graduate: "We are not sick, we are just IDP and I think it is not good enough reason to have separate schools."

#### 6.2.4. Analysis – summary of the findings

As the new caseload IDPs memories of the conflict and the followed events are still rather fresh, they were able to provide more detailed information. In spite of the very limited sample, the interviews were very helpful in generating an overview of the secondary school students' perception of the situation.

Some of the students had attended the first school year in Tbilisi because the school in Tserovani had not been built yet. According to the interviews, at least some of them had faced disrespect and the quality of education was not as good as in Tserovani school. It seems that all the students were quite satisfied with the teaching in Tserovani school. The school in Tserovani is not officially an IDP school. However, in reality it is one because of its student core which predominantly consists of the IDP students living in surrounding settlements. The existence of a segregated school is not considered to be in line with the best interest of the child. It is also stated that in the case of protracted displacement segregation becomes even more questionable. In line with this, most of the scholars and organisations are supporting integrated schools. Interestingly, one of the interviewees from Tserovani supported segregated schools providing the following reasoning: "It is good to have IDP schools because the neighbours; we, the village children, we live together and accordingly we go to the same school and all this resembles the previous life."

In the case of the new caseload IDPs the research hypothesis number one, which assumed that the IDP schooling was initially not well planned as it was mainly improvised response

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<sup>251</sup> Tserovani School was opened in 2009. The school construction works began in November 2008 and was finished in 10 months. There are 970 pupils and 72 teachers in the school. Georgian Educational and Scientific Infrastructure Development Agency, information available at <http://www.esida.ge/news/>

to the fast moving events, is not fully supported. It is partially true stating that the IDP schools were established in a rush to respond to the fast moving events. However, the process seemed to be managed well -perhaps because there already was experience in managing issues related to displacement or because the flow of the IDPs was not as overwhelming as it was with the old caseload IDPs.<sup>252</sup> Furthermore, there is no indication of any type of major shortcoming with regard to schooling of IDPs.<sup>253</sup>

The second research hypothesis assumed a weak sub-identity which is recognized by the outer-group, but which will very likely merge with local autochthonous identities. In the case of the new caseload IDPs the status is still rather strong. However, the IDP students predominantly categorized themselves to be Georgians rather than demonstrating a strong IDP group identity.

The third hypothesis foresaw that the schools have not been designed robustly to preserve the distinct identity of the IDP students. Based on the interview replies this seemed to be very much the case among the new caseload IDPs. This topic will be discussed further in the following comparative analyses between the two IDP-student groups.

### **6.3. Conclusions - comparative analysis**

According to the interview conducted among the old caseload IDP students, they seem to be well integrated – a result which is supported by other surveys.<sup>254</sup> There was no evidence of strong in-group bond among the old caseload students as described in Chapter two on theoretical framework. Today, the IDP identity seems to the author more like an administrative fact entitling the persons with IDP status to state allowances rather than a strong emotional bond which, for instance, would offer basis for powerful political mobilisation. It is very likely, that the situation was different right after the conflict. However, it must be pointed out that families and relatives tend to form the most important and predominant cohesive group in a very collective Georgian society. As a result, it is arguably how much importance can be placed on peer group bonds in shaping the core of an

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<sup>252</sup> Confirming comment extracted from the interview regarding schooling of new caseload IDPs; Daro, 11th grade student: “We arrived in August, the school started month later and I believe it would be impossible to have better process.”

<sup>253</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council 2010, p. 48.

<sup>254</sup> See for instance: Human Rights Watch, *Living in Limbo*, 2011.; Norwegian Refugee Council, *Not Displaced, out-of-place, Education of IDP children in Georgia*, March 2011.; Internal Displacement Centre, *Moving Towards Integration. Overcoming segregated education for IDPs*, September 2011.

individual identity. The commentators used for triangulation shared the opinion that there is no need for segregated schools. In spite of the political rhetoric, at least based on the findings of this survey, there has not been any strong attempt to instrumentalise schools to preserve and nurture the specific identity of IDP pupils and students. As a result, the integration and related reconstruction of students' identities to resemble the local identity of autochthonous people has taken place. The idea of "returning" to Abkhazia must be an unfamiliar idea for these students which would probably equal to second displacement.

Compared with the old caseload IDPs the new caseload students seemed to demonstrate more in-group cohesion even though they as well considered the Georgian identity as the most important one. There are two obvious reasons for this. Firstly, the temporal proximity of the conflict – even though very different one from its length and secondly due to fact that large section of the new caseload IDPs live in compact settlements built for them after the conflict in 2008 and thus they live surrounded by other IDPs. A more extensive study including the autochthonous population would create a bigger picture of the society revealing the out-group perceptions of the IDP groups as well. The idea received from some parts of this study together with author's own experience suggests that at least the old caseload students are fully perceived as part of the local Georgian society. However, there were some indications from the interviews from the new caseload IDPs that they might face some discrimination or suffer from prejudices.<sup>255</sup> Some students reported that during the first year they had attended the school in Tbilisi, their peers had excluded them. The local interviewer commented on this from her own personal experience by saying that this was very likely based on the fact that the peers in the capital felt some sort of supremacy towards the pupils coming from outside Tbilisi and speaking differently rather than on the fact that they were IDPs. Another thing is that the IDPs have been treated differently over the years. As the old caseload IDPs were left with rather little attention (which might be partially explained by the comparably worse economic situation where the Georgian state found itself in 1990's compared with 2008) the new caseload IDPs were provided with rather decent housing in purpose built settlements soon after the conflict. This has caused friction between the two IDP groups over the years. However, as a local interlocutor described, this all happened many years ago and it is unlikely that it would affect the intergroup relations between young secondary school students coming from these two distinct groups. According

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<sup>255</sup> One of the interviewed new caseload students mentioned that her friend is in a relationship with a non-IDP person whose family cannot accept the relationship due to IDP status. It remained unclear, however, if the reason could have been linked to IDP's socio-economic situation rather than on anything else.



to this very limited sample, the new caseload IDPs felt that they are being treated differently (I understand this to refer to perceived discrimination) due to their IDP background. This is very likely linked also to the fact that the IDPs are living in a compact settlement area where their categorization becomes more evident compared with the old caseload IDP pupils in Zugdidi. It is also obvious that the temporal proximity of the conflict has an impact on new caseload IDP students. Some of them are still likely to be traumatized.<sup>256</sup>

The third hypothesis assumed that schools have not been designed in a way to robustly support the political aim of the return of IDPs to the breakaway regions. It seems that topics related to lost territories are not discussed in detail in schools, which are simply following Georgian standard curriculum. In fact, all the new caseload interviewees stated that they would have liked to learn more about their region at school. In the same way, it seems that parents' participation in school activities is somewhat limited, in spite of the fact that the amended law on education foresaw school boards including parents. The schools could play a bigger role in bridging different actors of the society supporting students' development especially in the post-conflict society. It seems that (also) in the case of Georgia this has not really taken place. It seems that there has been some sort of a gap between the political discourse and the actions taken. Then again, the scarce resources might also have prevented it. The old caseload IDPs were left for a long time without solid support and guidance. The parallel administration run by Georgia – the Abkhazian government in exile – has not been able to fulfil its tasks effectively. As a result, the IDPs have had to adapt in their surroundings in a way that would make their return to the lost territories somehow feasible. Moving now would mean to many, who have found more or less fragile ways to cope in their current locations, a second displacement. For many years, the Georgian political leadership saw creating a plan of action for local integration as an indirect recognition of territorial losses (which would have been a political suicide for any politician in the eyes of the voters) and thus it was not done. At the same, the fact that there were no more serious attempts, such as within the schools, to support preserving the particular identity of the pupils/students, somehow indicated a de facto acceptance of the loss.

If and when the current international situation (discussed also in the final conclusion chapter of this work) will not change in the foreseeable future, Georgia must allocate all available sources to the full integration of IDP pupils and students. School pupils and students should

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<sup>256</sup> Comment by Ketii, 11th grade student from Tserovani during the interview: “When I saw and heard the explosion, I got really scared because I thought that it was the last second of my life and I thought it was all over.”

not be used (as was done during the last two decades) for political goals related to promoting reintegration of the lost territories to Georgian controlled area.

#### **6.4. De facto Abkhazia – Georgian IDPs in Gali**

##### 6.4.1. Introduction

This chapter will illustrate and discuss the situation of the Georgian voluntary returnees, IDPs who have chosen voluntarily to return to the Gali region in Abkhazia after the conflict in 2008. As stated earlier, multiple aspects of this group complicate the structure of this work. However, as these returnees can potentially strong political impact in the post-conflict stability, I wish to include and discuss this topic in this work. Moreover, this group presents a peculiar profile in terms of diversity. They mainly consist of Mingrelians, which form a Georgian sub-group in the western part of Georgia. They normally commute between Georgia and de facto Abkhazia and normally hold an IDP status in Georgia. However, they cannot be categorized to be typical members of old caseload IDPs, but they could be assessed to constitute a third ingroup. Finally, this group forms an ethnic/linguistic minority in de facto Abkhazia. Therefore, I shall also reflect minority protection in a following chapter as it is an important instrument of diversity management. These persons were displaced initially after the conflict in 1992-1993.<sup>257</sup> It is estimated that prior to 1999 some 47 000 Georgians had returned to Gali. Estimating the correct figures is, however, impossible due to controversial information especially after the conflict in 2008. The administrative boundary line remained officially closed for over a year and a half after the conflict in 2008. After that, the restrictions were relaxed only in 2010.<sup>258</sup>

The return of IDPs has taken place spontaneously without any official policies and has been tolerated by the Abkhazian de facto authorities. Prior to the conflict in 2008 approximately 96% of the inhabitants of Gali district were ethnic Georgians.<sup>259</sup> Abkhazian authorities have

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<sup>257</sup> Ceasefire agreement (Moscow agreement) was signed between the parties of the conflict in May 1994. In accordance with the agreement a peace keeping forces from the Commonwealth of Independent States consisting purely of Russian forces were deployed in the area. Peace talks on durable conflict settlement were initiated as the so called Geneva process. In 2003, Georgian (Shevardnadze) and Russian (Putin) presidents agreed to establish three working groups: on return of IDPs, on restoration of railway and renovation of Inguri powerplant. The ceasefire held until the August conflict in 2008. The ceasefire agreement from 1994 is available at <http://peacemaker.un.org/georgia-ceasefire94>

<sup>258</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Living in Limbo. The Rights of Ethnic Georgian Returnees to the Gali district of Abkhazia*, 2011, p. 23.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid*, p. 18.

not allowed Georgian IDPs to return to any further than to Gali as they are concerned about the impact of the returnees on the demographic make-up of the society. In spite of the expulsion of the Georgian population during the conflict in 2008 ethnic Abkhazians still form some 36% of the population in contemporary Abkhazia. Considerable increase of ethnic Georgians could have unwished political consequences should the returnees be entitled to vote.

In the following, I shall discuss the role of the educational policies seen as a diversity management tool in shaping a heterogeneous society in an aftermath of an ethnic conflict. The unusual case of Abkhazia is relevant for the scope of this work in a sense that Georgian authorities consider persons who have returned to Gali district as IDPs. As a rule, this people maintain their IDP status which entitles them to state allowances, pensions and social services. The situation of Georgian pupils residing in Abkhazia is particularly precarious and will have a deep impact on their future educational and working opportunities. Moreover, the group of IDPs either living or commuting across the ABL creates a separate group of IDPs compared with the new or old case load IDPs residing in Tbilisi controlled area of Georgia. The complicated educational situation – discussed in this chapter – with limited possibility of usage of Georgian, at least in formal context, due to fact that only Russian and Abkhazian languages can be used with the authorities in Abkhazia, will have an impact on the identity formation of the IDPs. The IDPs who have chosen to return despite the various problems mainly linked to security<sup>260</sup> at can at least partially, in spite of the changed societal reality, live in their home region. The empirical part of this work does not entail interviews conducted among the returnee pupils. This is unfortunate, but the reason for this is that firstly, it would have complicated considerably managing this work. Secondly, this work is primarily interested in the policies carried out by the Georgian authorities and on their impact on IDP pupils seen from the perspective of IDPs. Georgian authorities have no control over the breakaway regions. The report by Human Rights Watch, *Living in Limbo* from July 2011, however, gives a good understanding of the difficult situation of returnees in Gali as the situation has not significantly changed until today. The author worked in western Georgia 2010-2012 and was exposed to versatile information on returnees in Gali.

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<sup>260</sup> The security situation of the IDPs in Gali was criticized in the report of the Special Representative of UN Secretary-General on the human rights of Internally Displaced Persons in a report following his visit to Georgia and Gali in September 2010. The report is available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/16session/A-HRC-16-43-Add3.pdf>

In the following, I shall shed light on the situation in the Abkhazian breakaway region, de facto state, whose independence from Georgia is recognized only by a few foreign states.<sup>261</sup> and challenged by almost the entire international community. For instance, EU does not recognize the breakaway and emphasizes to integrity and respect towards internationally recognized Georgian borders.

De facto state of Abkhazia as well as its former host state Georgia in some aspects are young and contested entities. Both of the entities are multiethnic and the building blocks used in the course of the (still ongoing) nation and state building are easily visible. The historical narratives of the two entities reflect both primordial and modernist elements.

The population of Abkhazia consists of diverse ethno-linguistic groups (including Abkhazians, Armenians and Greeks) However, for the purpose of this chapter, I shall concentrate in Georgian/Migrelia minority forming the majority in Gali district adjacent to the administrative boundary line (ABL) between Abkhazia and Georgia. The interest in this group is based on the fact that their kin state was the other party in the ethnic conflict in 1992-1994 and again in August 2008. Hence, the treatment of this group in terms of education serves as a (proxy) indicator of the concept Abkhazian authorities are applying vis-à-vis long term policies towards Georgians providing a forecast on the future inclusion or exclusion of the ethnic Georgians.

In order to limit this chapter, I shall simplify a number of issues and do shall not dwell too much in detail, for instance, on issues related to international law or to the role of the Russian Federation in this issue.<sup>262</sup> I shall try to focus on the educational structures and the role ethnicity plays in choosing them. I am aware of the fact that my approach will not address the complexity of the (frozen) conflict, as full account of its aspects are beyond the scope of this study. However, I shall aim to shed light on one relevant aspect that can either mitigate

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<sup>261</sup> By June 2014, besides Russia, the republics' independence has been recognized by Nicaragua and Venezuela, as well as the small Pacific nations of Nauru, Vanuatu and Tuvalu. In spite Russian efforts, not even the usual allies of Russia, China, Serbia and Belarus, have recognized neither of the two *de facto* states by May 2014.

<sup>262</sup> Russian Federation supported the Abkhazian leadership in especially in the conflict in 2008. After recognizing the independence of Abkhazia (and South Ossetia) in 2008, Russian Federation has also taken over the responsibility of the border guarding the Administrative Boundary Line (ABL) between de facto ABK territories and Georgian area based on the agreement with ABK authorities in for the next 49 years with a possibility of extension for 15 years more. Russian forces have also started to construct several border guard/military bases along the ABL.

and defuse the future reasons for a conflict or to further polarize the society - the applied educational model.

I shall first provide a short account on the historical background and the ethnic relations between Abkhazia and Georgia discussing briefly the concept of ethnicity and ethnic conflict as they are crucial in the context of Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. I shall then illustrate the make-up of the Abkhazian society. After that, I shall concentrate on the situation of the Gali district in Abkhazia. In my conclusions at the end of the chapter, I shall assess the situation in terms of schooling in the Gali district and its potential importance for the future development.

#### 6.4.2. Ethnicity and ethnic conflict

In spite of the important role education can play in mitigating ethnic conflict, it is noteworthy to mention that education alone cannot correct the situation in case appropriate political, economic and social initiatives are not in place. Furthermore, educational policies also have to take into account parents and how to engage them as schools cannot erase or totally reshape the perceptions and attitudes handed over by the parents to their children.<sup>263</sup>

Numerous scholars have proposed diverse definition to what is understood as ethnicity. According to Paul Brass, ethnicity is the subjective or symbolic use by a group of people of any aspect of culture in order to create internal cohesion and differentiate themselves from other groups.<sup>264</sup> This implies that group identity consists, on one hand, of cohesion and on the other hand, of differentiation from the others. Furthermore, ethnicity and ethnic groups do not exist as an abstract, but they are social constructs. The ethnic boundaries are, hence, movable even if they appear not to be so in a specific historical moment and context. Charles Tilly also argues that ethnic identities are social constructs. The main goals of a group are political and material gains. As a result, political entrepreneurs make use of economic differences and promote ethnic solidarity as a means to reach this goal. Perceived discrimination can create willingness or incentive of an ethnic group to mobilize politically.<sup>265</sup> Michael Keating points out that ethnic identities are being made and re-made

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<sup>263</sup> Ibid, p.8.

<sup>264</sup> Brass, Paul, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison*, New Delhi 1991, p. 19.

<sup>265</sup> Tilly, Charles, *From Mobilisation to Revolution*, Reader, University of Michigan, 1978, available at <http://ssr1.uchicago.edu/NEWPRE/Change2/Tilly.html>

constantly. Identities cannot be defined objectively but rather by self-consciousness and common references.<sup>266</sup>

Sergei Arutiunov, Head of Caucasian Studies Department at the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology in Russian Academy of Sciences, describes dispute between Georgia and Abkhazia as a good illustration of politically manipulated ethnic conflict. According to Arutiunov, Abkhazia had long been associated with Georgia under the Soviet system and Abkhazians lived peacefully within a Georgian-dominated media and educational structure. “Politically and culturally, however, Abkhazians were more oriented to Russia - which was larger and less culturally threatening - than Georgia. With the dissolution of Soviet Union, Abkhazians resisted incorporation into the newly independent Georgian nation, leading ultimately to the Georgian-Abkhazian War of 1992-93, which produced de facto independence from Georgia. Superficially, this seems like the classic example of an inter-ethnic conflict. Although true in a strict sense, there is really no great ethnic enmity between Georgians and Abkhazians, noted by a high percentage of mixed marriages. Abkhazian demands were not for independence as an expression of nationhood, but rather for association with federal Russia rather than Georgia. The conflict turned on the desire to change political association, not to secure ethnic independence per se.”<sup>267</sup>

Arutiunov concludes that conflict in Abkhazia was not innate and historically predetermined antagonism, but rather an outcome of political manipulations of certain leading individuals who used ethnic identity to safeguard for themselves the benefits of political power during a period of economic transformation.<sup>268</sup>

Finally, in their pioneering study dealing with the role of the education in ethnic conflict, Bush and Saltarelli state that: “Ethnicity neither causes conflict, nor in many cases does it accurately describe it. Rather ethnicity is increasingly mobilized and politicized in contemporary violent conflicts.”<sup>269</sup>

#### 6.4.3. Historical background and roots of the conflict

Abkhazia is located on the Eastern shore of the Black Sea, in the mountainous Caucasus region. The precise origin of the Abkhaz people is unknown. In 1810, Abkhazia was first

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<sup>266</sup> Keating, Michael, *Culture and Social Sciences*, in Della Porta, D. and Keating, M., *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences. A Pluralist Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 108.

<sup>267</sup> Arutiunov, S.A., *Ethnicity in the Caucasus: Ethnic Relations and Quasi-Ethnic Conflicts*, available at <http://www.circassianworld.com/ethnicity.html>

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> Bush and Saltarelli 2000, p.7.

incorporated and then officially annexed (1846) into the Russian Empire. Many Muslim Abkhazians fled or were expelled to the Ottoman area from Abkhazia as they had aligned themselves with the Ottoman Empire, which was Russia's enemy and rival. During the Ottoman rule, the Abkhazians had been converted to Islam. Consequently, they were also seen as an alien element in the Orthodox Russian Empire. To fill the vacuum, many Russians and Georgians immigrated to Abkhazia. Furthermore, Abkhazians also rebelled against Russian rulers which increased Russia's dislike and mistrust towards Abkhazians.<sup>270</sup>

The region gained some political clout under Stalin - becoming an autonomous republic in 1931. However, Abkhaz self-governance was extremely limited: the Abkhazians were incorporated under Georgia and they were forced to speak Georgian. After Stalin's death, the Soviet regime adopted a substantially more pro-Abkhaz policy, encouraging the people to maintain a separate, non-Georgian identity.<sup>271</sup>

Despite the differences between ethnic Abkhazians and ethnic Georgians, the Georgians maintained their claim to Abkhazia largely because Georgian society was perceived more developed in terms of culture and language. Abkhaz language did not have an alphabet. Consequently, educated elites in Abkhazia normally spoke Georgian and they were assimilated into the Georgian society. Georgia's claim on Abkhazia was enhanced by its demographics: many ethnic Abkhazians had fled their territory during the Stalin years. Before the beginning of the Georgian-Abkhazian war in 1992, the total population of Abkhazia was about half a million out of which some 45% were Georgians, only some 18% native Abkhazians, about 15 % were Russians, almost the same number of Armenians and the remaining 9-10 % were Greeks, Jews, Estonians and members of other smaller groups. Over half of the Abkhazian population was displaced during the civil war in 1992-1993. Most of them were ethnic Georgians who ever since have been dwelling in Georgia proper as internally displaced people (IDPs). Abkhazia unilaterally declared its independence from Georgia in 1999. No state recognized Abkhazia until the conflict in August 2008 and unilateral declaration of Kosovo and the partial recognition of the latter by the international community changed the power-politics and triggered Russian Federation to recognize Abkhazia.<sup>272</sup>

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<sup>270</sup> Gahrton, Per, *Georgia - Pawn in the New Great Game*, London - New York 2010, p. 63-65., Ascherson, Neal, *Black Sea, The Birthplace of Civilisation and Barbarism*, Vintage Books, London, 2007, p. 100., Trier, Tom; Lohm Hedvig and Szakonyi, *Under Siege, Interethnic Relations in Abkhazia*, London 2010, p- 23-25.

<sup>271</sup> Ascherson 2007, p. 10.

<sup>272</sup> Trier 2010, p. 2, 17.

### *Abkhazia – demography and society*

Abkhazian authorities released the results of the latest census only in December 2011. According to the data, the total population of Abkhazia today is 240 705. Half of the population (51%) identify themselves as ethnic Abkhazians. 43 166 are Georgians (18%) - mostly living in the Gali district (see the annexes, map 1). Furthermore, according to Abkhazia's statistic office, 3 600 residents additionally identify themselves as Mingrelians (Georgian sub-ethnos). Furthermore, there are 76 541 Armenians (15%) and 74 914 Russians (14%). The rest consist of smaller minorities mentioned earlier. In spite of the diminished population, it is well justified to define Abkhazia as a multicultural society.<sup>273</sup>

Mingrelian and Georgian are considered as separate languages.<sup>274</sup> In spite of the long standing history and compact dwelling area in western Georgia, most of the Mingrelians identify themselves with the Georgian state and have not even made a strong attempt to claim any institutional and normative recognition for their distinguished identity. Mingrelian speakers are normally being educated in Georgian or Russian speaking schools. There are practically no Mingrelians who would only speak their mother tongue. Mingrelian is considered an unwritten language (even though alphabets have been created based on Georgian) which is widely used in Samegrelo, in the western part of Georgia, in all informal communication.<sup>275</sup> It is interesting to observe that Mingrelians have never launched any powerful campaign to claim for increased political or cultural rights in their “homeland”. The situation is interesting compared with Europe as it can be argued that Mingrelians meet the objective (compact settlement area in the western part of the country, shared language, culture, habits, religion, idea of common past) and subjective criteria (self-identification) to qualify as a national minority. Georgia has ratified the most important European instrument dealing with minority protection: The European Framework Convention on Protection of National Minorities (FCNM).<sup>276</sup> As there is no commonly agreed international definition for national minority, the state parties can determine which groups they consider as a national minorities in their respective countries. The Georgian state does not consider Mingrelians as a minority. The experience the author has is that when some (even university educated) Mingrelians were asked if they would feel it important to have pre- or primary schools conducted in Mingrelian, they find the idea very amusing. Neal Ascherson offers an

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<sup>273</sup> Civil Georgia, Tbilisi 29 December 2011, *Sokhumi Releases Final Results of Census*, available at <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.phd?id=24315>

<sup>274</sup> Definition of language and dialect is not always very clear. It can in some contexts to be claimed that languages are dialects with political powers.

<sup>275</sup> Trier, Tom and LePrevost, Alfred; *Regional Languages in Georgia and the European*. (Draft) of European Centre for Minority Issues (ECMI) working paper, July 2011, p. 9.

<sup>276</sup> The text of the FCNM is available at [http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/1\\_AtGlance/PDF\\_H\(95\)10\\_FCNM\\_ExplnReport\\_en.pdf](http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/minorities/1_AtGlance/PDF_H(95)10_FCNM_ExplnReport_en.pdf)



explanation for this in his book *Black Sea*. According to him, some languages have different statuses and it is not considered an imperative to develop and preserve them formally. Ascherson gives also another peculiar historical example from the western Georgia of people whose language has not been developed formally, namely, the Laz people. This group belongs to an earlier historical “pre-nationalist” segment and it has practically perished from its original dwelling area. The Laz are still to be found in the North-Eastern Corner of Turkey. Lazi speak a pre-Indo-European language which belongs to the Kartvelian language group. According to Ascherson, the small number of Lazi surviving in Georgia was not well received by Georgian politicians during the early years of Georgian independency. Laz people are yet another concrete example of the ethno-linguistic mosaic of Georgia where the application of exclusive 19<sup>th</sup> century nation state concepts has proven challenging. According to Ascherson’s analysis, “Lazi with their distinct language and folk-culture are perfectly aware of their distinctiveness...but they have felt no imperative to discover roots, or to externalize their collective identity by researching or inventing a history of Lazi people. Nor have they been concerned with a very European idea that the disappearance of their language would lead to the disappearance of their Lazi identity, and that these two processes would amount to a bad development which ought to be resisted.”<sup>277</sup>

Against this backdrop the vision suggested by a pro-Abkhazian British scholar, George Hewitt, in his text sounds interesting academically, yet unlikely, as today Mingrelians strongly identify themselves with the state of Georgia. Hewitt writes in his article that: “It is wrong to impose, or try to impose, ethnic categories (in the way that Georgian ethnicity was actually imposed on Mingrelians, Svans and Laz by the central authorities circa 1930), and important to respect the fact that people's sense of their identity can both shift over time and contain plural elements; by the same token, acceptance of the distinction (which Abkhazians tend to make) between Mingrelians and Georgians, and the growth of Mingrelian pride in their particular, historically marginalised, language and culture, could help greatly to reconstruct relations among people scarred by conflict and to reduce the threat of its recurrence.”<sup>278</sup>

Hewitt hints in his writing that the fact that Mingrelians are a sub-identity of Georgians and that in reality, according to him, their original identity was suppressed by the dominant Georgian group can also provide a basis for future coexistence of Mingrelians and Abkhazians in Abkhazia.<sup>279</sup> In fact, some Abkhaz nationalists have presented the idea that teaching in schools in Gali could take place in Mingrelian to enhance the Mingrelian identity and eradicate the Georgian influence. The de facto

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<sup>277</sup> Ascherson 2007, p. 201.

<sup>278</sup> Hewitt, George, *Abkhazia, from Conflict to Statehood*, online article in Apsnypress on 17 July 2012, available at <http://apsnypress.info/en/articles/414.html>

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

Abkhazian authorities, however, have not supported this initiative.<sup>280</sup> Moreover, there has been discussion on the possibility to start broadcasting in Mingrelian in Abkhazia. Obviously, this would serve the state building in order to create a situation where the Mingrelians as a distinct culture could start to affiliate themselves with Abkhazia rather than with Georgia. As stated earlier, the status and knowledge of formal Georgian language among the Georgian who have returned to Gali-region has already deteriorated in spite of the support Georgian authorities have tried to provide for Georgian pupils attending the Georgian schools in Abkhazia. In the future, if the Georgian population chooses to stay in de facto Abkhazia, it would be a rational option for young Georgians to learn Russian and/or Abkhazian if they are determined to stay in their home region. This is because the region can offer very few working opportunities. The ability to communicate with all the members of the community would probably enhance the working/trade opportunities. Moreover, the upper secondary school graduates might be able to access Russian Universities.

#### 6.4.4. Concept of nation state in Abkhazia

Abkhazia developed to ethnically defined entity in the early 1990's. The political discourse linked to the nation state has ever since been predominantly ethno-nationalistic. The selected concept depicts Abkhazians as a titular nation in spite of the multi-ethnic make-up of the society.

Due to the fact that during the Stalin era Abkhazia was a destination for a large Georgian immigration, the escalation of the relations with the Georgian state in the early 1990's and the conflict in 2008 have kept the relationship between the two parties frosty. Manipulation and misuse of history have also provided a fruitful soil for ethnic tensions to grow on both sides. Abkhazian leadership seems to feel that the only way to maintain their culture and language is to keep ethnic Abkhazians numerically as the largest group and to concentrate political powers to them. The Abkhazian leadership has seen the secession from Georgia as a legitimate right to self-determination (based on the concept of a nation state). Otherwise, Abkhazian culture would face risk to become extinct. Today, there are no institutional arrangements in place guaranteeing the representation of the minorities in the Abkhazian society.<sup>281</sup>

The increasing diversity in contemporary societies, including Abkhazia, has contested the traditional concept of self-determination from multiple directions. Firstly, it has become very visible that the concept of a state where one or few constituting groups define the identity (using objective or subjective markers) of the society is distorted. Secondly, the developments in international politics have cast a shadow on the existing interpretation of the international law vis-à-vis the right to self-determination (examples include unilateral

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<sup>280</sup> Trier 2010, p 51-54.

<sup>281</sup> Trier 2010, p. 8-9; 18-19.

declaration of independence by Kosovo and its partial recognition by the international community).

As stated, in spite of the multiethnic nature of the Abkhazian society, Abkhazia is implementing the concept of “nation-state”. The notion of a nation state can be divided in two categories that emerged during the 18th and 19th century nation building in Europe. The ideology of nationalism foresees that the ultimate phase of a nation should be a situation where all the “nations” have their own state. The markers for a nation consist of a shared language, history, ethnicity, culture and religion. The first model, the so called French model, purposely did not recognize ethnic differences and differential rights (such as particular cultural or educational rights). The core of the concept was that each citizen, regardless of ethnicity, sex, age, language or religion shares the same mutual rights enshrined in the constitution. The second model, known also as the German model, on the contrary institutionalizes the cultural/ethnic/religious differences. This approach provides a legal framework that consists of provisions, such as political representation on grounds of ethnicity, decrees on special livelihood, education or religious matters. This creates particular group rights, such as the use of minority language, which can only make sense and be practised in group. It can be concluded that the application of the French model calls for assimilation and does not promote pluralistic society. It can lead to tensions among diverse groups as the same treatment of different groups does not always create equality between dominant and non-dominant groups.<sup>282</sup> Instead, well-balanced diversity management will use asymmetric approaches when they are better suitable for the given situation.

The importance of the Gali district is based on the fact that the majority of the population in the area are ethnic Georgians (Mingrelians) whose kin-state is Georgia. More importantly, according to the Georgian leadership, both Abkhazia and South Ossetia are occupied areas belonging to the internationally recognized territory of Georgia. Most of the states - with only few exceptions (Russian Federation being the most important one) - maintain this opinion recognizing the international borders of Georgia to include the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russian Federation has also further consolidated its strategic bridgehead in South Caucasus by issuing Russian passports to Abkhazian (and South Ossetian) inhabitants since 2000. It is estimated that by the year 2006 some 80% of Abkhazia’s population possessed a Russian passport. This process was accelerated after the

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<sup>282</sup> Marko, Joseph, *Autonomie und Integration. Rechtsinstitute des Nationalitätenrechts im funktionalen Vergleich*, Wien-Köln-Graz, 1995, p. 214-261.

conflict in 2008.<sup>283</sup> This development has perhaps had already an irreversible impact on de facto Abkhazia's future bearing in mind that the current Russian political leadership has stated that when required, Russia can and will protect the interests of ethnic Russians living "near abroad" outside the borders of Russia.<sup>284</sup>

#### 6.4.5. Education in Abkhazia – Gali district

Before moving on to discuss the school situation in Abkhazia and in particularly Gali district, I will briefly present different education models.

Educational models may have two different consequences. On one hand, education can be used to assimilate individuals to the dominant society and on the other hand it can be used to preserve and reproduce the distinguished identity of a minority. The design of educational institutions plays a crucial role in this context drawing a demarcation line between different groups residing in a multicultural society reflecting the grade or the lack of integration.

##### *Educational models*

The education system types can basically be divided into four groups: 1. separated education system, 2. monolingual education system, 3. partly bilingual or multilingual education system, 4. mutually bilingual or multilingual education system.<sup>285</sup> It is common that applied systems are variations of these models.

The first model preserves separate existence and identity of different ethnic groups. Usually in this system minority children can receive instruction in their mother tongue at least till the graduation from secondary school.

In the second model, all minority groups have to attend public schools in the language of the state or dominant group. In this case, we can say that the family is the only entity responsible for preserving the distinct culture and language of the minority. This model does not provide for minority languages but its goal is gradually to assimilate pupils to main society. However, it does not necessarily mean that the state would be hostile towards the minority languages. In case the state/region allows and supports private schools establishment of

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<sup>283</sup> Human Rights Watch, *Living in Limbo*, 2011, p. 18.

<sup>284</sup> Address by President of the Russian Federation, 18 March 2014, available at the official site of president of Russia at <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/6889>

<sup>285</sup> Sulg, Ülle, *Political Regime, Education System and Minorities in Plural Societies*, Tartu 2000, p. 15-18.

minority schools is at least to some extent possible.

The third model refers to societies where the educational settings are established in a more flexible way. In regions where there are concentrated minorities, education can be provided in the minority language. Therefore, all the minorities are not treated equally. Nevertheless, flexible educational structure including differentiated educational language policy indicates recognition of the minority by the state.

The last, fourth model, provides the most supportive school setting for the old minorities. All the dominant and non-dominant groups have access to education in their own language. The second language used in the education is the language of the minority or the dominant group depending on the nature of the school. This model is common in highly federal structures, like in the case of Switzerland and Canada.<sup>286</sup>

The reality in Abkhazia and the Gali district is a mix of different models. There is no clear cut policy in place implementing one standard throughout the region.

There are costs which can influence on the ability of the IDPs families to ensure schooling of their children. Direct costs of education to households include: formal fees, informal tuition charges, (possible) bribes and entrance fees, textbooks and other school materials, allowances to children studying away from home, clothing and shoes (according to Innocenti study). What kind of impact the implementation of the prescribed school models can have in a multiethnic society after a conflict in a situation where there is a little or no trust between different groups of the society?

### ***Schools in Abkhazia***

Abkhazia has been a multilingual region for centuries - especially the urban areas. The villages have been mainly monolingual. In the course of the Ottoman era, Turkish was a commonly understood language. Russian gradually replaced this after the Russian empire annexed the territory in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Also Russian, Georgian, Greek, Armenian and Estonian groups arrived to Abkhazia both voluntarily as well as forcibly as a part of the Russian resettlement policy.

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<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

Before the war in 1992-1993, teaching in nearly all of the schools in Gali district was taking place in Georgian.<sup>287</sup> In 2006, there were 170 primary schools in ABK. 72 of them were instructing in Abkhazian. Nineteen of them were instructing in Georgian. Five schools were bilingual. These figures are contradicting the information provided by de facto ministry of education stating that there are 59 schools teaching in Abkhazian. The schools system has 11 grades. Abkhazian is the primary language until the fourth grade. Starting from the fifth grade, Russian is replacing Abkhazian as the language of education except for history, literature and Abkhazian language classes. In the report published in 2010 following the visit to *de facto* Abkhazia, the UN Representative of the Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons commented and reiterated that the de facto authorities should respect IPDs right to use their own language also in educational institutions, as enshrined in principle 23 of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.<sup>288</sup>

According to de facto Abkhazian Constitution, non-dominant minorities in Abkhazia have a right to speak and study their own languages as long as Abkhazian syllabus is followed and Abkhazian language is taught in the school.<sup>289</sup> Like in so many other regions, the minority languages in Abkhazia have preserved by being used in the private sphere. The schools are facing severe problems due to lack of funds, materials and lack of educated teachers who would be able to uphold high standards in their teaching.

According to some sources, Mingrelian is also used in self-censoring way not to provoke the ethnic Abkhazians living in Gali. Georgian is used by Gali inhabitants mainly when visiting the nearby city of Zugdidi and the surrounding municipalities.

The majority of the population living in Gali district are ethnic Georgian. Most of them use Mingrelian as their first language. The use of the Georgian language, and the importance given to it by the Abkhazian de facto authorities, has reduced in recent years. The ability to use Georgian language is passed down within the families and through the education system. Even though the ethnic mix within Gali district varies little between the lower and upper

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<sup>287</sup> Human Rights Watch 2011, p. 48.

<sup>288</sup> Report of the Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the human rights of internally displaced persons on his follow-up mission to Georgia (13 to 16 September 2010), p.4., available at [http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/16session/A-HRC-16-43-Add3\\_fr.pdf](http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/16session/A-HRC-16-43-Add3_fr.pdf)

<sup>289</sup> Article 6 of Abkhazian Constitution: “The official language of the Republic of Abkhazia is Abkhazian. The Russian language as well as the Abkhazian language shall be recognized as the language of the government, public and other institutions. The state shall guarantee all ethnic groups living in Abkhazia the right to use freely their own languages.” The Constitution – as well as a large number of Abkhazia related articles and analyses mainly from the *de facto* perspective, are available at <http://www.abkhazworld.com/abkhazia/156-constitution-abkhazia.html>

parts of Gali district, the schools in these two areas apply different levels of importance to Georgian language. In lower Gali nearly all subjects are taught in Georgian in comparison with upper Gali, where Georgian language and literature are taught as a single subject and all other subjects are taught in Russian. Within Gali town and in two other villages north of Gali Abkhazian language is promoted and used for most subjects for the first four grades.

Although international human rights instruments are not strictly implying the obligation to offer school education in respective mother tongues, the Abkhazian de facto constitution guarantees the right of ethnic groups to use their own language. Therefore, the de facto authorities in Abkhazia are acting in contravention of their own constitution when diminishing the use of Georgian language in schools in predominantly Georgian parts of Abkhazia.

Within the Gali district it appears that there are three different approaches in operation with regard to the use of Georgian language. In the lower zone of Gali district all schools use Georgian as the main language to teach the majority of subjects. The only exception is in lower Gali where Russian language is used to teach Abkhazian and Russian, history and geography. Abkhazian language is of course taught in Abkhazian. These non-Georgian language subjects are usually taught by an Abkhazian teacher.

In upper Gali the majority of lessons are delivered either in Russian or Abkhazian and the use of Georgian is very limited. However, according to some information all schools are able to offer Georgian literature and language classes in the Georgian language. In some of these schools Georgian language lessons are only offered on an optional basis. This constitutes a significant difference in terms of the efficiency of language acquisition. Abkhazian language and literature are taught in Abkhazian in these schools and all other subjects are taught in Russian.

The third approach consists of a group comprising two large schools in Gali town. According to information from the NGO Teacher's Union in Kutaisi<sup>290</sup> these schools are teaching most subjects in the first four grades in Abkhazian and most subjects from the fifth grade onwards in Russian language. Abkhazian literature and language continue to be taught in the Abkhazian. Georgian literature and language are taught in Georgian, but Georgian subjects maybe optional or not offered at all. According to a number of interlocutors, teaching of or

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<sup>290</sup> Kutaisi is the second largest Georgian town with population of 190 000 located in Imereti-region.

teaching through Georgian language is currently taking place unofficially and is carried out in secrecy in several locations.<sup>291</sup>

The Abkhazian de facto authorities are trying to increase the attraction of Russian as the main teaching language in Gali district through a scholarship program launched at the beginning of the school year in September 2010. Pupils residing in Gali district and completing their secondary education there are offered free scholarships to continue their education at Sukhumi University. The only condition is the use of the Russian language at the University. As this is a new scholarship program only limited information is available. It is not clear if all applicants are able to receive a free scholarship, or if there is a selection process and if the ethnic Georgians residing in Gali in reality are eligible for the same scholarships.<sup>292</sup>

Under international law it can be argued that a group or entity which is, de facto, controlling a certain area must respect and uphold existing international legal standards even though the regime may not be internationally recognized (de jure). As a result, without discussing the legitimacy of the Abkhazian de facto authorities, it is possible to state that they are obliged to conduct their policies according to international human rights standards.

Human rights are interdependent, indivisible and inviolable. Minority rights are part of human rights and their object is to complement the larger category of human rights to ensure efficient implementation of individual rights.<sup>293</sup> Georgians (and Mingrelians) living in Abkhazia form a de facto minority<sup>294</sup> being in a non-dominant position within Abkhazia. Consequently, their situation can be observed from a human rights and minority rights perspective. The right to education is a human right which is reflected in the minority rights

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<sup>291</sup> A historical analogy can be found in South Tyrol, North Italy, where the German speaking population organised German schooling in secrecy in so called *Katakombenschule* after region was annexed to Italy and after fascists came into power adopting a degree in 1923 leading to gradual closure of all the German Schools in the territory., Di Michele, Andrea, *Die Schule in Südtirol zwischen Faschismus und Nazismus. Ein Blick in die Dokumente, in 1900-1950. Südtiroler Alltagsgeschichte*, in I Dossier di Storia e, Jg. 1, April 2003, Nr. 3, p. 24-39, available at [http://www.emscuola.org/labdocstoria/storiae/Dossier/Dossier02/pdf-td/dossier2-03\\_07Td.pdf](http://www.emscuola.org/labdocstoria/storiae/Dossier/Dossier02/pdf-td/dossier2-03_07Td.pdf)

<sup>292</sup> According to de facto Abkhazian state information agency, *Apsnypress*, in 2011, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation granted Abkhazians 72 quotas on studying at Russian higher education establishments for 47 professions. The article is available at <http://apsnypress.info/en/news/211.html>

<sup>293</sup> Wilson, Duncan, *Right to Education*, 2002, p. 13.

Available at [http://www.right-to-education.org/sites/r2e.gn.apc.org/files/Duncan\(1\).pdf](http://www.right-to-education.org/sites/r2e.gn.apc.org/files/Duncan(1).pdf)

<sup>294</sup> There is no single internationally agreed definition on (national) minority. Reference is usually made to definition offered by UN Special Rapporteur Francesco Capotorti in 1979: “non-dominant peoples who possess ethnic, religious, or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and who have a sense of solidarity directed toward preserving their cultures, traditions, religions, or languages.”



regime. Contemporary international standards reflecting the right to education are laid down in a number of conventions, declarations and recommendations (see the chapter dealing with international normative framework).

Even though the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is not a legally binding instrument, it carries considerable political and moral weight as international customary law.<sup>295</sup> Article 26 of the UDHR read in conjunction with the article 2 create an obligation for the Abkhazian de facto authorities to provide education for all and to respect the wish of (Georgian) parents regarding the nature of the education for their children.<sup>296</sup>

The most articulated and authoritative provisions with regard to education can be found in the UN convention on the Rights of a Child (CRC). Article 2 of the CRC stipulates that a state has to treat all the children on its territory without discrimination. This means that a state has to guarantee equal opportunities to education for all children. Furthermore, articles 28 and 29 spell out the right to education for all children – including minorities and IDPs. Today, there is a fairly broad international consensus on the major goals and objects of the right to education.<sup>297</sup>

However, there is no international obligation for a state to provide education in minority languages.<sup>298</sup> A state is given some flexibility to determine how much education it provides in a minority language. A state is not supposed to prevent minorities from establishing their own schools or from receiving support from their kin-state. In addition the curriculum of minority schools must be in line with the national curriculum in order to guarantee the option for pupils to continue their studies in other educational institutions.

According to Putnam, language is one element of complex issue of bridging and bonding social capital. One might think that bridging and bonding are incompatible. However, there

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<sup>295</sup> A practical example of the authority of the UDHR is shown, i.g., by its use during the national and provincial assembly elections that were held in Pakistan in 2008. The EU monitoring mission used the UDHR as a primary source to assess elections, due to the fact that Pakistan had not ratified relevant legally binding international treaties., EU Election Observation Mission Final Report, available at [http://www.eueompakistan.org/PDF/final%20report/EU\\_EOM\\_Pakistan\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.eueompakistan.org/PDF/final%20report/EU_EOM_Pakistan_Final_Report.pdf)

<sup>296</sup> Text of the UDHR available at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml#a26>

<sup>297</sup> Nowak, Manfred, The Right to Education in A. Eide at al.(eds.), Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. 2001, p. 251-252.

<sup>298</sup> The most famous case in this respective in Europe is the ruling by the European Court for Human Rights (ECtHR), so called Belgian Linguistics case from the year 1968. The Court found that the state has a right to determine the official languages of instruction in public schools and denied that there was a right to instruction in the language of one's choice. The Court averred that otherwise anyone would be free to claim any language of instruction in the territory of any of the states parties bound by the convention. This ruling was done prior to the CRC and the ruling has been later criticized by number of scholars. See, for instance, Wilson 2002, p. 16.

is some evidence suggesting otherwise. Dutch researchers have found that the Turkish immigrants who are most actively involved in the broader Dutch society are the same who are also most actively involved in the life of the Turkish community itself. The bonding, in short, can lead to bridging, rather than impeding bridging. This is a fact that should be considered in a long term policy planning.<sup>299</sup>

Arguably, bearing in mind the contested status of Abkhazia and its unclear legal position, the current policy of the de facto authorities is breaching the spirit of international standards embedded in the international documents listed earlier. Moreover, according to Zugdidi based Government in Exile adviser for the ministry for education other ethnic groups, such as Armenians, do not face similar problems with regard to education in Abkhazia. It appears that the Abkhazian de facto authorities are treating different ethnic groups unequally as the obligation of the state (or entity exercising power over a given area) should be to respect, protect and fulfil the right to education of all people under its jurisdiction equally.<sup>300</sup> Moreover, the international standards that are laid down in international conventions and declarations should be implemented progressively. This is also violated by restricting and scaling down the use of Georgian language in teaching. It is also pertinent to note that according to the Abkhazian constitution, article 6, "...the state shall guarantee all ethnic groups living in Abkhazia the right to use freely their own languages."<sup>301</sup> Furthermore, article 19 stipulates that "Everybody has a right to...education."<sup>302</sup> In other words, the actions of the Abkhazian de facto authorities are inconsistent with their own constitution. Abkhaz citizenship law allows dual Russian-Abkhaz citizenship but not dual Georgian-Abkhaz citizenship.<sup>303</sup>

Overall, it appears that Abkhazian legislation is rather underdeveloped and it falls short in meeting the international standards.<sup>304</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> Putnam, Robert D., *Education, Diversity, Social Cohesion and "Social Capital"*, Discussion Note in meeting of OECD Education Ministries, Dublin 2004.

<sup>300</sup> Comai, Giorgio, *In Abkhazia, worried about the language law*, published 6 November 2012, Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso, the article is available at <http://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Regions-and-countries/Abkhazia/In-Abkhazia-worried-about-the-language-law-124824>

<sup>301</sup> Available at <http://www.abkhazworld.com/abkhazia/156-constitution-abkhazia.html>

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

Frederick, James, L., Colpano, Maria, A., *Georgia. Profiles, Foreign Relations and Human Rights*, New York, 2013, p. 81.

<sup>304</sup> Trier 2010, p. 75.

According to a Human Rights Watch report from February 2010, the teaching language in the upper zone of Gali district has been changed from Georgian to Russian. The report concludes that:

“Although Abkhazia is an unrecognised entity, and as such is not party to core international human rights treaties, human rights guarantees applicable in Georgia also apply to Abkhazia. The de facto authorities therefore have the obligation to respect and protect those guarantees. This includes the requirement to address the problems that ethnic Georgian returnees face. Abkhazia's constitution explicitly recognises this obligation and guarantees the rights and freedoms provided in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international human rights treaties. So, regardless of Abkhazia's status, its authorities have an obligation to ensure freedom of movement with respect to the ABL, non-discrimination - in particular, with regard to identity documents - and the right to education in one's mother tongue.”<sup>305</sup>

### ***Reconciliation?***

The themes of post-conflict civic reconstruction and reconciliation are difficult and sensitive topics for any society. This is further complicated with the unclear status of Abkhazia and the political decision of the past Georgian political leadership not to accept the de facto authorities.<sup>306</sup> There have been no sincere efforts to build a truth and reconciliation committee to investigate claimed atrocities which occurred during the conflict in 1992-1993 and 2008. Paulson makes a claim that education can play an important role as a catalyst for transitional justice and development. She underlines that the past educational policies and their role in exacerbating the conflict need to be studied carefully. The authorities must make sure that the educational system is not reconstructed in the same way perhaps holding the seeds for a new conflict with its intolerant structures, policies and teaching processes. Instead, the educational planning must rather recreate the educational system than try to build it based on the pre-conflict structures.<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> Human Rights Watch, 18 February 2011, Georgians in Gali, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/country,,,GEO,4562d8cf2,4d6373351e,0.html>

<sup>306</sup> Reconciliation through economic integration in a similar way which was done in the case of Germany and France after the WW II does not constitute a viable option in a situation where the both parties do not even recognize each other's legitimacy. Harzl, Benedikt, *International law in a position to provide interaction with de-facto states*, 5 December 2012, interview available at <http://abkhazworld.com/aw/interview/1113-caucasus-times-interview-with-benedikt-harzl>

<sup>307</sup> Paulson, Julia, *(Re)creating Education in Post-conflict Contexts: Transitional Justice, Education and Human Development*, International Center for Transitional Justice, November 2009, p 5.

#### 6.4.6. Conclusions – impact of current school model in Gali on Abkhazian society

Abkhaz leadership – with support of the Russian Federation – have gradually decreased educational possibilities in Georgian. The Georgian administrated Abkhazian Government in Exile is providing teaching materials for Georgian schools as well as providing occasional advanced training for Georgian teachers working in Abkhazia. Additionally, the government in exile organizes courses for high school graduates from Georgian schools in Abkhazia free of charge to prepare them for Georgian University entrance exams. It is already noticeable, that the knowledge of Georgian pupils attending the schools in Abkhazia is deteriorating and their prospects to obtain further education in Georgian will diminish. In the long term, this could give an incentive to parents to educate their children in Russian (or even in Abkhazian). This would weaken the status of the Georgian language further and support long term assimilation of the population.

Another factor that is complicating the interethnic relations is the fact that the status of Russian in Georgian schools has diminished considerably being replaced by English. This has been done in spite Russian still forms lingua franca in entire Caucasus region. This will also have indirect impact on interethnic relations in Abkhazia. A number of Georgian pupils from Gali go to school in Georgia. As their knowledge of Russian diminishes, so do their possibilities to interact with the Abkhazian inhabitants – or with any other ethnic group in Abkhazia for that matter.<sup>308</sup> As the time goes by, the more improbable it becomes that any kind of long term solution for the Abkhazian (Russian) – Georgian conflict could be found corresponding somehow to the situation prior to war.

In addition to paramount economic problems and emigrating population, prospects for a functional and dynamic multicultural society are slim. More likely, the culture and minority languages will survive in the private sphere. It can be assumed that the knowledge of formal high language in all minority languages will be lost to uphold schooling, further education as well as conducting official business through these languages. In essence, in case there is no change in the development in the near future, the outcome will be a society where diversity will not and cannot be institutionalised and a member of a non-dominant minority will not enjoy equal opportunities at least not until he/she masters Abkhazian or Russian.

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<sup>308</sup> Comai 2012, available at <http://www.balcanicaucaso.org/eng/Regions-and-countries/Abkhazia/In-Abkhazia-worried-about-the-language-law-124824>

Moreover, the language and culture its members present remains more vulnerable and ultimately may face extinction. On a more pragmatic note, the members of the minority groups will also not be able to contribute to the development of the whole society due to the fact that they do not enjoy proper educational and working opportunities. Finally, the non-recognition of minorities in the form of not providing them with full-fledged educational opportunities does not provide equal opportunities and hence diminishes social cohesion of diverse groups which provides, in the worst case, a fruitful soil for ethnic tensions and even for an ethnic conflict.

The situation regarding the use of languages in Gali district schools needs is very likely in flux. This snapshot provides a reference point for potential changes in the situation and a basis for identifying trends. The fear of a further Russification of the education system in Gali district may well be realistic. The policy direction of the Abkhazian de facto authorities, with regard to either promoting or diminishing the use of Georgian in schools, in the predominantly Georgian parts of Abkhazia will be seen over time. The policy of de facto Abkhazia can also change due to high politics. Also for this reason a full-fledged analyses of the situation in Abkhazia could be premature or unnecessary. During the time of finalising this work the political situation in Abkhazia was changing. The Abkhazian de facto president Ankvab was forced to step down on 1 June 2014 by the opposition demonstrators who were accusing Ankvab of mismanagement.<sup>309</sup> New snap presidential elections are set on August 2014. At this stage, it can only be guessed whether or not the events are somehow connected to to changing changed power politics in the Black Sea area after the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. In spite of the fact that the current status quo of Abkhazia served well Russian strategic goals in South Caucasus well, it cannot be excluded that Russia would consider annexing also the two breakaway regions. Yet, it must be considered unlikely against the fact that the Russian political leadership found it important and made an effort to picture the annexation of Crimea legitimate and to be in line with (Russia's interpretation of) the international law. Similar actions would be even more difficult in the case of Abkhazia (and South Ossetia). Any profound political changes in Abkhazia would obviously have unforeseen consequences for the Georgian IDPs living in the region.

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<sup>309</sup> Civil.ge, Georgian Daily News Online, 1 June 2014, *Ankvab steps down*, available at <http://civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=27296> See also the article by Thomas De Waal on recent developments in Abkhazia, 30 May 2014, Carnegie Moscow Center, *Abkhazia, all politics is local*, available at <http://carnegie.ru/eurasiaoutlook/?fa=55749>

It is not clear why, in this largely ethnically homogenous part of Abkhazia, the role of the Georgian language in schools varies so much between the upper and lower areas of Gali district. The de facto legislation provides no explanation for this unequal use of Georgian in schools. One explanation is that so far the Abkhazian de facto authorities simply have not had resources in terms of competent teachers to change the existing situation.

IDPs create an ongoing challenge on both Georgian and Abkhazian sides (Abkhazian de facto authorities call them refugees as in their eyes they have crossed an international border when leaving ABK and entering Georgia proper). It seems that IDPs - particularly the old case load stemming from the conflict in 1992-1993 dwelling in Georgia proper have been considered by the Georgian government – officially – as a temporary problem as Abkhazia and South Ossetia are temporarily occupied areas. Therefore, no full-fledged integration policies and measures have been designed and implemented. Consequently, in spite of the fact that over 21 years have passed, a number of the IDPs are not been fully integrated into the societal fabric of the regions they dwell in. As a result, the situation resembles the post-conflict situation in many aspects as the status of the IDPs remain somehow open in the hope that the IDPs will eventually still return to the territory currently governed by the de facto authorities of Abkhazia. The situation is awkward – especially but not exclusively – to the secondary school pupils who were not even born in Abkhazian side. The situation remains complicated especially for the IDPs originating from Gali district. At the same time, the issue of the Georgian internally displaced persons still substantially weakens the Abkhaz argument for independence. Approximately 250 000 ethnic Georgians, well over half of the ethnic Georgians living in Abkhazia at the time, were expelled from Abkhazia in 1992—1993 during the first war with Georgia.<sup>310</sup>

As regards the selected school model, it is important to bear in mind that school institutions do not operate in a vacuum. In case completing education in a minority language does not provide realistic further education and employment opportunities, parents may can be reluctant to send their children and support minority schools and rather opt for educating their children in a dominant language. In the case of Abkhazia, the lack of institutional representation of the minorities in public administration as well as serious economic problems coupled with high unemployment does not support the development and maintenance of the minority schools. A crucial element of stability in a society is the equality between different individuals and groups. Non-recognition and insufficient realization of

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<sup>310</sup> De Waal, Thomas, *The Caucasus. An Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2010, p. 164-166.

specific educational rights can lead to lack of social cohesion creating interethnic tension and unrest in the society. Moreover, the diminished socio-economic opportunities also hinder the overall growth of the entire society.

There is insufficient amount of empirical research on the education in multiethnic-post-conflict societies that would give solid strategy proposals in establishing overarching educational models. Individual development plans without reflecting the education as a whole will not succeed in providing tangible and sustainable prospects for all members of a society. In a post-conflict society, it is particularly important to provide concrete and visible incentives for interethnic co-operation as the future prospects play a crucial role in enhancing intergroup co-operation. Moreover, a more holistic approach to education is needed; possibilities that schools are offering to create incentives for interethnic dialogue have not been exploited enough in the existing research.

## **VII - CONCLUSIONS**

### **7.1. Main findings, challenges and limitations**

The IDP schools in Georgia were created quickly to meet the acute practical need to provide continuity for the pupils and students as well as not to create too heavy a burden for the public schools with a sudden flow of IDP pupils. This was the case with both old and new caseload IDPs. Also, the schools created working opportunities for IDP teachers and civil servants. The fact that they all remained together was also thought to facilitate a smooth return of the schools to the lost territories once Georgia would have regained their control.

The schools alone with limited resources have not been able to resist the changed realities, nor have they been equipped systematically to do so. It is interesting that based on the interviews parents' participation on the school activities has been slim. This in spite of the fact that the Georgian law provides for school boards including parental participation. Moreover, international standards stipulate that education needs to take place in conformity with parents' wishes. Yet, the involvement is scarce.

The qualitative survey, the interviews, gave a good indication of the perceptions of the IDP pupils in spite of the limited size of the focus group. The fact that the IDPs belong to the same ethnic/linguistic group as the local population created a situation where distinguishing

between the in- and out-groups was not that clear and obvious. This did not facilitate preserving a distinct identity based on the IDP status.<sup>311</sup> As a result, the IDPs have integrated locally or migrated to bigger cities or abroad in search of better working opportunities. The findings were further tested through triangulation with persons who due to their professional backgrounds had in-depth knowledge of the topic. Based on the interviews, no strong bond among the IDP pupils was detected. This was particularly the case with the old caseload students who personally have not experienced the conflict in Abkhazia. Largely, these pupils are fully integrated into the local autochthonous population – including those pupils who attend the still remaining IDP school run by the Abkhazian government in exile. In their case, the return to Abkhazia would probably resemble displacement. Political mobilisation based on their IDP status is also no longer likely.

The new caseload students seem to have a stronger group identity even though they, just like the old caseload students, predominantly identify themselves with the Georgian state. The relatively recent conflict has had an impact on importance and relevance of the IDP status. Also, unlike the old caseload IDP students, the new caseload students felt that they are being treated differently due to their IDP status.

The situation for IDP pupils who have returned with their families spontaneously to de facto Abkhazia remains volatile and unclear. It will also remain in the focus of the international community as they form a highly vulnerable group whose discrimination could also cause potentials for future tensions between Georgia, de facto Abkhazia and the Russian Federation. The identity building of these students as part of the multiethnic de facto Abkhazian society will also remain unclear being closely linked with political actions of the different parties to the conflict.

As regards the normative framework, it seems that the international standards related to education are reflected and fulfilled without any grave shortcomings. Based on the sources used in this work, the formal guidance vis-à-vis education and IDPs has been limited. Other aspects have gained more importance, such as housing, health care and employment. As a result, education has not been a priority.

This work is mainly interested in the identity-based dimension of education. However, the link between education and labour markets, improved educational and working

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<sup>311</sup> It appears that ethnicity, in spite of a fact that it is also a social phenomenon, creates more salient basis for group identity than gender, class or territory., Smith, Anthony, D., *National Identity*, Penguin Books, UK, 1991, p. 25.



opportunities, is clear. Nevertheless, education cannot be an almighty agent of change in all conditions – at least not when it is not a part of full-hearted, well-planned and coordinated effort by a state authority or international community to facilitate a change in the societal fabric. The socio-economic situation in some areas of Georgia, especially in rural parts, is so difficult that even targeted vocational training would not improve the situation since there simply are no markets due to high level of poverty.<sup>312</sup>

According to social theory, identities are dynamic and changeable. In case the unlikely would happen and the IDPs would be able to return to their pre-conflict regions, their identity would reform itself based on the communalities among the people and their subjective categorization. However, today, the shape of the identity of the IDPs has already been reconstructed. This is of course self-evident with those persons with IDP status who have not lived during their youth or adult time in de facto Abkhazia or South Ossetia, which is more likely, due to the time factor, among the old caseload than with the new caseload IDPs. Based on this survey, the IDP identity is not central for the most of the interviewed people anymore. As a result, without entering ethical discussion about historical injustice and limits of self-determination, it can be claimed that there is no factual imperative to keep the IDPs separate to “facilitate their mental return” to the lost territories. As a result, the focus of the politics should clearly be shifted towards sustainable integration.

As regards the research design, it must be noted that the small sample allows qualitative assessment and limited deduction. Moreover, social identity theory is probably the most helpful in a situation where the research can be started at the early stage of displacement. In that way, it would be possible to observe and detect changes in-group dynamics and assess the identity (re)construction by using more robust data. The both focus groups, however, have obvious similarities due to their situation and reasons for displacement. Therefore, a survey conducted among the new caseload IDP students after some years could be interesting in terms of assessing the level of their integration. Are their perceptions and identities going to develop in the same way like in the case of the old caseload IDP students? If there are differences, how can these be explained? Probably this type of study would also allow to make more accurate analyses which could serve wider audiences and provide support for

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<sup>312</sup> In spite of the fact that the UNHCR report pointing out this fact is from the year 2009, the situation has not changed significantly within the past five years. UNHCR, *Protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia: A Gap Analysis*, July 2009, p. 29.

more knowledgeable and accurate policy planning elsewhere. I also believe that building a study on the topic around the concept of human security could yield useful information.

Historically, very few peace treaties have been signed with provisions dealing with education. The agreements signed related to conflicts in Georgia have none either. This should not be the case and education should be taken into account in peace talks. Education/schools are only one element of a society which cannot by itself solve complex post-conflict situation. Moreover, it is interrelated with a broad range of subjects such as disarmament, rule of law and democratisation process to name some. However, education is probably the most interconnected element overlapping on so many spheres that it could provide a vehicle to address a number of diversity management issues fostering stability and peaceful development which could have a powerful, transforming spill-over effect on the situation.

The literature and reports by international organisations and NGOs dealing with Georgia contain numerous well balanced policy recommendations. Therefore, there is no need to repeat them here. Yet, I wish to briefly list a few points which should in my view to be reflected. The peace agreements related to conflicts in Georgia did not contain any provisions regarding education (as historically has usually been the case). As listed in the first chapter of this work, education is a powerful agent, which can create a sense of normality amidst the post-conflict chaos. It is the key for individual and civic reconstruction and for economic development, which is an imperative for a post-conflict society. Ignoring the education reconstruction holds the seeds of a new conflict by regeneration old prejudices and myths. Therefore, there is a need to stress the role of education in conflict resolutions and durable conflict settlements. International commitment should use its leverage to convince parties to conflict to agree on educational arrangements, such as making a commitment at the earliest convenience to develop an action plan, to start discussion on teaching alternative histories as a part of reconciliation. The relevance and importance of the identity (re)construction is eminent. The feeling of belonging to a group is much more salient and resistant when it is based on emotions and feelings rather than on economic incentives.

Authorities, either national ones or international organisations/NGOs when they must perform as education service providers, should create a regular survey/assessment based on social group theory – or on other applicable theories – to assess systematically the speed of change and the substance of students/pupils identities and affiliations. This information should then be used for policy guidance to amend and revise existing practises and priorities.

To summarize, it can be stated that the research provided some expected results which were in line with the hypothesis. On the other hand, the results generated also some controversies which were probably not surprising due to the complexity of the situation and the limited research group. First of all, it seems that the Georgian national identity is the most important bonding identity. Secondly, the school curriculums have not really included robust attempts to sustain pupils' distinct identity which would understandably be difficult and perhaps even questionable in a liberal democracy (which Georgia proclaims to be). Consequently, coupled with protracted displacement, local integration has taken place wherever the IDPs have not been living in too isolated surroundings. Some of the new caseload IDPs have been traumatised and they also have had some experiences of possible discrimination, at least in the beginning of displacement. Also, somehow surprising taking into account the apparently strong national identity, the students did not seem to feel any bond to the other IDP group in spite of the shared hardships. The explanation very likely lays in the considerable time difference between the conflicts – at least in the minds of secondary school pupils.

## **7.2. Reflections of the finding against the current political situation**

The fact that the IDPs have very much same cultural features have very likely helped their acceptance among the local population. It is obvious, however, that some friction has occurred in communities where the resource are scarce. A historical analogy on the challenges IDPs are facing in Georgia can be found in post WWII Finland. This example is out of the context of this work, but it can perhaps be presented here for two reasons. Firstly, because surprisingly many Georgians know the war history of Finland – mainly the successful defence during the Winter War in 1939 against the Soviet Union. It was a commonplace to hear this historical example be used in Georgian rhetoric, at least when they discovered that their interlocutor was a Finn himself. Secondly, Finland has been proposed at least by scholar like Gahrton<sup>313</sup> as a potential model for Georgia on how to create cordial relationship with the Soviet Union (Russia in the case of Georgia) after a war and loss of territory and base the relationship on non-alignment. Evidently, Georgians wish to see Finland's success in defending its territory against a superior neighbour as an analogue for their own struggle against the Soviet Russia, Soviet Union and most importantly, against the Russian Federation. As a result of the peace accords with the Soviet Union in September

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<sup>313</sup> Gahrton, Per, *Georgia, Pawn in the New Great Game*, Pluto Press, New York, 2010, p. 230.

1944, Finland lost some 10% of its territories, including Karelia in and over 400 000 IDPs (a term that did not exist back then), roughly 12% of country's population in 1944, had to be resettled in Finland proper. In spite of the unifying impact of the war on the Finnish population and the rather cohesive common Finnish identity, the resettlement of the IDPs created antipathy among some Finnish municipalities where according to the law on resettlement (agricultural) land had to be provided for the Karelians. Sociologically speaking, Karelians were considered by the rest of the Finnish population as an out-group with a distinct dialect and sometimes with the orthodox religion on the contrary to elsewhere dominant Lutheranism. An even more problematic issue were the Swedish speaking or bilingual municipalities in Finland which were not obliged to resettle many Karelian IDPs. This was because it would have changed the demographic make-up of the municipality (according to Finland's constitution – then and now – the country has two official languages, which have equal standing: Finnish and Swedish). This historical example of asymmetric diversity management, if the anachronistic term can be used, was based on real politics. Swedish People's Party, which traditionally has been the political (linguistic) party for Finland's Swedish speaking population (5% of the population), was endorsing this decision. The main reason for including this stipulation in the law on resettlement was the importance for the war-crippled Finland to maintain good relations with its western neighbour and its lifeline; Sweden. This was vital for economic and political reasons to fulfil the heavy peace accords. This episode has remained in the Finnish collective memory rather stubbornly until today which has not from its part supported in generating social cohesion between the two language groups. Practically monolingual Swedish speaking autonomous island of Åland (since 1920) belonging to Finland, was exempted entirely for resettling Karelians.<sup>314</sup> The presented historical case of a refugee situation has often been perceived as a success. However, a closer look reveals the more complex situation which the Finnish political leadership at the time tried to accommodate through pragmatic asymmetric policies. This historical example highlights the challenges a state may face in managing its diversities. In some ways, Georgia's path has been even more challenging due to its considerable diversity and domestic instability.

Poverty and unemployment remain among the key challenges of Georgia. Despite the economic growth, the extreme poverty level decreased only slightly, 9.7% in 2010 and 9.2% in 2011, while poverty increased from 22.7% in 2010 up to 23% in 2011. Unemployment

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<sup>314</sup> Virtanen, Pekka V., *Asutustoiminta itsenäisessä Suomessa*, 2006, available at [http://www.maankaytto.fi/arkisto/mk106/mk106\\_895\\_virtanen.pdf](http://www.maankaytto.fi/arkisto/mk106/mk106_895_virtanen.pdf)

remains high (15.1%, 2011; estimated youth unemployment over 30%).<sup>315</sup> Education alone cannot provide a solution for problems of this magnitude.

In terms of Georgia's foreign policy, the United States has been a close ally to Georgia after the latter became independent. It is said that since 1991 US has supported Georgia with over three billion USD out of which one billion was paid as a post-conflict assistance package after the conflict in 2008. The US support for Georgia has regularly been one of the highest US has provided calculated per capita.<sup>316</sup> The US is interested in particular to support Georgia's Euro-Atlantic integration, stable market economy and democratic governance. Without going into more detail here, it was also stated that the US supports IDPs – as well as the rest of the Georgian population – by endorsing health and education reforms and development.<sup>317</sup>

One of the top challenges Georgia faces is ensuring equal educational opportunities for its IDPs. Most of the states are currently struggling with the dilemma of how to educate pupils into a globalised world and at the same time preserve, reproduce and transmit the elements of the traditional national identity to the next generation. To make it ever more complex, all this is done in an environment where it is very hard to predict the future needs of the society and where the scarce resources should be invested skilfully. At the same time, due to ever-increasing globalisation and technological development, the state is losing its traditional monopoly as an education provider. Language and national identity can be seen as vulnerable social functions in a global market place driven by free market economy and knowledge. The progress might affect the social cohesion or create a need to renegotiate its legitimacy in a society. This is based on the fact that meritocracy will be replaced by purchasing power – as was pointed out also by one of the interviewed new caseload IDPs - which will provide a means to acquire a high quality training from the global markets.<sup>318</sup>

It could be argued that due to the globalisation driven regional and global development there is no clear identity the IDPs or any other group could easily and comprehensively grasp. In that respect, the situation is very different from the context where certain European states developed their national identity (countries like Finland) and yet the state building process

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<sup>315</sup> National Statistics Office of Georgia, available at <http://www.geostat.ge/index.php?action=0&lang=eng>

<sup>316</sup> Frederick, James, L., Colpano, Maria, A., *Georgia. Profiles, Foreign Relations and Human Rights*, New York, 2013, p. 2, 50.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid*, p. 51.

<sup>318</sup> Robertson, Susan L., Bonal, Xavier and Dale, Roger, *GATS and the Education Service Industry: The Politics of Scale and Global Reterritorialization*, in *Education, Globalization & Social Change*, Hugh Lauder, Philipp Brown, Jo-Anne Dillabough, A.H: Halsey, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 240-241.

was based on the historical fictional concept of nation state. At the same time, Georgia is stressing its membership to Europe which, based on my three-year experience in the country, is not self-evident neither objectively nor subjectively. Yet, European integration is used as a building block of the Georgian identity. A good example of the shift in terms of education markets is the composition of Saakashvili's and Ivanishvili's governments. In both cases the average age of the ministers was quite young, but in addition to that, the majority of the ministers in Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream government were educated in the West – both in Europe and in the US. This poses a question what sort of identity this political leadership has, how well they understand the situation of the IDPs and how all this is reflected in political acts.

If we then turn to the international relations, Stephen Jones summarises well the current situation in his book. According to Jones, Russia's role in the region changed significantly after the 2008 conflict. Russia was no longer a mediator, but a party to the conflict. For Georgians it became an occupier after it recognized the breakaway regions' independence and deployed military to their territories. Russia's interest, however, has another dimension. Its actions in Georgia have to be seen in the context of international politics. In other words, they were linked to the eastern enlargement of NATO, western recognition of independency of Kosovo, security concerns in North Caucasus and the West's aspirations to gain access to gas and oil resources in Eurasia independently from Russia. Jones states that a limited war in Georgia served to re-establish Russian influence in South Caucasus and send a signal to CIS countries and North Caucasus of the might of the Russian Federation.<sup>319</sup>

There are several reasons why Georgia has become important in terms of international politics. There are contradicting forces on one hand trying to endorse Georgia's bonds with Europe and Trans-Atlantic structures and on the other hand forces trying to force Georgia back to Russia's orbit. These tendencies and the out-come of this process - will have an impact on Georgian policies and ultimately on its identity. Obviously, IDPs future as a part of the Georgian fabric will be effected also by this process.

Svante Cornell points out several issues in his analysis why Georgia plays an important role for both the West and Russia. In the course of the past two decades, a corridor has been developed which links Europe and Turkey via South Caucasus and Caspian Sea to Central Asia.<sup>320</sup> The possibilities this corridor offer have not been utilized fully yet. However, its

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<sup>319</sup> Stephen Jones, *Georgia – a Political History since Independence*, New York 2013, p. 250.

<sup>320</sup> Cornell, Svante, *Getting Georgia Right*, Centre for European Studies, Brussels, 2013, p. 14-15.

importance in providing Europe with Caspian oil and gas is already evident. (Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan-pipeline was opened in 2005, Trans-Anatolian-pipeline is scheduled to be completed by 2018). This will increase Europe's energy links and make it less dependent on Russian energy supplies and less vulnerable to Russia's attempts to use its energy resources as tool in its (foreign) policies. Also, the corridor has had importance since the NATO operation in Afghanistan since 2001 as a strategic maintenance route. Georgia's geostrategic location in this corridor is an important one. Georgia has also been the weakest link in this corridor due to its turbulent history, breakaway regions and lack of cohesion (domestic diversity). For this reason, Russia has focused on Georgia to destabilize the region as Russia sees the current pluralistic democratic and economic development to play against its national interests. The extensive EU report composed after the war by the Swiss diplomat Heidi Tagliavini states that Georgia started the hostilities in 2008 against South Ossetia and that Russia's response to the aggression was disproportional. Moreover, there is evidence which suggests that Russia had been prepared for military operation in the area since 2006 in order to ensure its strategic interests.<sup>321</sup> Whatever the true sequence of the events was, the situation after the conflict seemed to suit Russia's interests: it managed to destabilize the area, ensure its military presence, and block Georgia's NATO membership to any foreseeable future – all this with a price of thousands of IDPs lives.

As discussed in this work, the Georgian society encompasses impressive diversity. The development of the state has been carried out on fast track which has resulted in some problems. After the collapse of the Soviet Union Georgia regained its independency but it came with a high price tag. The GDP of Georgia diminished by two thirds as the country entered to an era of civil strife which did not finish until the Rose revolution and Mihail Saakashvili's era. The modernisation process and transformation of the society was severely damaged by this. In spite of the impressive economic growth of Georgia (even double digit figures) not everybody could enjoy the fruits of the programme and like in many other post-Soviet countries the concept of democracy became to mean something else than in consolidated democracies. The new Georgia chose a historical 18<sup>th</sup> century nation state concept as its driving force emphasizing the dominant status of its titular group, Georgians. Georgia under Saakashvili started to strongly approach Europe and NATO openly stating that its goal is to join the EU and NATO. Georgia is still today predominantly a post-Soviet rural country. All this together with the conflict, loss of the territories and flow of displaced

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<sup>321</sup> Ibid, p. 16.

people into regions where the standard of living even for even the autochthonous people is insufficient had created a challenge for identity formation of both people and the state, especially for the IDPs. In the existing reality, in order to consolidate a peaceful society where all the people feel cohesion with the state and with their fellow citizens, Georgian authorities need to pay attention to the diverse actions that can be placed under the broader notion of diversity management. As pointed out in this work, exclusion diminishes cohesion which in turn can create instability slowing the progress and jeopardizing human security. Education plays a major role creating individual identities as well as constructing national identity. In ensuring that an individual's educational rights are met and that educational institutions both bridge and bond diverse groups in the societal fabric, the authorities can create conditions where the society can thrive. It seems that Georgian political leadership has slowly adopted more inclusive policies which accommodate the needs of the various ethnic groups residing in its territory, and respect, protect and fulfil their rights (see the FCNM state report from 2012). There is also an urgent need to address the schooling of IDPs. Judging from the historical experience (i.e. Finland) it might be realistic to ensure that the IDPs are fully integrated to the Georgian educational system so their alienation affecting their identity can be brought to an end. It is hard to agree that due to political aspirations, which do not seem to be realistic in the existing international realities, IDPs can still be kept in limbo.



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## APPENDIX

### A – Questionnaire

#### Questionnaire for IDP – interviews, June 2014

**Interviewer:**

**Time**

**Location**

**Age and sex of the interviewed person:**

1. Do you have IDP status? Is you or your family originally from  
 Abkhazia yes/no  
 South Ossetia yes/no
  
2. Where do you live now?  
 .....  
 .....
  
3. What sort of school you attend? (please tick)
  - a ) IDP school?
  - b) Standard public school?
  
4. If you are attending public school, are/were there also IDP pupils?
  - a) Many
  - b) Some

- c) Only few
- d) None

Comments: (For an example: they did not always know if a pupil had IDP back ground or not)

5. If you attend/went to IDP school, are/were there also non-IDP pupils?
- a) Many
  - b) Some
  - c) Few
  - d) none

6. Is the fact that you are IDP important for you
- a) very important
  - b) important
  - c) not important
- Comments:

7. Who are the people you consider as your friends?

Most of them are

- a) IDPs
- b) Local Georgian population
- c) More IDPs than locals
- d) More locals than IDPs

8. Do you feel it is/it was important to teach and talk about Abkhazia/South Ossetia in your school?

Comments:

9. Is/was this being done in your school and if yes, in which format? (Special history classes? Special classes on geography? In some other way? Please explain.)

Comments:

10. Do you feel that because you are an IDP, non IDP-people treat you differently?

- a) yes
- b) no

Comments:

11. Did or does your family have a say in school matters at your school? Did the parents had an opportunity (like in the format of parents' council) to influence how the teaching was carried out?

- a) yes
- b) no

Comments

12. Do you feel that it is
- a) good
  - b) bad
  - c) or it has no impact

to have separate schools for IDPs?

Please explain why

13. What is the most important/valuable for you from the following list?

- a) Georgian state
- b) Your region in Abkhazia or South Ossetia
- c) The region you currently live in Georgia

Comments:

14. How do you think the education should be organized for the pupils with IDP background in Georgia?

20. Exactly like for the other Georgian pupils

21. Some measures need to be taken to preserve the distinct Georgian Abkhazian or Georgian southossetian identity (for example, special history teaching with regard to lost territories)

22. Other measures, please explain:

15. Do you feel that you belong to the same one group with

d) All the IDPS (both from Abkhazia and South Ossetia)?

e) Only to IDP group from Abkhazia or South Ossetia?

f) You are a member of the local population in region in Georgia where you live now, the rest is unimportant?

Comments:

16. Please list three positive things which best describes the group you belong to:

1)

2)

3)

17. How would you like to IDP situation to be resolved?

a) You would like to return to your home in lost territories

b) You want to stay where you are, connect with the local population and focus on your life there

c) You want to move elsewhere

Comments:

18. How in your opinion education to IDPs should have been organized after the conflict(s)?

c) It was organized in a right way

d) It should have been done otherwise,  
please explain

19. Do you feel that you can influence your current situation as an IDP somehow? How?  
please explain (for instance, through political participation, civic engagement?)

## MAPS

Map A. Internal displacement in Georgia in 2011. Source: Government of Georgia (cited according to the International Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC))

