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SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND SPATIAL FACTORS OF ALIENATION AND SEGREGATION OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONSIN THE CITIES OF GEORGIA*

Abstract: Internally displaced persons (IDPs) emerged since the early-1990s as a result of violent ethno-political conflicts on the territory of Georgia. They represent a distinct social group in terms of identity and role in the society, and are labeled as one of the most vulnerable population groups. Almost half of IDPs (more than 113,000 persons) reside compactly in several 'Collective Centers' that comprise former public non-residential buildings. This article aims atexamining of how the official policies help or prevent collectively settled IDPs to integrate into mainstream societies in urban places. It also investigates strategies that IDPs use to cope with alienation, exclusion and segregation.

The study employs quantitative and qualitative research methods based on 900 semi-structured interviews with IDPs and several in-depth interviews with different stakeholders dealing with IDP-related issues. The study reveals four key-factors that have decisive impact on IDPs lives and integration ability. These are: settlement/housing type, education, (un)employment and political participation in places of their new residence.

Key words: Alienation, coping strategy, Georgia, integration/segregation, internal displacement, resilience.

Introduction

The period after the regaining of independence (1991) in Georgia is characterized by violent ethno-political conflicts as well as the struggle against its negative consequences in the society. The first wave of the conflicts started soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union and yielded almost 300 thousand[1] of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to the juvenile Georgian state. IDPs that fled from the conflict regions found their new homes in other areas of the country, controlled by Tbilisi authorities. The war with Russia in August 2008 resulted in another influx of IDPs (up to 20,000 persons). IDP community in Georgia could be seen as a newly evolved socio-cultural group of society, united by common destiny and desire of getting back to their previous residences, as soon as possible. Displacement is the main aspect that unites this group of people.

Nowadays (2013) IDPs comprise more than 5 percent of Georgia's population and have been labeled as one of the most vulnerable social groups in the country, as usually they belong to low income stratum and are characterized by limited integration with the non-IDP population. In 2010 the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia[2] reported about 250,658 registered IDPs. Geographically their distribution throughout the regions and municipalities of Georgia is very uneven. More than 70 percent of all IDPs are concentrated in two areas: the capital city of Tbilisi and Samegrelo region in western Georgia, in the immediate neighborhood with the conflict region of Abkhazia. Urban areas accommodate more than 2/3 of the entire IDP population. Figure 1 shows adistribution of collectively settled IDPs throughout Georgia.

Two major sub-types of IDPs could be identified: (i) individually settled persons, and (ii) groups of IDPs settled compactly in collectively acquired buildings and places. The latter sub-type, which comprises slightly more than 45 percent (113,210 persons) of the entire IDP population, is a main target group of our study. The great majority (at least 80 percent) of them lives in urban places – in Tbilisi and few big and medium cities. They are concentrated in so called 'Collective Centers', *i.e.* places of collective residence of several individuals and families. Such collective centers usually comprise former public non-residential buildings (*e.g.* research institutes, kindergartens, hospitals, hotels, *etc*.) and have a very little or no living standards and insufficient inner residential space. Usually they also lack very basic utilities such as sewage, central water and gas pipelines. Additionally, often they are located separately from the main residential areas of the cities, thus creating a suitable environment for physical isolation of IDPs with their further alienation and spatial segregation from the mainstream societies.

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[1] More precisely, UNHCR statistics showed 278,500 IDPs in Georgia, and was usually rounded up to 280,000 (NRC 2004:33; see Kabachnik*et al.* 2012, p. 3).

[2] Formerly, until 2010, the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia (MoRA).
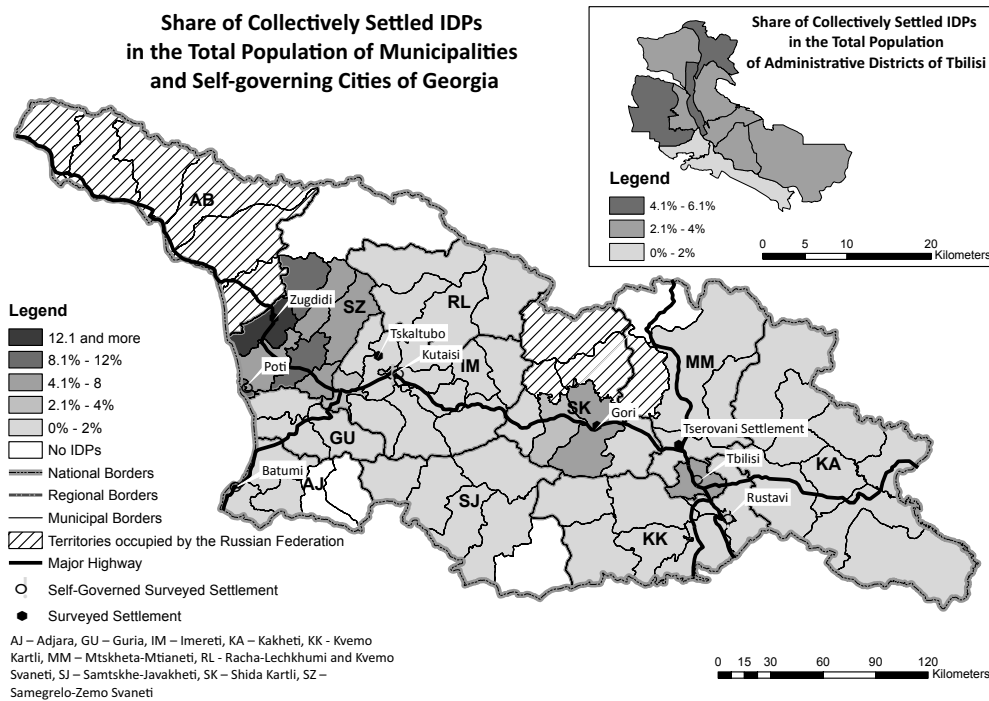
Figure 1. Distribution of collectively settled IDPs in Georgia
Source: [*Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons…* 2011].

There might be many arguments both in favor and against the collective resettlement of displaced population. However, our main hypothesis/assumption is that collective accommodation and artificial clustering of IDPs in 'Collective Centers', without implementation of a comprehensive state policy assuring their provision with basic frameworks for decent livelihood and economic activities, significantly hinders possibilities of their integration in mainstream urban societies and processes, in terms of both social and spatial dimensions.

The purpose of this article is to reveal,based on a representative survey, those socioeconomic and spatial factors that shape IDPs' strategies to cope with the tense economic situation and problems of social integration in new places of their residence.

1. Important debates and conceptual framework:
displacement, segregation, resilience

Displacement, in a global context, is determined as the forced removal of a person from his/her home or country, often due to armed conflict or natural disaster. Con-

sequently, Internally Displaced Person (IDP), according to the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, is defined as a "person or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border" [*Asylum and Migration Glossary* 2012, p. 53].

Internal displacement as a separate theoretical concept in many cases is defined and discussed as a part of global process of forced migration and a form of existence of a vulnerable social group. The discussions refer to migration, coping strategies, resilience, as well as aspects of social exclusion and social capital.

The question of internal displacement is directly linked to the peculiarities of migration and more specifically, to the forceful displacement. Unfortunately, the relevant literature doesn't make difference between the internal and international displacement, thus mostly covering the situation of international forced migration, *i.e.* refugees. Weiss and Korn [2006], who have been working on the issues of internal displacement, describe how this term emerged from the scientific and humanitarian discussions during the last two decades. They define IDPs as 'forced migrants who physically remain within their own countries'. The authors also underline the importance of such re-definition when linking the growing number of internally displaced population and the necessity of answering their different needs from refugees.

Another important work addressing to the problems of forced displacement in Europe and in Central Asia is the publication by Holtzman and Nezam [2004]. Generally, they discuss a set of important questions such as material well-being, employment, human and social capital of the displaced population and the role of state actors. They argue that despite geographic location or belonging to a particular country, displaced population in the above mentioned region 'do constitute a significant source of vulnerability in affected societies'. The authors underline the relatively high level of social exclusion from the mainstream society; additionally, they mention the role of broader social networks which exist beyond their original society and contribute to the better integration and improved livelihoods of the displaced population. Holtzman and Nezam point out several important issues which are typical to the forced displacement in the region: considerably higher level of unemployment, very vulnerable survival strategies; the role of extended family links and kin relations is very important. However, due to the overall deterioration of inter-personal relations those networks are also under substantial danger, the housing situation is very poor which also contributes to the additional vulnerability of the displaced population.

When describing the scientific approaches of investigation of IDP lives in Georgia, it is worthy of mentioning about a huge gap in analyses and explanation of survival and coping strategies of IDPs and spatial peculiarities of their everyday lives. Despite the fact that different international organizations work on the IDP-related

issues, there is a significant lack of academic studies in this field. We can point out only few joint papers by Kabachnik, Mitchneck and Regulska [*e.g.* Kabachnik *et al.* 2012; Mitchneck *et al.* 2009], which deal with IDP issues, especially underlining the fact that return, local integration and even estimating the number of internally displaced population of Georgia were subjects of political games until very recently, and, perhaps, nowadays too.

However, another important aspect of the theoretical framework is not directly linked to the displacement, as it suggests the basis for the theoretical discussion about the livelihoods and strategies of vulnerable (and not only) population groups. There are several key theoretical concepts like coping strategies, resilience, social exclusion and social capital, which are discussed below. Moreover, there are several important theoretical notions which show the spatial particularities of behavior among the minority and other vulnerable social groups.

The issues of integration, social segregation and discrimination are described in the work of Knox and Pinch *Urban Social Geography* [2010]. They assess the positive and negative sides of cohesive minority groups in a city in details – why it is an advantage for various minority groups to concentrate in space, and what are the undesirable effects that they have on urban environment. Minority groups with strong group ties manage to preserve their own cultural values and traditions, meanwhile preventing themselves from assimilation into mainstream urban societies. On the other hand, after a while their exclusiveness might turn into full social alienation between them and other groups residing in the city. In addition, the minorities are being viewed as a troublesome group that intentionally tries to avoid contacts with outsiders. The shortage of communication between these groups support formation of false stereotypes and negative attitudes creating a fruitful ground for confrontation and social exclusion, thus affecting formation of unhealthy urban environments as well.

The authors also point out several reasons of voluntary segregation – which, in our opinion, might be rather an outcome of improper official policies than a voluntary measure – typical to the minority groups: a) clustering together for defense – the minority groups separate themselves and concentrate in mutual spaces in order to defend themselves from mainstream urban societies. The spatially concentrated settlements of minority groups act as defensive clusters against the possible violence and fear; b) clustering for mutual support – minority groups unite in physical space and thus strengthen the social and economic ties within the groups; c) clustering for cultural preservation – minority groups stick together in order to preserve and promote a distinctive cultural heritage that is present within the social group. One can observe the above described situation, when there is a clear ethnic, religious or other types of difference between the host, mainstream society and certain social group. Furthermore, the clustering can be manifested not only through the operation of ethnic institutions and businesses but also through the

effects of residential propinquity on marriage patterns. The marriage between the IDP groups and to avoid the inclusion of "outsider" in their community is quite common, especially in the rural areas and in physically segregated collective settlements; d) spaces of resistance: clustering to facilitate 'attacks' – the groups try to settle close to each other in order to prevent and defend themselves from the hostility of other groups in society. Additionally, spatial concentrations of group members represent considerable electoral power and often enable minority groups to gain official representation within the institutional framework of urban politics [Knox, Pinch 2010]. This is far less common in Georgian case were IDPs are not represented as a separate electoral power so far, however, the examples could be found when they represent quite significant part of voters in particular electoral precincts, and, hence, cause an interest of political players. It is especially true in cases of the collective centers that emerged after 2008 as many of them have been formed as separate voting precincts. It is noticeable that according to the results of the 2012 parliamentary elections, the IDP voters from collective settlements of Gori municipality overwhelmingly (more than 77%) voted for then-ruling United National Movement –the difference in percentage between those IDP represented precincts and the average district and settlement levels was about 37-40%[3].

Van Kempen in his article *Rotterdam: Social Contacts in Poor Neighbourhoods* [2006] tries to outline the importance of the effects of residence and social contacts on the ability of individuals to aggregate and collect relevant information that would be helpful for a proper employment, education and social benefit opportunities. Van Kempen presents two types of social capital – bridging and bonding capitals – that differentiate and determine the amount and type of information that an individual will be getting. Those that hold bonding capital have several strong ties with relatives and few close friends, which lead to a low amount of new information. On the other hand, an individual with bridging capital is holding higher amount of weak ties that provide far more information and better opportunities. The quantity and quality of the contacts of individuals from various minority groups very much influence the developments and achievements in an individual's life.

Couple of other concepts are highly relevant to our study. Social resilience is the ability of groups or communities to cope with external stress and disturbances as a result of social, political and environmental change. According to Adger [2000], there is a link between social resilience and its ecological counterpart, especially when we talk about the usage of natural resources by the societies. Studying the case of the coastal Vietnam, the author suggests an interdisciplinary approach to the problem. Another example of reviewing social resilience is to look at it from the point of view of international labor migration, which describes the approaches of migrants who

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[3] Calculations are based on data and boundary description provided by the Central Elections Commission (CEC) – http://www.cesko.ge/index.php?lang_id=GEO&sec_id=137 and Georgian Election Data Portal http://data.electionsportal.ge/ka.

broke up their tense ties with the original background. In their case remittances serve as main factor of resilience from the original communities [Julca 2011].

Another concept, which also could be important for our case, is the strategies of coping. The article by Bærenholdt & Aarsæther [2002] discusses this issue using the example of the Nordic countries. Coping strategies include three dimensions: innovation, networking and formation of identity. Innovation is the process of changing in economic structures resulting in new solutions to local problems, as responses to the transformations of a globalizing and increasingly knowledge-based economy. Networking means the development of interpersonal relations that are transcending the limits of institutionalized social fields. Formation of identity reflects cultural discourses on identity building from the local to the global perspectives. As usual, coping strategies are discussed together with 'social capital'. According to them, social capital is an asset, while coping strategies are socio-spatial practices producing social capital. Case-studies have shown that successful, *i.e.* reflexive, coping strategies depend on institutional regimes encouraging participation and other associational virtues.

2. Research questions: how IDPs cope with marginality and exclusion?

Provided that IDPs are one of the most vulnerable social groups which in many cases are left without considerable state help and thus have to manage their lives by themselves, the determination of coping strategies that IDPs undertake in order to survive the challenging circumstances of their everyday life becomes essential.

The paper tries to answer several research questions that can be grouped thematically. First set of questions refers to the everyday challenges of the IDPs: what are the main vulnerabilities and coping strategies which the IDPs face in their everyday activities and what difficulties should be overcome? The second set of the questions refers to the particularities of spatial practices of the IDPs, especially their mobility patterns and housing practices. These questions are important for defining the main physical obstacles towards the IDPs integration into mainstream urban society. Additionally, we measure the attitudes of the IDPs towards the representatives of local societies, which is by itself an important indicator to see how involved and integrated the IDPs are with other social groups.

Another important aspect is to examine the national and local governments' policies and activities towards the IDPs and their influence on the IDPs lives and coping strategies. The literature review, fieldwork and interviews revealed and allowed to analyse relevant aspects of IDP-related issues in the context of adopted legislation, implemented policies and strategies, and practices of responsible governmental and public institutions, such as, for instance, the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia. The

research emphasis were put on an interaction of these institutions with local governments and planning authorities that are in charge of improving of physical environment and housing conditions of all social groups, including IDPs. Relations of public sector with NGOs and different groups of civil society for solving the IDP problems are also examined.

The implemented State policies so far have not favored an efficient resolution of this problem; furthermore, some state actions have supported further social exclusion and disintegration of IDP groups from the parts of Georgian society. Another, interrelated hypothesis is that geographical factors play essential role in elaboration of coping strategies and resilience approaches by IDPs, in order to adapt themselves to the new conditions of existence.

The above mentioned strategies and approaches might differ among IDP subgroups according to their place of accommodation, age, gender, occupation, professional background and several other features. The existing realities of collectively settled IDP community, resulted from both public policies and self-elaborated coping strategies, tend to be supportive for social alienation and territorial segregation of this vulnerable group of the contemporary Georgian society.

3. Methodology and data analysis

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to answer the identified research questions. A representative survey has been conducted in eight urban settlements around the country which have the highest concentration of collectively accommodated internally displaced population, as well as in one collective rural settlement that emerged after 2008 war between Russia and Georgia.

The survey was conducted in form of interviews and used a semi-structured questionnaire which covered the issues relevant to the research, such as demographic peculiarities of the respondent, the history of living in collective centres, level of adaptation to the current situation, attitude towards local population, networking and socio-economic situation, *etc.* 100 respondents have been interviewed in each selected urban settlement, hence, collecting almost 900 interviews in all. A quota sampling was used for respondent selection based on proportions of six major gender-age groups (males and females of age of 18-34, 35-54 and older than 54). This method assured achieving a sufficient level of randomness and an acceptable representation of the target population, *i.e.* collectively settled IDPs. The collected data was coded and transferred into SPSS statistical format/database.

Collected survey data was coded and entered using open-source web-based data entry platform 'Limesurvey'. STATA statistical database was used for further data cleaning (check for wild codes and illegal values, running logical consistency

tests, searches ensuring the presence of all basic demographic and geographic variables, *etc.*) and analysis. The methods of univariate and bivariate data analysis have been used, including contingency tables and checks for the significance of the correlations (Chi-square, Pearson's coefficient) depending on the type of examined variables.

The first dimension of our analysis refers to the general review of survey results; it takes a look into the key analysis. From the thematic point of view, analyzed variables could be grouped as follows: i) description of adaptation process of IDPs, ii) employment and job opportunities, iii) networking and communications, and iv) measurement of attitudes towards local population. Additionally, an important aspect of analysis implies comparison of two groups of collectively settled IDPs – (a) those of resettled in the rehabilitated collective centers, *i.e.* recipients of new state program, and (b) IDPs which were not affected by the mentioned program.

Physical adjustment of a dwelling and its surroundings is an important issue that shows significant differences throughout the surveyed areas (Fig. 2). The residents of newly emerged Tserovani rural settlement, who were villagers before the 2008 war too, more frequently transform their dwellings and cultivate nearby land plots. Significant number – 36% – of interviewed IDPs in the second largest city of Kutaisi also reported that they have garden plots, and so did many IDPs from Zugdidi and Tbilisi. As for the physical transformation of the dwelling, Tserovani is an exception among other cases where one third of respondents have arranged some kind of building extension.

Employment, especially inequality in employment opportunities, is an important measure when discussing the problems of integration and segregation. Only 23% of the surveyed respondents mentioned that they have some kind of job; it is much less that national average of self-perception regarding employment status. On the other hand, 28% of respondents stated that being an IDP to some extent created an obstacle to the access to employment opportunities.

An important aspect of integration is how IDPs perceive relations with the local population. The attitudes of some displaced persons(almost 1/3 in the ages from 18 to
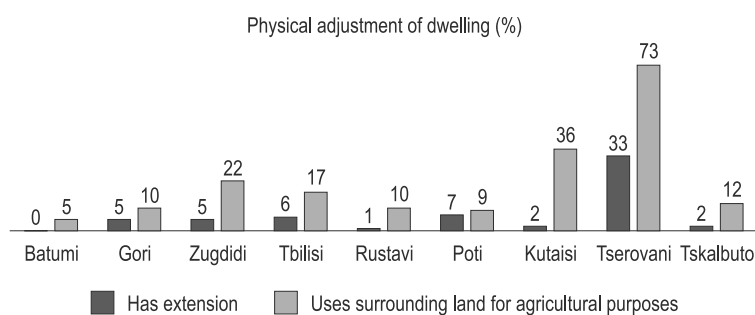

Figure 2. Physical adjustment of dwellings by IDP

Source: [*Coping with Marginality and Exclusion…* 2013] (Figs 2 and 3).

How frequently do you have relations with locals
(non-IDPs) X Age group (Pr = 0.000)

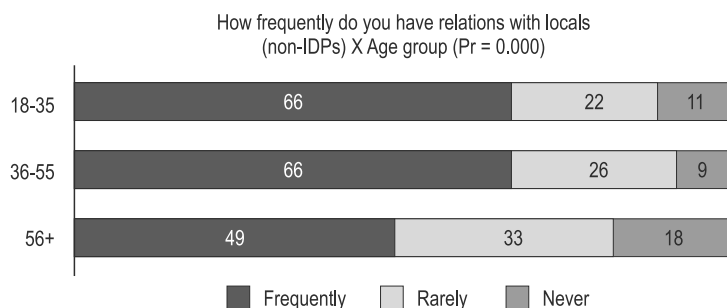| Age group	Frequently	Rarely	Never
18-35	66	22	11
36-55	66	26	9
56+	49	33	18

■ Frequently ☐ Rarely ■ Never

Figure 3. Frequency of relations with local non-IDP population

55, and more than half of 56+) towards non-IDP population reveal insufficient human contacts with the local population, leading to alienation and segregation. Meantime, 60% of the interviewed respondents reported on frequent contacts with locals. However, there is an important difference between age groups – younger people are more likely to have frequent relations rather than their older counterparts.

4. Discussion: the factors of alienation and segregation of IDPs

The fact of over-politization of displacement issues in Georgian reality is undisputed [see *e.g.* Kabachnik *et al.* 2012]. Unfortunately, the state has been using this issue for manipulation of IDP groups, making them to believe that one day, in foreseeable future, they would go back to their homes. As a result of inconsistency of such promises and expectations the problem has been exacerbating on and on and IDP groups have been kept aside from other parts of Georgian society. Apparently the situation with IDPs in Georgia was not as harsh as in some other countries, *e.g.* the neighboring Azerbaijan. However, as some authors argue [Kabachnik *et al.* 2012], the ignorance of existential problems of IDP population, initially derived from the harsh socioeconomic situation in the country, and followed by the politically motivated policies of the post-Revolutionary government[4], resulted in deep societal problems. Different policies elaborated by the government, *e.g.* the "My Home" program[5], mainly aimed to create a false expectations rather than real outcomes. Finally, we have witnessed certain changes in the government's approach, when the newly in-

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[4] The government that came into the power after the 'Rose Revolution' of November 2003 is meant; until the 2008 war with Russia they systematically fueled IDPs by promises of fast return to their home places.

[5] The Presidential Program "My House" was launched based on the Presidential Decree #124 of February 2006..'Measures to Register the Rights to Immovable Property located in the Abkhazian Autonomous Region and Tskhinvali Region'. It aimed at identifying and registering all property claims of Georgian IDPs from the conflict regions using the modern remote sensing technologies.

troduced program of resettlement of collectively accommodated IDPs created an important stratum of displaced population which became owners of their dwellings. As the theory suggests, the last option could contribute to the improved socioeconomic situation of the affected population [Holtzman, Nezam 2004].

In general, we observe that IDP resilience and adaptation strategies are expressed in four main 'dimensions': physical, socio-cultural, economic and political. Two of them – physical and economic – are mostly determined by IDPs themselves, while two others – socio-cultural and political – are largely determined by the State policies.

The study shows that the **form of residence** significantly affects peculiarities of IDP communities' socio-cultural and economic features as well as their spatial behavior. Majority of IDPs has changed their living place at least twice before moving to current locations. About a quarter (more than 200 persons) of the surveyed population report that they have lived in different places prior to moving in to the last destination. The main reasons of moving were: (i) the wish to improve their housing conditions, (ii) the government's advice and involvement in their resettlement or (iii) the intention to move separately from homes of their relatives who offered primary shelter right after fleeing from Abkhazia or South Ossetia. Frequent movement prevents development of social contacts and could be seen as an obstacle for social integration. People have to accustom to the new situations and try to get new employment opportunities.

A question which arises regarding this aspect is how state resettlement projects affected the lives of IDPs. Taking into consideration the factor of employment status, namely very high unemployment rates of both earlier settled and resettled IDPs, we didn't find any significant difference between the two groups; however, resettled IDPs are more likely to have longer history of looking for the job. About 11% of resettled IDPs said that they are looking for a job for the last four months whilst only 4% of non-resettled IDPs were in the same position.

Another issue is how IDPs change building spaces in order to adjust them to their living conditions for making their lives better. As nearly none of collective centers was built for residential purposes, IDPs had to apply 'Do-It-Yourself' practices to redesign buildings, mainly interiors, for making spaces and rooms "livable". Such changes involved shifting rooms, extending living space by using areas and facilities which were meant for absolutely different purposes other than living. Entrances used as living rooms, windows turned into walls, spaces under stairs as utility or storage rooms, *etc.*

Besides significant internal changes to their buildings, a shortage of living space and a desire to improve the living standards pushed IDPs to extend their living areas too. As a result, for a few square meters of extra living space, they have constructed

attached extensions to the buildings, deteriorating safety, healthiness, and aesthetical image of the buildings. However, even after extensive modifications of buildings and living compartments the problem of lack of living space and safety stays unresolved. Noticeably, such an *in situ* modification (qualified as 'improvement' by dwellers) of living spaces is not characteristic only for IDPs; as a residential resilience approach it was widely practiced in Tbilisi and other Georgian cities by the regular local population too, especially in the 1990s and early 2000s [Buzarovski *et al.* 2011].

Due to the lack of living spaces in the majority of collective centers some people started the appropriation of public space or so called 'No man's land/space'[6] around their living area or inside the buildings. IDPs mostly use such land plots for agricultural activities – about 20% of non-resettled IDPs report that they engage in some kind of agricultural activities around their living space[7]. The same practices are undertaken only by 8% of resettled IDPs. The 12 point difference reveals quite dissimilar attitude of the two groups of IDPs towards different residential environments of their habitat – non-adjusted to residential needs in case of 'old' IDPs and better adjusted in case of newly resettled IDPs. This emphasizes an importance of character and quality of physical space for IDPs and its influence on their everyday behavior and practices.

Education is one of the issues that can lead to the improvement of IDP's status and current conditions. However, we argue that up to nowadays it has been a factor that hinders integration of IDP youth into society. Currently 13 secondary schools specialized exclusively for the IDP children (earlier there were more than 50 of them) still exist.

Such specialized schools for IDPs provide jobs for up to 20,000 IDP teachers and related workers that were employed in the education sector in Abkhazia. It also keeps IDP children into their original society and by this 'preserves' their identity.

The applied policies apparently have been designed with good intentions for IDP community[8]. However, it has resulted in increasing level of segregation, and decreasing level of the education. Nevertheless, many parents expressed their satisfaction with keeping their children in IDP dominated environment, despite of clear trends of segregation from the mainstream society. There are different explanations, presented by experts and scholars, of such a situation with secondary education in IDP community that is completely shared by us: "While many IDP youth have no issues in attending local schools, some IDP parents opt to send their kids to IDP schools

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[6] 'No man's land' usually included vacant spaces in between buildings, as well as green areas separating buildings, and collectively owned areas such as courtyards and public spaces between apartment blocks [Salukvadze 2009, p. 174].

[7] This figure indicates agricultural practices of IDPs in urban places, as the residents of the rural Tserovani are excluded from this calculation.

[8] An interview (April 2013) with a former high-ranked authority from the The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia confirmed that the preservation of specialized schools for IDP children was determined by the preference of IDP parents and an intention of securing IDP children from a discomfort of quite frequently expressed unfriendly attitudes from regular local pupils.

for financial (cheaper), practical (closer), and psychological (avoid stigmatization) reasons. Another reason parents prefer IDP schools is that they want their children, many of whom don't remember Abkhazia, to develop love and pride for their homes". [Kabachnik *et al.* 2012, p. 8]. These schools instill and reserve IDP children's pride, belonging, and patriotism to Abkhazia [Scarborough *et al.* 2006].

The problem of **unemployment** is not specific for IDPs. Only 23% of interviewed respondents have paid job. However, the self-assessment of employment status is quite different in the nationwide opinion polls. According to the results of 'Caucasus Barometer' (2012), an annual survey covering the countries of the South Caucasus, shows that 35% of the entire population of Georgia is employed, revealing more than 10% difference with IDPs [*Caucasus Baro*meter 2012].

On the other hand, unemployment twinned with displacement significantly aggravates IDPs' position. As the study suggests, locals have more access to the wages / salaries than the IDPs [Holtzman, Nezam 2004] – the fact that indicates that most IDPs make their lives using either informal economic activities or using remittances or cash donations sent from their family members or relatives residing both inside and outside the country. There is a significant stratum of respondents (about 27 percent) which claim that being an IDP in a particular settlement is some kind of obstacle for getting a job.

Unemployment rate, in general, is especially high in urban areas and so is that of IDP population. However, we can argue that there are several reasons which explain the existing high level of unemployment: a) high number of IDPs residing in Tbilisi and other urban settlements, formerly were employed in agriculture, industry and education sectors, who barely works after they have been displaced; b) private sector, mostly "open air markets", was a main niche that was occupied by IDPs. Nowadays, an extent of this type of markets is largely limited. Moreover, local governments in some cities, *e.*g. in Zugdidi, Tbilisi, *etc.*, close down (often forcibly) street and open air markets, thus leaving vendors, both local population and IDPs, without job and sources for existence.

As for employment structure of IDPs in different sectors of economy, it is clearly seen that they are more employed in the private sector. They rarely get a job in public sector, and this can be viewed as a source of segregation as well. So called structural assimilation has not taken place yet.

Political participation of IDPs in local politics has been limited since the early 1990s. Three institutions: the Government of Abkhazia in Exile, Provisional Administrative Entity of South Ossetia and the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgiahas been responsible for IDP issues. Because of implemented policies for more than ten years IDPs could not participate in local (municipality) elections and could not vote for a majoritarian candidate[9] to the Parliament of Georgia in the district they lived. "The governments in exile" make IDPs "feel different", ones that have "other govern-

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[9] Georgia has mixed electoral system where 75 out of 150 candidates are elected in single-member (majoritarian) districts.

ment", even though their responsibilities were and still are by far symbolic rather than practical and not oriented on resolving problems. Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia cannot solve the problem of IDP's participation in local elections and local political processes, as well as in urban affairs.

Importantly, collectively accommodated IDPs, submitted to 'virtual government in exile' that is always loyal to any ruling party, are seen and used as one of the main sources for getting relatively easy electoral votes in support of an acting ruler in any election (Parliamentary, Presidential and/or local). This fact apparently is considered by governments, when formulating policies for IDP problem resolution. There were some evidences from the Parliamentary and Presidential elections of 2008 that at the polling stations which were established for newly accommodated IDPs the ruling party (the United National Movement at that time) enjoyed a landslide victory. It refers both to the settlements created for the displaced population affected by thewar in 2008, as well as the recipients of the state resettlement policy.

Social contacts play a vital role in displacement. Mostly people try to settle in a place where they know someone. **Social Network** means close contacts developed when there is a concentration of IDPs. Dense network among IDPs can be qualified as a concentration of poverty. It emerges because IDPs try to attract people with similar background around their community, and as IDPs want to feel safe in their living area. It results in the over-representation of people with the same background. The concentration of unemployed people does not motivate IDPs to actively look for a job. The concentration of poverty might lead to specific social and spatial behavior.

The analyses of the research dataset evidence a fact that IDPs are mostly closed and attached to their residential areas even during their free time. About 87% of the respondents indicated that they spend whole or half of their time inside the collective centers. Only quarter reported that they travel to other parts of the settlement every day. The others indicated that these kinds of movements are less frequent in their lives.

However, the research outcomes show that there are important networks created not only inside the IDP communities but outside as well. Especially the young people often engage in the active relations with local population. More than half of the surveyed IDPs report that they have quite frequent relations with local population. Interestingly, the respondents usually abstain from reporting on any problems to their families which were caused by the local non-IDP population. However, we can argue that the history of relations to the local population is a story of improved attitudes. About 30% of the respondents stated that the attitudes of locals towards IDP population improved, that is, in the beginning there were some negative attitudes, which later changed to the positive. Another important measure of emerging networks with the local residents is the cases of inter-marriages. About 56% of the respondents stated that the members of their communities were married to both representatives of IDP and non-IDP population, which indicates the reduced or even non-existing marital preferences.

5. Concluding remarks

To summarize, the existence and residence of large numbers of IDPs in collective centres, twinned with a very high rate of unemployment among them, stimulates the deepening of social disintegration and creates a precondition for segregation. Additionally, one can observe the existing structural differences between local and IDP population's employment status.

The existing policy approaches from the Georgian government in some instances was oriented, with or without purpose, on hindering the integration of IDPs into Georgian society, in order to keep their motivation of returning to the places of previous residence. Meantime, the governments always knew about miserable chances of achieving it, especially after the Russo-Georgian war of 2008.

Apart from the state policies, the coping strategies exercised by IDPs so far usually don't promote integration into local societies. The representatives of IDP population are concentrated and closed into their residential areas due to the remoteness of the collective centers, lack of incentive and motivation in business mobility, alienation from other groups of local societies, *etc.* However, the fact that IDPs of younger age groups report on the increasing number of contacts with the local population and expanding social networks, gives a reason for expecting better integration of IDPs in mainstream societies and avoiding spatial segregation, in the future.

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