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Georgia: Frozen Conflict and the Role of Displaced Persons

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the University of Denver

University of Denver

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Kate E. Zimmerly

March 2009

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ABSTRACT

Though commonly overlooked, communities of displaced persons often play a complex and significant role in the emergence and perpetuation of ethnic conflict. This paper looks at the intersection of these themes in the conflict between the former Soviet Republic of Georgia and the separatist region of Abkhazia. In particular it looks at the nature of protracted or “frozen” conflict with particular attention to the role of the displaced community in the conflict’s entrenchment. Specifically, it seeks to answer the question: why do certain conflicts go unresolved for so long, and what role do refugees play in this resolution resistance? The paper is based on field research conducted in Georgia, including interviews with 45 Georgian internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Abkhazia. The results of the study suggest that various forces and motivations acting on the IDP community have the effect of entrenching it in the ambiguous state of neither returning to Abkhazia nor integrating into Georgian society that has become the status quo, and that this entrenchment plays a role in the factors that contribute to the frozen state of the conflict. In particular, the study suggests that power and identity play an unexpectedly large role in maintaining this population’s status quo.

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Introduction

The double-decker tour bus was heading from the Georgian capital of Tbilisi, skirting the southeast corner of the Black Sea towards some ocean-side resort in Turkey. Passing through the Georgian sea-side city of Batumi, two Georgian men on board were playing cards to pass the time of the multi-day journey. “This is foolish,” one of the men joked to the other. “Why are we going all this way to Turkey – why don’t we just go to Sukhumi?” Other riders sitting around the men laughed, betraying the joke’s context.

Sukhumi is the capital city of Abkhazia, a region on the northeast shores of the Black Sea. The region is internationally recognized as part of the Republic of Georgia, but gained de-facto independence from the emerging state in a bloody war fought just after the fall of the Soviet Union. Although the war was halted by a ceasefire in 1994, the conflict between Abkhazia and Georgia remains unresolved today, leaving the people of both nations in a state of legal limbo and uncertain status.

From that ceasefire in 1994 until recently the world saw comparatively little violence coming from the region, as the urgency of negotiations and the conflict cooled and came to an apparent stand-still. However, in August of 2008, the headlines of international media outlets were saturated with news from Georgia. It what has come to be called by some as “The August War” Russian and Georgian forces clashed in a brief but highly destructive war. The conflict was sparked over the other of Georgia’s separatist regions, South Ossetia, which although distinct shares much in common with Abkhazia in terms of history and relations with Georgia. However, the fighting that began in and around this region quickly spread to Western Georgia as an additional front opened along the Georgian-Abkhazian border. Russian forces, acting on behalf of

the separatist regions, whose claim for independence they support, advanced into Georgian territory, attacking its military and state infrastructure for roughly one week before withdrawing amid increasing pressure and criticism from the international community.

The outcomes of this recent round of fighting are not yet clear at the time that this document is being written, nor is it clear that the recent round of fighting is entirely over, as occasional skirmishes, kidnappings, and casualties from paramilitary activity continue to occur. As far as is known to the public, settlement negotiations regarding the substantive issues of sovereignty and status have yet to take place, and it is uncertain as to what the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia will be when or if they are completed. However, despite the uncertainty that currently surrounds these conflicts, one thing that is clear is the importance of these conflicts' history as a source of understanding the recent round of violence in them. The initial periods of violence that began these conflicts, the ceasefires that in theory ended them, and the time that has passed since then with no resolution and no movement towards either peace or renewed war is all the more relevant due to recent events. The ceasefires that were signed in the early 1990's and their failure to initiate a fruitful peace process ought to be the subject of serious thought and study for the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and any other entity that seeks to serve as a third party in the settlement of these conflicts.

Understanding why these cease-fires did not lead to a meaningful resolution of the conflict, and understanding the so-called frozen period that followed, and the dynamics that held it in this stagnant state are crucial to constructing a successful and implementable peace agreement at the conclusion of the current round of fighting.

Conflicts such as the one between Georgia and Abkhazia are representative of the kind of conflict that has proliferated since the fall of the Soviet Union. Perhaps there were some for whom this fall marked the emergence of a new, more peaceful world order. Nearly two decades

later, the major military powers of the world are no longer at war, but the presence of violent conflict has not abated. Rather, armed conflicts within states and between smaller states have emerged throughout the world. There are many names given to the armed conflicts that persist today: international, intrastate, inter-communal, ethnic conflict, ethno-national conflict, border wars, separatist wars, and so on. While these conflicts take place under vastly different conditions and for various reasons, many of them are similar in that they are resistant to conventional conflict resolution methods. A number of these resolution-resistant, or intractable, conflicts erupted in the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s. In several of the newly formed states such as Georgia, Moldova, and Azerbaijan full-scale armed conflict erupted shortly after independence. Yet while these regions have not until recently experienced such high levels of violence as those in the early-1990s, all of these conflicts have yet to see the implementation of a successful peace agreement. These have commonly been referred to as “frozen” conflicts, mostly due to this lack of progress or action. This type of conflict, and the painful stagnation that it tends to display, is the primary concern of this paper.

The conflicts referred to as frozen appear to have a different dynamic than the wider set of conflicts that are thought of as intractable. While both are characterized by continuation over a long period of time and a general resistance to resolution, intractable conflict often has a cyclical dynamic: phases of relative violence followed by quieter periods, followed in turn by resurgent violence. The conflicts in Israel-Palestine and in Sri Lanka are examples of intractable conflict; something as simple as international news coverage demonstrates the cyclical pattern whereby these conflicts will occasionally flare-up, dominating headlines around the world, only to remain relatively quiet for a period of time. By contrast, frozen conflict tends to behave a bit differently. Rather than going through cycles of violence and relative calm, frozen conflict goes through an initial wave of intense violence which is then stopped by a ceasefire (often internationally enforced). This begins a long period of stagnation where violence remains low but parties see no

resolution to the issues of dispute and little movement in the peace process. Think, for example, of the conflict in Cyprus or the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh involving Armenia and Azerbaijan. When these conflicts each reached their respective breaking points, they commanded a great deal of international attention. However, since these conflicts descended from the height of intensity in the mid 1970's and early 1990's respectively, the international community has heard relatively little from them, although neither has been resolved.

During this period of no war- no peace, parties may seem to return to normalcy, entering a post conflict phase before the conflict has actually ended. Sizable populations of displaced persons and internally displaced persons (IDPs) serve as reminder that the conflict is not over until it is resolved. As frozen conflict goes unsettled and stagnates, those displaced by the initial conflict remain unable to return despite low levels of violence. The Greek Cypriots that were displaced in 1974 and have yet to return to their former homes in North Cyprus are an example of such a population.

The conflict between the Republic of Georgia and Abkhazia, its breakaway region, is an example of frozen conflict. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Abkhazian and Georgian forces engaged in a brief, intense war over the sovereignty of the region. Intervention by the international community resulted in a ceasefire in 1994, which has more or less held until the recent round of fighting between Georgia and Russia. Efforts by government officials to negotiate a settlement have been unsuccessful, and despite the relative absence of subsequent violence between the groups, the conflict remains unresolved. Between 200,000 and 300,000 ethnic Georgians were displaced from Abkhazia during the war of the early 1990's, a population of uncertain status central to the frozen nature of the conflict. IDP policies, interests, and actions have a significant impact on this population, the conflict, and on the peacebuilding groups that attempt to work with them. Furthermore, IDP policy and IDP communities are key factors in

conflict settlement and must be taken into account by third parties involved in the negotiations of these settlements.

What accounts for the longevity of frozen conflict? Why do frozen conflicts go unresolved for so long, and why do they not simply fade away? This paper will turn to the existing literature in several related fields, and the case of Georgia and Abkhazia in particular in an attempt to answer these questions. The pursuit of these questions will include the study of displaced populations, their role in such conflicts, their view of return, and an understanding of the obstacles that stand in the way of return, both real and perceived.

Focusing on the relationship between frozen conflict and displacement the study suggests that there are two plausible alternative rival hypotheses that explain the role of displaced persons in frozen conflict, examining conflict in the IDP community on two levels. The first hypothesis looks at the conflict that occurs on the refugee-government level, and uses the framework of William Zartman's ripeness concept (1989) and Pruitt's modified readiness model (1997, 2007)¹ to explain the continuance of the conflict. In this hypothesis, frozen conflict exists at a sort of equilibrium - below ripeness and readiness in intensity and motivation and above peace (or non-conflict). According to this hypothesis, opposing forces in the conflict are what keep the conflict in this sort of equilibrium or limbo. Forces such as peacekeepers, international aid programs, and state building projects in the separatist regions push the intensity level down, keeping it below the level of what we might call ripeness. Meanwhile the presence of an IDP population that maintains a desire to return pushes the intensity up, keeping the conflict at a level that demands formal resolution and prevents the conflict from fading away. This also offers a conceptualization of frozen conflict that accommodates the criticisms of post-soviet scholars such as Dov Lynch and Charles King, who argue that the term "frozen" is misleading as it betrays what in reality is a

¹ Both ripeness and readiness theories attempt to describe the element of timing in conflict resolution. Generally speaking these concepts explain that a conflict is ripe for resolution when the cost of continued conflict is perceived to be greater than the cost of settlement.

dynamic conflict situation where both parties have changed and grown over time (Lynch, 2001, 2004; King 2001). If frozen conflict is conceived of as being in a state of equilibrium, held in what appears to be a standstill by opposite and opposing forces, this allows for a great deal of movement on both sides without significant movement in the conflict and peace process.

The second hypothesis looks at conflict on the internal level of IDPs, focusing on the opposing forces within this population to explain the frozen nature of the conflict. This hypothesis is informed by Kurt Lewin's classic force-field analysis framework (1958), and posits that although the IDP population claims the desire to return as an official position, there are opposing and contradicting forces within IDPs: forces for return and recompense as well as forces against return and for stagnation. The conflict of these forces within IDPs, acted out in IDP communities, therefore prevents the return of the displaced population while also preventing their integration into the host community.

To explore these alternative hypotheses, this research looks at the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict and examines the population of IDPs displaced during it. The displaced population in Georgia is a major factor in this conflict, and that which this population can tell us about the issue of return can in turn tell us about the obstacles or resistance to settlement of the conflict. This case study will seek to address questions regarding IDP status, IDP views about return, perceived obstacles to return, and whether grassroots peacebuilding has the ability to overcome these obstacles.

This study specifically analyzes the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, and more generally discusses the group of ongoing conflicts that are considered frozen. It does so through a rather endogenous lens and looks mostly to the internal dynamics of these conflicts for greater understanding of their causes and entrenchment. However, there are a number of ways in which these conflicts, and in particular the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, can be interpreted and a number of outside factors that could be said to have a significant role. First, many have pointed to

precedents set since the eruption of these conflicts by both Chechnya and Kosovo. Early analysis of these conflicts looked to the outcome of the Chechen war as a precedent for the outcome of similar efforts by Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno Karabakh, and Transnistria for independence. The precedent set by Chechnya was that of a separatist conflict without tremendous international involvement ending with the re-absorption of the separatist entity into the state from which it seceded by force (Lynch, 2004). Naturally, in the case of Chechnya Russia had that which other former Soviet states do not have: the military capability to repatriate the separatist states by force. Yet the frozen state that has followed ceasefire in these conflicts has been interpreted simply as the central states like Georgia waiting to build their military to sufficient strength.

Kosovo has played an equally precedent setting role in the interpretations of these conflicts. In particular, the separatist states involved in these conflicts have pointed to the legal interpretations and reasoning of western states for supporting Kosovo's Independence, and hold this reasoning as the legal and political precedent for their own independence. Furthermore, the Russian government has pointed to the wide recognition of Kosovo's independence as a precedent for their official recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states.

Further still, there are interpretations of the "Great Powers" persuasion that paint these conflicts as proxy wars in which hostilities between Russia and Soviet successor states, especially Georgia, are played out. This interpretation has been seen throughout media coverage of the most recent round of fighting in the separatist areas of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. One can also find this interpretation taken a step further, especially in current media analysis, suggesting that the hostilities between successor states and Russia as played out in these separatist conflicts, are in turn a proxy stage for Russia and the Western powers that have supported the newly independent successor states to confront each other. These and other interpretations of these conflicts and their respective stalemates all offer both insight and scope to the understanding of these conflicts and

their causes. While these insights all merit consideration, this analysis will attempt to focus endogenous on the causes, factors, and players that drive the dynamics at work in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict on the micro level.

The proceeding paper contains five sections. The first will offer a review of existing literature relevant to the question of what exactly frozen conflict is, and why it tends to display such stagnation. The second will provide a background into the case that this study will focus on, the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict. The third section will provide an account of the methodology used in this study, while the final chapters will offer the results of this study and discussion and analysis of these results.

The theoretical literature presented will attempt to unpack the concept of frozen conflict by looking at the issues surrounding and related to it. Thus, the paper will consider the literature in several areas including: the dynamics of protracted/intractable conflict, conflict settlement and power sharing, and the timing of peace processes. The literature review will also look at the largely sociological and social-psychological theory examining refugee return, theories of social forces, and the literature that looks on frozen conflict as a phenomenon of the former Soviet sphere. By exploring the theories offered in these fields, the study arrives at two hypotheses highlighting possible factors accounting for the longevity of frozen conflict, which will be explored in this study.

I explored these questions in the summer of 2007 on a two-month site visit to the Republic of Georgia, collecting data from individuals and organizations including IDPs, service providers and government officials in various regions of the country. Sources for data were primarily material collected from NGOs (such as pamphlets, reports, mission statements) as well as the data collected from interviews with NGO's and with IDPs. Analysis of the data will identify sentiments, fears, and experiences that are common in the IDP community while also attempting to recognize certain themes that emerge inductively from in the IDP responses. Some

of these themes connect to those which past literature suggest are significant, such as themes of return and security. Analysis of the data should suggest that one of the hypotheses presented is accurate or that neither is correct. It should also be noted that as this study was conducted in 2007, the research and data collection was completed well before the recent eruption of violence involving Georgia, the separatist regions, and Russia. While this may affect the significance and context of this study, it does not affect the findings or accuracy of this study, as the research presented herein was focused not on the specific outcomes of this conflict, but on the socio-political phenomenon of conflict “freezing” of which the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict has been an example.

The discussion and analysis of these factors may shed a bit of light on the stagnant nature of frozen conflict and may even highlight some causes of this stagnation. Furthermore, by looking at the role of grassroots peacebuilding in frozen conflict, particularly in respect to their work with displaced populations, this project’s conclusions may carry implications about the capacity of multi-track peacebuilding to make a significant contribution in such situations and may even raise questions about the appropriateness of such interventions in certain conflict scenarios.

Literature Review

What accounts for the longevity of frozen conflict, and what role do displaced populations play in this? In the attempt to find an answer to these questions in existing literature, this review will cover prominent theories in several areas. These include the literature on intractable and protracted conflict, power sharing, and peace agreements. However, before such topics can be explored it is necessary to first develop a definition and understanding of what is meant by the term frozen conflict. The term is often used to describe conflicts whose peace process seemingly ends with the imposition of a ceasefire agreement, leaving the initial conflict unresolved for years or decades. Yet despite the not uncommon use of this term, there has been little development of a working definition or consensus on what it connotes of the conflicts it is used to describe.

It could be said that two central characteristics of frozen conflict are longevity and lack of progress in negotiations or peace processes, two characteristics that are also central to the related designation of intractable conflicts. Both frozen and intractable conflict possesses a certain resistance to resolution, and it may even make sense to describe frozen conflict as a particular phenomenon within the world of intractability. As such, the literature on intractability will be helpful in defining frozen conflict.

Defining Frozen Conflict

In the most basic sense, we know that protracted conflict is marked by its longevity; yet a deeper understanding is necessary to describe the nature of frozen conflict as a type of intractable or protracted conflict. Protracted social conflict (PSC) is defined by Edward Azar (as cited in

Fisher, 1997, p. 79) as “hostile interactions which extend over long periods of time with sporadic outbreaks of open warfare fluctuating in frequency and intensity.” In developing his theory on protracted social conflict, Azar noted the connection of protracted social conflict to such factors as identity, human needs, and underdevelopment. Contrary to realist approaches, Azar argues that PSCs in the post-WWII era are carried out primarily by identity based groups rather than by state actors. He notes that most conflicts in this era are based on “developmental needs expressed in terms of cultural values, human rights and security; as such, they are not easily suppressed, and continue to be pursued in the long term by all means available” (Azar, 1990). These concepts are heavily influenced by John Burton’s needs theory and Johan Galtung’s structural approaches to violence.

Galtung’s early work on peace and violence expanded on the common use and understanding of violence to incorporate forms of deprivation and denial. Under this expanded view, social injustice, particularly when institutionalized, is interpreted as structural violence which can be understood as systematic inequality in power and access to resources (Galtung, 1969). Theories of structural violence are interested in the linkages between political, economic and social structures, institutionalized inequality, and overt violence and conflict (Azar, 1990; 2002), and provide a theoretical foundation for the connection between conflict and development.

Burton’s theory of human needs (1997) draws on Galtung’s theory of structural violence. Needs theory, Burton explains, emerged as a way of describing the deprivations and problems created by structural violence (1997). Needs theory distinguishes between “negotiable interests and non-negotiable needs,” indicating also that while the former can be bargained or bartered for, the later may require “altered perceptions by the parties concerned, and in some cases agreed structural change” (Burton, 1997, p.35). Such non-negotiable needs include those for recognition and identity. Burton posits that social conflict and violence are rooted in the desire or attempt to secure these non-negotiable needs for one’s self and one’s identity group.

Azar conceptualized protracted social conflict as being rooted in such phenomena and therefore claimed that traditional means of resolving conflict are insufficient in these contexts: “Outcomes (military victories, negotiated agreements, etc.) insofar as they do not satisfy basic needs, contain latent conflicts which cause further cycles of manifest violence, often involving a shift or spill-over in issues and actors” (Azar, 1990). Azar’s theory of protracted social conflict also identifies main characteristics of these conflicts, which may be helpful in conceptualizing where frozen conflict stands in theoretical relation to protracted social conflict. The main characteristics are:

- Protracted hostility and insecurity characterized by periods of armed violence and crisis with no clear cycle of genesis, maturity, reduction and termination
- Fluctuation in the intensity and frequency of interactions, oscillating between overt and covert patterns of conflict, while hostile attitudes continue
- Absence of a distinct termination point, where war has become the status quo and the threat of peace may mean crisis
- Conflict spillover in terms of both actors and issues, so that the conflict is no longer intrastate or one-dimensional but regional and multi-causal, with blurring of internal and external boundaries of the conflict (Azar E. , 2002 p.16)

With these characteristics in mind, perhaps we can begin to outline a conceptualization of frozen conflict. Building on these characteristics of PSC, frozen conflict might be characterized as protracted hostility and insecurity characterized by a single period or series of periods of armed violence, ending in a ceasefire enforced by a third party. The second characteristic also helps to define frozen conflict if we understand “overt and covert patterns of conflict” more as non-traditional conflict patterns such as forced economic or political isolation or operating through non-state militias rather than overt armed military aggression. Furthermore, frozen conflict typically demonstrates a distinct termination of armed conflict, in this way we might understand the third point as absence of a distinct termination of hostilities, where the effects of these hostilities (such as displacement) become the status quo. Finally, frozen conflict can be thought of

as demonstrating the conflict spillover that Azar describes in the final point. The two groups of characteristics are compared in the table below.

Characteristics of Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) (Azar, 2002)	Proposed Characteristics of Frozen Conflict
Periods of armed violence and crisis with no clear cycle of genesis, maturity, reduction and termination	Single period or series of periods of armed violence, ending in a ceasefire enforced by a third party
Fluctuation in the intensity and frequency of interactions, oscillating between overt and covert conflict patterns.	Presence of non-traditional conflict patterns such as forced economic or political isolation or operating through non-state militias rather than overt armed military aggression.
Absence of a distinct termination point, war becomes the status quo	Distinct termination of armed conflict without the distinct termination of hostilities - where the effects of these hostilities (such as displacement or sanctions) become the status quo.
Conflict spillover - the conflict is no longer intrastate or one-dimensional but regional and multi-causal, blurring of internal and external boundaries of the conflict	Conflict spillover - the conflict is no longer intrastate or one-dimensional but regional and multi-causal, blurring of internal and external boundaries of the conflict

Table 1: Characteristics of PSC versus Frozen Conflict

The conceptualization of intractability offered by Heidi Burgess and Guy Burgess can also shed light on the issue of frozen conflict. Burgess and Burgess cite a concept from John Burton in defining intractability through the distinction between the long-term, underlying (usually intractable) conflict and the innumerable dispute episodes that occur within the context of the larger conflict (Burgess & Burgess, 2006). In this sense we might understand frozen conflict as this type of long term, underlying and intractable conflict, but where these dispute episodes are either so infrequent or low-level, or are played out in less obvious forms such as militia activity or structural violence that they do not register as what is commonly considered conflict.

Furthermore, Jacob Bercovitch (2003) outlines the defining characteristics of intractable conflict:

1. In terms of actors, intractable conflicts involve states or other actors with a long sense of historical grievance, and a strong desire to redress or avenge these.
2. In terms of duration, intractable conflicts take place over a long period of time.
3. In terms of issues, intractable conflicts involve intangible issues such as identity, sovereignty, or values and beliefs.
4. In terms of relationships, intractable conflicts involve polarized perceptions of hostility and enmity, and behavior that is violent and destructive.
5. In terms of geopolitics, intractable conflicts usually take place where buffer states exist between major power blocks or civilizations.
6. In terms of management, intractable conflicts resist many conflict management efforts and have a history of failed peacemaking efforts (Bercovitch, 2003).

All of these characteristics can be seen in ongoing frozen conflicts such as those in Georgia-Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh or Cyprus. Although the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict will be discussed at length in the next chapter, a brief discussion here will expand upon how this conflict reflects Bercovitch's characteristics listed above. The first characteristic, a long sense of historical grievance between actors, is ever-present between Georgians and Abkhazians. There has been disagreement over the status of Abkhazia in relation to Georgian since before both areas were incorporated into the Russian Empire, and the decline over time, in terms of strength and numbers, of Abkhazian nationality is a grievance that most Abkhazians blame the Georgians for. In terms of duration, the present conflict has lasted since 1992, although it could be argued that it began before the Soviet era. The issues at stake are those of national identity and sovereignty, which on both sides have been battered by seventy years of Soviet rule. In terms of relations, both Abkhazians and Georgians view the actions of the other actor as direct assaults on their national identity and sovereignty. While the parties' actions have not been overly physically destructive since the early 1990's both exhibit behavior that is destructive to their relationship with each other and to their chances for resolution. The Georgian government has repeatedly embraced rhetoric that calls for reunification and restoration of Georgia's territorial integrity, highly aggressive language from the Abkhazian point of view. Meanwhile, as Abkhazian leadership moves increasingly closer to Russia (for example, carrying Russian passports), they also foster Georgian fears of renewed Russian domination. In terms of geopolitical placement the Abkhazian conflict

can be thought of not only as a buffer between Georgian and Russia, but between Russia and Europe or “the West.” Finally, in terms of conflict management efforts, the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict has resisted multiple negotiation efforts, numerous grassroots peacebuilding projects, and attempts by third parties to intervene (Lynch, 2001).

In the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, historical grievances can be traced back to the emergences of Armenian and Azerbaijani nationalism in the late nineteenth century, as the Nagorno-Karabakh region plays a significant role in the mythology of both nations. In duration, the current conflict erupted in the late 1980’s and despite the signing of a well-observed ceasefire in 1994, the conflict still exists as this paper is written. Like the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, the issues at stake in Nagorno-Karabakh are those of national identity and sovereignty, which are both intangible and non-negotiable (Lynch, 2004). Polarized perceptions of hostility are present, as both groups view the other as an oppressor and part of a hostile coalition. For Armenians, Azerbaijan is seen as the close ally and ethnic cousin of its western neighbor, Turkey, leaving them mostly surrounded by hostile neighbors, and the majority of their border closed. Meanwhile the significant support that separatists in Nagorno-Karabakh have received from the Armenian Diaspora is likely viewed by Azerbaijanis as western support of Armenian aggression. Furthermore, highly destructive and violent behavior was seen between 1988 and 1994 (Lynch, 2004).

Geopolitically, Nagorno-Karabakh may be seen as a buffer state between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but it is difficult to see these as major power blocks. However, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh could be seen as part of a buffer-region (the Caucasus) which makes up something of a border region between Christian Europe and the Islamic Near-East. In terms of Bercovitch’s final characteristic, the conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh has been resistant to resolution and has a history of failed peacemaking efforts, including parallel talks between the

OSCE and both Azerbaijan and Armenia as well as bilateral talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan hosted in France and later in the U.S. (Lynch, 2004).

Like the conflicts in Georgia-Abkhazia and in Nagorno-Karabakh, the frozen conflict in Cyprus also reflects the characteristics of intractable conflict as described by Bercovitch (2003). The conflict involves Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. Although these two specific groups share a history of mostly harmonious coexistence, their parent nations, Greece and Turkey, have a long history of hostile and grievous relations that begin as early as the Ottoman conquest of the Byzantine Empire and Constantinople. The current conflict is most commonly traced to the eruption of fighting that took place in 1974, however the current hostilities can be traced back to guerilla warfare that began in 1955 with Greek-Cypriot agitation for unity with Greece (Fisher, 2001). Like the conflicts discussed above, the issues at stake in the Cyprus conflict involve intangible issues such as national identity. Like the other conflicts, the Cyprus conflict has also involved polarized perceptions of the other and destructive behavior, including violent clashes that have resulted in mass human displacement as well as sanctions and embargos that have been economically damaging to the parties (Fisher, 2001). Geopolitically, the island of Cyprus sits at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, and has historically been a buffer between major civilizations and empires. Today it sits, not unlike the Caucasus region, at the border where Europe meets the Middle East. Finally, in regard to the characteristic of resistance to peacebuilding efforts, the conflict in Cyprus has eluded resolution despite efforts by the UN to resolve the conflict, numerous negotiations between the parties, and countless unofficial peacebuilding projects (Fisher, 2001).

Based on the proximity of these conflicts that are commonly referred to as frozen conflict to the characteristics given by Bercovitch (2003) and the existing conceptualizations of intractability, such as those offered by Burgess and Burgess and Azar, it would seem that it would

be useful in developing a working definition of frozen conflict to consider it as a certain type of intractable or protracted conflict.

As mentioned earlier, the term frozen conflict typically accompanies a certain group of conflicts, namely those in the former Soviet Union. The literature that describes and analyzes the Soviet Successor Wars (King, 2001), can generally be sorted into two groups. The first group tends to analyze these conflicts singularly. They are concerned with what might be called post-Soviet order: state transition, democratization and development in the young successor states. In this literature, conflicts are analyzed as factors within the wider process of transition and democratization. Treatment of the Soviet Successor Wars in this group typically identifies roots of conflict in the legacy of Soviet rule, and as such tend to focus on the question of why these conflicts began as opposed to examining the question that this thesis is most concerned with: why they have failed to settle. This group includes the work of those such as Ghia Nodia and Bruno Coppieters which will be discussed later in the case study.

The second group of literature on the Soviet Successor Wars tends to analyze these conflicts jointly and comparatively, asserting that each of these conflicts, while distinct, is part of a certain breed of conflict that has developed in fallout of the Soviet Union. As such, authors in this latter group, such as Dov Lynch and Charles King, offer valuable insight into the questions under consideration in this review: how do we define frozen conflict and why does it go unresolved for so long?

While these works do not specifically offer a definition of frozen conflict, they do offer a number of characteristics of the term and common qualities of the conflicts it describes. Two works in particular were early to examine the separatist conflicts of the former Soviet Union comparatively, one by Edward Walker in 1998 the other by Charles King in 2001. Walker (1998) cites five conflicts of contested sovereignty in the former Soviet Union: Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, and Chechnya (Walker, 1998, 2000). While the term

“frozen conflict” is not specifically used, he does list several similarities between the conflicts listed above, which are useful in grasping the characteristics that describe frozen conflict. “In all five cases” he notes “cease-fires have ended most of the violence, but settlements on legal status remain elusive” (Walker, 2000 p.152). The lack of settlement specifically on the legal status of parties is a useful articulation of what remains unsettled in these conflicts despite a successful ceasefire. Walker also notes that in all five of the noted conflicts “secessionists have triumphed on the battlefield... [but] have failed to win international recognition” (2000 p.152). This raises an interesting point – that in all of these cases the victor in initial military engagement is a party that the international community is unwilling to recognize. It is uncertain whether this is a defining characteristic of frozen conflict, but is certainly a distinction worth keeping in mind.

In another early comparative work on the successor wars, King (2001) examines the state building projects of separatist states, and seeks to clarify their longevity by looking at those groups benefiting from the status quo. King is concerned with how the “chaos of war become[s] transformed into networks of profit” (King, 2001 p.524), which will certainly be reconsidered when this review identifies possible causes for the longevity of frozen conflict. However, in terms of defining frozen conflict, King provides several small pieces that contribute to that definition. King focuses on what he calls the Wars of Soviet Succession: Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Chechnya, and Tajikistan. He notes of these conflicts that “each involved a range of players, including the central governments of newly sovereign states, territorial separatists, the armed forces of other countries, and international peacemakers” (King, 2001 p.525). There are noteworthy distinctions made here. He notes that the actors in this group of conflicts are the newly formed central governments and territorial separatists. It may be worth considering whether separatism is a central element of frozen conflict. Certainly the element of separatism contributes to the trend noted by Walker (2000) whereby these conflicts have two winners: one on the battlefield, the other in the proverbial court of international opinion. It is

uncertain whether this is a defining factor of frozen conflict, but it may be that frozen conflict by definition has the tendency of forming out of separatist conflicts where separatists triumph on the battlefield but lose the struggle for international recognition. He also echoes Walker in noting that in all of these conflicts, with the exception of Chechnya, despite little progress on peace talks “none of the post-Soviet disputes returned to the previous levels of organized violence” (King, p. 525). Furthermore, King notes that the conflicts he discusses have “evolved from armed engagements to something close to equilibrium” (p. 525). This description of “close to equilibrium” echoes the idea of conflict becoming the status quo (Azar, 2002), and reflects a certain degree of stability in the conflict.

Dov Lynch (2004) offers a full comparative study of the post-Soviet separatist states and the conflicts that defined them. Building on the work of Walker and King, Lynch provides a thorough analysis of the status quo in each conflict (Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Transnistria) and identifies factors in both the separatist and metropolitan states driving the status quo (Lynch, 2004). In his discussion of these conflicts as “frozen” he takes issue with the use of this term, claiming it overlooks certain dynamic features of both parties. This discussion is useful for the task of defining frozen conflict, as the reasoning behind this misnomer is helpful in defining it. Lynch explains in a later article that these conflicts “appear frozen, in that little progress has been achieved in negotiations and the conflicts remain fixed on cease-fire lines established in the first half of the 1990s” (Lynch, 2005 p.192). But they are not frozen, Lynch argues that “on the contrary, events have developed dynamically, and the situation on the ground today is very different from the context that gave rise to these conflicts” (Lynch, 2005 p.192). It is useful to distinguish, as Lynch does, between the frozen or immobile peace process and the conflicts themselves which are dynamic and have changed significantly since the signing of ceasefires in the early 1990’s. Lynch views these conflicts as being stuck in their status quo, and suggests that they are held there by a variety of factors. It may be useful to think of frozen

conflict and its stagnation or status quo as an equilibrium, appearing to be static, but actually held in place by a myriad of dynamic forces. This possible conceptualization will be expanded on when discussing the theories of Lewin (1958, 1969) and Coleman (2000, 2006), but it is worth noting here the connection between the concept of equilibrium and Lynch's objection that the term "frozen" denies the true dynamic nature of these conflicts.

Like Walker and King, Lynch also noted the uncertain status of the parties, describing them as existing in "legal limbo" (Lynch, 2004 p. 7). Furthermore, Lynch explains that "frozen" is an inappropriate descriptor, as while the ceasefire lines and peace process have been all but immobile, this does not mean that the individual parties are stagnant. Lynch's conceptualization of "frozen" conflict in the former Soviet Union turns ripeness theory on its head, so to speak. In these conflicts parties reach a mutually hurting stalemate, however they do not seek to attenuate the pain through negotiation or settlement, as ripeness theory would assume. Instead, parties in these conflicts develop their own internal mechanisms and external sources of support to offset the pain of stalemate (Lynch, 2004). In this way we may conceptualize frozen conflict as one where parties reach a mutually hurting stalemate, but for one reason or another do not move away from this stalemate towards resolution.

Thus, synthesizing what the literature on intractability and Soviet successor wars tell us about the meaning of frozen conflict, we might describe frozen conflict in the following way. Frozen conflict is a particular phenomenon of intractability where the conflict experiences a long period of what seems to be stagnation or non movement. This period occurs after most of the violence in the conflict is ended by ceasefire, but leaves the conflict unresolved and parties in a state of destructive and painful ambiguity – particularly in regard to parties' legal relationship with each other and with the outside world, which becomes the status quo for those involved.

The Longevity of Frozen Conflict

With an understanding of what is meant by frozen conflict, this review may continue with the main task of exploring what explanations existing literature may hold for the longevity of frozen conflict. As with the task of defining this type of conflict, the literature exploring intractability and factors behind its resistance to resolution is an opportune starting point.

Intractability. Intractability is rooted in a number of factors and circumstances. In Edward Azar's writing on protracted social conflict (PSC), he makes the helpful distinction of factors that contribute to the genesis of the conflict and factors of the process dynamics, which contribute to the entrenchment (or intractability) of the conflict (Azar, 1990). Azar describes four clusters of variables that are preconditions for protracted social conflict. Multicommunal societies, particularly when the communities are politically mobilized, are likely to experience PSC. Deprivation of human needs for physical security and for access to political institutions are another main generator of protracted social conflict, particularly when such deprivations are institutionalized by the state or ruling party, referred to as distributive injustice (Azar, 1985) or what Galtung calls structural violence.

Azar also describes certain factors that contribute to the entrenchment of such conflicts. First, he notes that protracted conflicts tend to go from one-issue-conflicts, provoked by a triggering event, to complex multi-issue-conflicts that are far more difficult to negotiate. As a power imbalance is likely to exist between parties, the weaker group tends to seek external assistance, turning the conflict into a multi-party, regional conflict which amplifies its scope and makes the conflict more protracted (Azar, 1985). Furthermore, protracted conflicts tend to generate certain conditions, which at the same time further reinforce the conflict. These include the deterioration of physical security for all parties, the degeneration of political and state

institutions, domination of war culture and fearful vigilance, and increased dependency or cliency on external parties (Azar, 1985).

The *Beyond Intractability* database assembled by Heidi and Guy Burgess also offers a number of treatments, both brief and in-depth, on causes and characteristics of intractability. A treatment offered by Michelle Maise cites a conflict's intractability as being grounded in high stakes, non-negotiable issues such as morals, identity, the pursuit of justice, or basic human needs. "Because conflicts grounded in these issues involve the basic molds for thought and action within given communities and culture, they are usually not resolvable by negotiation or compromise. This is because the problem in question is one that cannot be resolved in a win-win way. If one value system is followed, another is threatened" (Maiese, 2003). In another essay by Heidi and Guy Burgess, intractability is said to stem from irreconcilable moral differences, high-stakes distributional issues, and identity conflicts over social status and privilege. When all three of these factors are involved the conflict tends to be particularly resistant to resolution (Burgess & Burgess, 2003).

Most interestingly, in an essay for the *Beyond Intractability* database, Heidi Burgess notes that it is the benefits of conflicts that cause them to be intractable, noting: "if disputants did not believe staying in the conflict was better than resolving it (considering both emotional and material factors), they would be more likely to resolve it" (Burgess, 2004). Profiteers, among both the parties and external onlookers, have vested interests in the continuation of hostilities and are often in positions to contribute to further hostilities.

In summary, intractability literature suggests that much like more common intractable conflicts, the longevity of frozen conflicts stems from a perfect storm of factors. First the conflict is rooted in high stakes issues like basic human needs, in non-negotiable issues like identity, and irreconcilable morally rooted differences. In other words, the causes of intractable conflict create a zero-sum situation. Furthermore, these conflicts grow and stem from one-issue, bi-party

conflicts into multi-issue, multi-party conflicts which makes their resolution far more complex and difficult (Azar, 1985). Intractability also notes the development of conditions that reinforce the conflict. These include increased dependency on external parties (Azar, 1985) as well as the development of profiteering parties and networks that become invested in the conflict remaining unresolved (Burgess, 2004). These various factors identified by scholars in the field of intractability or protracted conflict shed light on factors in frozen conflict that hinder progress towards resolution, but still leave unanswered the question of why parties in frozen conflict find themselves stuck between stages of the peace process.

Conflict settlement, power-sharing and ripeness. Another approach to explaining the longevity of frozen conflict is to ask why they do not settle. The vast literature on conflict settlement and resolution lays out numerous factors that affect parties' willingness to negotiate and the viability of the agreements they reach. We might sort these various factors, as William Zartman (2000) does, into two or three schools on the subject. Probably the oldest school on resolution and settlement looks at the substance of the negotiations and the provisions and structures provided in the agreements to explain their success or failure. This school includes the literature on power-sharing, consociational structures, and pluralistic institutions. The second school on resolution looks at the timing, rather than the substance, of negotiations to explain their success or failure. This is the school to which William Zartman, Dean Pruitt, and others that work on ripeness and readiness theory belong. The third school of thought on conflict resolution includes those such as John Paul Lederach and Herbert Kelman, and focuses on the relationship between disputants as a key factor in settlement success. In reality, it is most common that all three sets of factors will be present in any negotiation or settlement situation. However, each school offers a set of theories and frameworks that are undoubtedly useful in explaining the protracted nature of some conflicts.

In looking at the substantive components of conflict settlement, the literature varies from those looking strictly at ceasefire to material interested in the implementation of an agreement. Virginia Page Fortna (2004) examines interstate ceasefire agreements, identifying certain factors that correlate with ceasefires that are able to prevent renewed fighting. Factors such as ending war in a draw rather than decisive victory, a history of conflict between the belligerents, perceived threat, and shared borders have a significant negative impact on ceasefire success. Long and costly wars, however, are claimed to be more conducive to lasting ceasefire. Meanwhile, Fortna claims that factors such as power symmetry between belligerents, the number of states involved, and democratic regime shifts are not as significant as is often thought in international relations. Fortna claims, however, that while these underlying factors have a strong impact, they do not determine the prospects for peace, and that peace lasts longer with stronger agreements in place. Agreements within ceasefires that “alter incentives by raising the cost of breaking a cease-fire, to clear up uncertainty about belligerents’ actions...or to reduce the possibility of accidents or spirals” are likely to increase the ceasefire’s holding power (Fortna, 2004, p.215). More specifically, measures such as demilitarized zones and third party involvement prove particularly effective. Like much of the ceasefire or settlement literature, Fortna acknowledges and identifies those situational and environmental factors that most strongly affect peace agreements, but argues that the substance of the agreement can override these factors. However, for the purposes of this paper, the results in such ceasefire literature are misleading. Within Fortna’s framework, agreements are considered successful so long as active or violent conflict does not reemerge; as such, frozen conflicts such as those in Cyprus, North and South Korea, and in parts of the former Soviet Union would fit the model of successful agreements. Since it is not only the suspension of armed conflict, but the lack of resolution to the root causes of conflict and the resulting stagnation that this paper is concerned with, a more comprehensive framework for agreement success is required.

On the other hand, literature that focuses on the settlement of intrastate conflicts such as civil wars and separatist conflicts tend to view success as occurring when root causes of the conflict are dealt with and a tangible plan for future coexistence is agreed upon. Walter (2002) is concerned with why some civil wars are settled and others rage on, and in those factors that contribute to successful implementation of the terms of the agreement. Walter (2002) highlights third party involvement and power-sharing agreements as necessary factors in the successful acceptance and implementation of a peace agreement. She proposes that we examine the resolution of conflict in a three-phase framework. This first phase is the process of getting parties to the table, so to speak, and the conditions and motivations that cause parties to enter into negotiations. The second phase is where parties reach a mutually acceptable agreement; this stage considers both the substantive and environmental factors that enable agreement. The final phase looks at the implementation of the agreements. Walter is mainly concerned with the second and third phase, and those aspects of settlement that make a peace settlement conducive to signing and compliance. Walter lays out the credible commitment theory which posits that combatants in civil wars will “sign and implement a peace settlement only if they are confident that their military forces will be safely consolidated and that power will be shared once they relinquish their own political and military assets” (Walter, 2002, p. 15). This is done through a third party security guarantee, particularly during demobilization, and strong power-sharing agreements that distribute political, territorial, and military power.

Focusing on the issue of power-sharing, Caroline Hartzell and Mathew Hoddie seek to differentiate between power-sharing agreements and argue that power-sharing arrangements that are more extensive and multi-dimensional are more likely to succeed in maintaining peace (Hartzell & Hoddie, 2003; Hartzell & Hoddie, 2007). Hartzell and Hoddie identify four areas or forms of power-sharing: political, territorial, military, and economic. Agreements that include power-sharing arrangements in all four categories are more likely to succeed than those with

power-sharing in only one area. Their framework also identifies other factors, both substantive and situational, that influence the success of a peace agreement. First, actors with previous experience with democratic institutions are more likely to craft a lasting agreement. Furthermore, wars of long duration increase the likelihood that parties will craft an enduring peace, however wars yielding a high casualty rate are unlikely to end in durable peace. Third party enforcement is also a key factor in this framework, as is the timeframe. Hartzell and Hoddie find that settlements negotiated in the post-Cold War era tend to be more successful. They also claim that the risk of war breaking out again declines with the passage of time.

These theories all underline the argument that while factors like relative power and timing are significant, they can be overridden by a strong agreement. In opposite fashion, theorists that focus on the timing of peace negotiations claim that even the best possible agreements will fail if the timing is not right for resolution. Two of the main proponents of this claim are William Zartman's ripeness theory and Dean Pruitt's modification of this which he calls readiness theory.

The intention of ripeness theory, as Zartman explains, is to identify "why, and therefore when, parties to a conflict are susceptible to their own or others' efforts to turn the conflict toward resolution through negotiation" (Zartman I.W., 2000, p.228). There are two central components to ripeness: the perception of a mutually hurting stalemate and the perception of a way out. The mutually hurting stalemate is a situation where "parties find themselves locked in a conflict from which they cannot escalate to victory and this deadlock is painful to both of them" (Zartman I.W., 2000, p.228). Or, one may say that a mutually hurting stalemate is reached when both parties perceive themselves to be at a point where the costs of continued conflict outweigh the expected costs of negotiation. This moment may be, but is not necessarily, enhanced or induced by a past, impending, or recently avoided catastrophe which can serve as a deadline or impetus for movement towards negotiation. The second component, a way out, need not be a specific solution

that parties can identify going into negotiations. Rather, it is only necessary that parties have a sense that a negotiated settlement is possible, and that the other party also has the motivation to seek it (Zartman I.W., 2000). Therefore, the working definition of ripeness, as posited by Zartman is: “if the (two) parties to a conflict (a) perceive themselves to be in a hurting stalemate and (b) perceive the possibility of a negotiated solution (a way out), the conflict is ripe for resolution” (2000, p.229).

Ripeness theory, as posited by Zartman, has had numerous reworkings and contestations since its emergence. One of the prominent modifications of this theory is Dean Pruitt’s readiness theory. Pruitt offers readiness theory as revision and elaboration of Zartman’s ripeness theory. Readiness is treated as a variable whereas ripeness is typically treated as a state, and describes the thinking of an individual party rather than a moment of joint thinking in the conflict (Pruitt, 2007). Pruitt offers four main criticisms of ripeness theory:

- (1) “Ripeness theory only seeks to explain entry into negotiation. Yet it makes sense that conditions which encourage entry into negotiation should ...also encourage all of the following: throwing large human resources into the negotiation, taking significant risks to achieve agreement, making deep concessions, and thus moving toward or to agreement.”
- (2) “Ripeness is viewed as a state rather than a variable; situations are either ripe or unripe. This is fine for an initial, heuristic set of ideas but ... viewing ripeness as a variable allows us to postulate that as ripeness strengthens... agreement is more likely to be reached.”
- (3) The antecedents of ripeness are viewed as joint states that simultaneously affect both parties to the conflict ... a more flexible theory would analyze the motives and perceptions of each party separately. This would make it easier to explain the asymmetric patterns that are often found in reality.”
- (4) “Ripeness theory has a list-like quality that does not distinguish between types of antecedents” (Pruitt, 1997).

Based on these criticisms, readiness theory is offered as a modification of sorts. Parallel to ripeness theory’s components of the mutually hurting stalemate and a perceived way out, readiness has two components: motivation and optimism. This theory posits that: “a party will move toward resolution of a heavily escalated conflict (entering negotiation, making concessions, etc.) to the extent that it is (a) motivated to achieve de-escalation and (b) optimistic about finding

a mutually acceptable agreement that will be binding on the other party” (Pruitt, 1997, p.239). Motivation to end the conflict is not entirely unlike the mutually hurting stalemate; parties achieve this motivation when escalation or the status quo are no longer viable or attractive options. Optimism, however, serves as a gating variable that determines the extent to which the motivation to end conflict is expressed as conciliatory gestures and behavior, which are necessary to successful negotiation (Pruitt, 1997). The component of optimism differs from its counterpart in ripeness theory, a perceived way out. In addition to the perception that a negotiated settlement is possible, optimism also requires working trust and lowered aspirations. This conceptualization of optimism helps to explain why some negotiations fail even though adequate motivation to resolve the conflict exists (Pruitt, 2007).

Relational approaches and reconciliation. Rather than focusing on the timing or substance of a peace agreement, there is a third group of peace theorists that focus on the relationship between the parties, and attribute failed negotiations to the failure of parties to transition from an antagonistic, zero-sum relationship to a more cooperative and win-win relationship.

Early major contributions to this school of thought were made by Herbert C. Kelman. Largely influenced by the work of John Burton and his theory on the centrality of human needs and their satisfaction in the resolution of conflict, Kelman developed a third party approach to conflict that has been termed interactive problem solving (Kelman, 1998). Like Burton, Kelman’s approach and understanding of international and inter-communal conflict is “anchored in social-psychological principles” (Kelman, 1998 p.190). Being derived from needs theory and informed by social-psychology, Kelman’s approach to conflict places emphasis on the relationships between parties and their respective representatives on an individual level. Kelman notes “there are many aspects of international conflict and conflict resolution for which the individual

represents the most appropriate unit of analysis” (Kelman, 1998 p. 191). He continues “thus we can identify certain processes central to conflict resolution ... that of necessity take place at the level of individuals and interaction between individuals” (Kelman, 1998 p. 191).

From these premises Kelman developed the problem solving workshop. This form of intervention gathers politically influential individuals (but not necessarily political office holders) of each party for intensive but unofficial meetings. These are not negotiations, and are not convened for the purpose of reaching political settlements, but are intended to produce change among workshop participants on the level of individuals and interpersonal interaction. With this, it is intended that participants will develop the ability to work cooperatively and engage in joint problem solving, with the hope that the proposals and ideas reached cooperatively in the workshops will feed back into official negotiations (Kelman, 1998). It may seem self-evident that the interaction between party representatives is important to the success of conflict settlement. However, the orientation of third party interventions toward the improvement of relationships and the interaction between key individuals in each party marks a departure from other conflict resolution strategies. Interactive problem-solving contributes to “the development of new approaches to conceptualizing and conducting the macroprocess of conflict resolution and international relations” (Kelman, 1998 p.197).

Another influential figure in the relational school of thought is John Paul Lederach. In his work, Lederach emphasizes a paradigmatic shift in the resolution of armed conflict from traditional negotiation between state representatives to the rebuilding of relationships between parties. Lederach builds on the early concepts of Adam Curle who emphasized the roles that balance of power and awareness of the conflict play in the readiness of parties to negotiate (Curle 1971 as cited by Lederach 1995). Confrontation between the parties, along with the role of advocacy, leads to a balancing of power, making negotiation possible and creating a role for mediation. He explains “successful negotiations and mediation lead to a restructuring of the

relationship...this result is what Curle refers to as increased justice or more peaceful relations” (Lederach, 1995 p.14).

This focus on the restructuring of the relationship between parties is the core of Lederach’s conceptual framework for reconciliation. “This paradigmatic shift” he explains “is articulated in the movement away from a concern with the resolution of issues and towards a frame of reference that focuses on the restoration and rebuilding of relationships...The framework must address and engage the relational aspects of reconciliation as the central component of peacebuilding” (Lederach, 1997 p.24). Reconciliation is the approach that follows from Lederach’s conceptualization of protracted conflict and of the central role that relational reformation plays in resolution. The concept of reconciliation as Lederach posits it, rests on three working assumptions:

1. “Relationship is the basis of both the conflict and its long-term solution
2. Engagement of the conflicting groups assumes an encounter, not only of people but also of several different and highly interdependent streams of activity.
3. Reconciliation requires that we look outside the mainstream of international political traditions, discourse, and operational modalities if we are to find innovation” (Lederach, 1997 p.27).

This approach to conflict settlement marks a departure from traditional state-centered diplomacy and peace negotiations in two ways. First, the focus on improvement of relations between parties rather than the settlement of disputed issues allows conflict resolution activities to take any number of forms. These include the problem solving workshop as promoted by Kelman, and later by others such as Ronald Fisher (1997), as well as a host of other unofficial, non-state centered activities. Second, the reconciliation approach requires that the process of conflict resolution incorporate the entire society rather than focusing entirely on heads of state and officials. This approach looks for influential figures at all levels and in all areas of a society, such as business leaders, media figures, clergy, or grassroots community leaders, and seeks to engage them in the conflict resolution process. In a word, it could be said that the relational or reconciliatory

approach seeks to build not just a peace agreement, but a peace-seeking society. Such alternative approaches to building peace in and between conflicting societies has come to be termed track-two or unofficial peacebuilding, and numerous other scholars such as Louise Diamond and John McDonald (1995) and Louis Kriesberg (1989), for example, have contributed to the expansion and opening of the concept of peace-building in this way.

Wars of Secession & De-Facto States. Contrary to some of the above mentioned literature which looks at characteristics of the peace process to explain the continuation of conflict, the comparative literature on the conflicts in the Soviet successor states focuses on characteristics of the parties. In particular, this literature focuses on the separatist states and their impact on the conflict's dynamics. Charles King and Dov Lynch point to the existence of these separatist regions and their development into (somewhat) functioning states as complicating the dynamics of the conflict and its resolution. As King explains: "the crystallization of independent statelike entities has meant that the resolution of these conflicts is not so much about patching together a torn country as about trying to reintegrate two functionally distinct administrations, militaries, and societies" (King, 2001 p.525). King also explores the implications of these state-building projects on parties' motivations to settle. As the stagnant conflict evolves into systematic normalcy, a variety of groups and individuals become invested in the status quo; as King notes, asking "cui bono" can illuminate a number of forces acting to maintain the status quo. Examples abound:

Both the separatists and their erstwhile opponents in central governments benefit from the un-taxed trade and production flowing through the former war zones. Even in less unsavory ways, individuals inside and outside the conflict areas have an interest in maintaining the status quo—from poets who have built careers extolling their newfound statehood to pensioners worried about how their meager incomes might be further diminished if the country were once again integrated. It is a dark version of Pareto efficiency: the general welfare cannot be improved—by reaching a genuine peace accord allowing for real reintegration—without at the same time making key interest groups in both camps worse off (King, 2001 p.525).

King asserts an additional aspect of the motivation to maintain the status quo, claiming that the governments running the separatist states often function as well as their central state adversaries. That separatists have been able to “build states that now function about as well as the recognized countries of which they are still formally constituents,” King asserts, is the real obstacle to settlement (2001, p.535). This argument is certainly persuasive, but only in cases where it is the reality. While this was most likely the case in 2001 when King published the article, the Georgian metropolitan state has experienced tremendous economic growth and increased stability since the Rose revolution in 2004, with GDP growth of nearly 10% in 2006 and 12% in 2007 (The World Fact Book 2008: Georgia, 2008). Thus, while there may have been a time when separatism was in part motivated by the ability of the de-facto state to function and better provide for its constituents than the metropolitan state, this no longer the case and should not be the obstacle to settlement that King argues it is. Of course, the most recent round of fighting between Georgia and Russia, in late Summer 2008, undoubtedly had an effect on the relative level of Georgia’s state functionality. Russian attacks devastated much of the state’s military capacity and national infrastructure, disabling major roads and transportation hubs, and creating a mass humanitarian crisis as thousands of Georgians living in or around the areas of conflict fled to other parts of Georgia. As of yet it is too early to know what long term effects the August war will have on Georgia’s economy, or if it will slow the tide of foreign investment that has had a large part in driving the country’s economic growth.

Dov Lynch further explores the de facto states of the former Soviet Union, citing their existence as the main reason for the absence of progress toward settlement (Lynch, 2004). He cites a combination of external and internal drivers as being behind the status quo that has dominated these conflicts since the early 1990’s. (He also emphasizes that the conventional wisdom attributing this status quo to primarily to external drivers, namely the role of Russia, is misconceived and narrow sighted.)

Because his focus is specifically on the separatist states in these conflicts, the internal drivers that he speaks of refer to things being done inside or by separatist states. He points out three main drivers: the insistence on absolute sovereignty based on international conventions and adherence to the principle of national self-determination, fear and insecurity, and subsistence systems that have developed under the weak governments and foster the growth of criminal elements in the economy (Lynch, 2004). First, the existence of these separatist states in isolation for so many years has bolstered their belief in sovereignty. Aside from the basic elements of sovereignty: territory, population, and government, these de-facto states have also developed limited institutions and financial systems. These systems reinforce the belief and insistence on their right to sovereignty. Furthermore, the strong sense of fear and insecurity in the de-facto states has also led them to bolster their security in whatever ways they can, and typically they maintain a military with rather wide mobilization capacity. These military forces are part of the state-building projects that have sustained the separatists during the long frozen periods of the conflict. Finally, the economic isolation felt by separatist states for many years has led to the creation of subsistence systems for survival and a return to primitive economic systems such as barter (Lynch, 2004).

Externally, Lynch points to Russian intervention, the role of international organizations, and the role of the metropolitan states. The term metropolitan, as Lynch uses it, refers to the central state from which the separatist or de-facto states have seceded; in the cases Lynch examines the metropolitan states would be Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova. Lynch modifies King's claim that the separatist states are probably better off than their metropolitan counterparts, pointing out several reasons for why the metropolitan states are not particularly enticing to the separatists. Of these external drivers, Lynch lists the assistance of international organizations, particularly humanitarian organizations, for enabling the separatist states and keeping them afloat

in terms of meeting the most basic needs of their populations (Lynch, 2004). He also points to the role played by the metropolitan states and Russian intervention.

This book was published shortly after the Rose Revolution, and therefore cannot account for the massive economic upturn experienced in Georgia after 2004, nor the violence experienced in the summer of 2008, but it does improve on King's claims by focusing on the perception held by separatists that they may be better off, rather than claiming this to be a reality. Again, however, this raises the question of whether this perception is still widely held or whether the prosperity experienced in Tbilisi has made ripples in Abkhazia. Lynch also notes, that regardless of economic improvement, the metropolitan state of Georgia is still dominated by nationalist politics, and caters to the radically nationalist Abkhaz Government in Exile made up of former Georgian officials from the pre-war government of Abkhazia (Lynch, 2004). So long as Georgia's political system is dominated by nationalist figures it is unlikely to appeal to minority separatists.

Lynch acknowledges Russia's role in maintaining the status quo and protecting the separatist states, but denies the claim that many (especially the metropolitan states) make that Russia is the key factor in the emergence and resolution of these conflicts, focusing rather on developments in the separatist states themselves. However, the fighting between Georgian and Russia during the summer of 2008 showed dramatically just how much of a player Russia is in these conflicts. While the outcomes of this brief war have yet to be determined, it is very possible that Abkhazia or South Ossetia may achieve either independence or annexation with Russia due primarily to Russia's insistence and formidable power.

We might adopt Lynch's conceptualization of these conflicts with regard to ripeness theory discussed earlier. Hurting stalemates have been reached in all the Soviet successor conflicts, but rather than turning to settlement to attenuate the pain of stalemate, parties develop internal mechanisms, such as subsistence and barter based economic systems, as well as reliance

on external sources of support to help offset the pain of stalemate. On the other hand, it might be argued (perhaps by supporters of ripeness theory) that these conflicts have not in fact reached a true mutually hurting stalemate or have not yet reached what might be considered as a threshold of ripeness. Lynch makes two arguments in his work that add to this conceptualization of ripeness. First, he argues that it is only in regards to official peace negotiations that these conflicts are frozen, where in reality they are not really frozen at all but are in fact rather dynamic beneath the surface. Second, he argues that the status quo in these conflicts is maintained by certain driving factors that originate inside the separatist states and that act on the separatist states.

Perhaps it is possible to integrate these arguments into an understanding of this conflict as framed by the theory of ripeness. This conceptualization would say that the stagnation or inertia of frozen conflict is due to the fact that although parties have reached a hurting stalemate the conflict has not yet reached a point of intensity or painfulness severe enough to motivate parties to settle (which will be referred to as ripeness for resolution for the sake of clarity). In the case of Georgia and Abkhazia parties do not reach this threshold because factors such as state building projects in the de-facto states, external support, and profiteering help separatist groups subsist through the stalemate and therefore keep the conflict or status quo at a tolerable level of pain. Charles King briefly referred to this status quo as “something close to equilibrium” (2001, p. 525), and although his work did not elaborate on the use of this term, the notion of equilibrium will become more useful as literature on social change is explored later in this review. This conceptual framework that integrates Lynch’s arguments with the idea of ripeness as a threshold illustrated below.

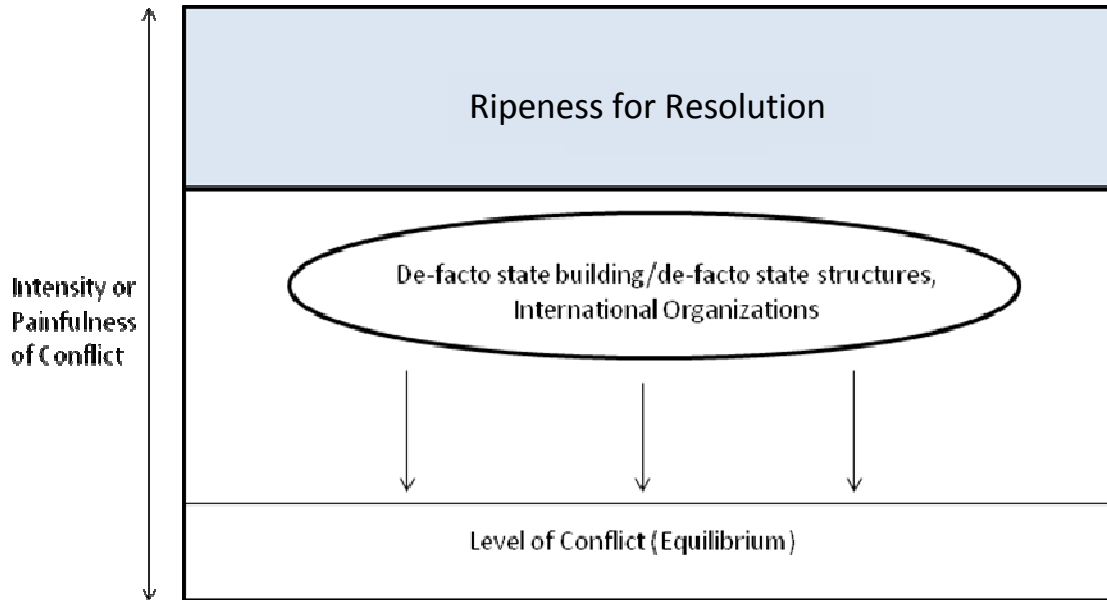


Figure 1: Forces keeping the status quo below the threshold of ripeness for resolution.

However, if we are to take this as compelling explanation for why the conflicts of the former Soviet Union have not settled, there are some problems that must be accounted for. As previously discussed, both King and Lynch's theories are based at least somewhat on the assumption that the governing bodies of the separatist states function as well as their counterparts in the metropolitan states.

Furthermore, the synthesis described above offers some possible explanation for why such conflicts seem unable to escalate to a point where the conflict is ripe for resolution. However, it fails to explain why the conflict has not particularly de-escalated in the more than a decade since ceasefires were established. There has been little warming of relations, opening of borders, or loosening of restriction, and what there has been was rather fleeting. In other words, while factors such as de-facto state building and international assistance push the conflict's level of intensity down, what is pushing back up so as to maintain the equilibrium or status quo that has reigned for so long?

It seems then that part of accounting for the longevity of frozen conflict is understanding why it does not de-escalate to the point where manageable relations are reached or can be negotiated. One primary factor that could be seen as preventing the de-escalation of such conflicts, and in particular the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict, is the presence of displaced peoples who desire but are unable to return to the regions from which they fled. In the case of Georgia, there is a population between 200,000 and 300,000 ethnic Georgians who lived in Abkhazia but fled during the war in the early 1990s. These internally displaced persons (IDPs) are a significant factor in the conflict; and a large majority express a desire to return to Abkhazia but are unable to do so under current conditions. However the frozen nature of the conflict and the current status quo are enough for many IDPs to retain the hope of eventual return.

With this sizable population being such a significant factor in the resolution of this conflict, a consideration of the dynamics of prolonged displacement, as well as the political role of organized IDP coalitions (in this case the Abkhaz Government-in-exile) may shed some light on the inertia that this review seeks to understand.

Prolonged displacement & refugee dynamics. In the last fifty years, predominating attitudes to refugees and other forcibly displaced persons have shifted dramatically. Previous to World War II, the provision of sanctuary to those viewed as fleeing unjust persecution was common practice in much of western culture. This was a tradition largely stemming from and beginning with the English offering of sanctuary to the French Huguenots in the late seventeenth century (Marfleet, 2006). In the Cold War era, the notion of “refugee” was more politicized, with the term often connoting one who has defected or fled from an enemy state. Until 1980, in fact, the U.S. government limited the term refugee to mean persons fleeing communism (Whitaker, 2003). However, with the fall of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War attitudes towards forcibly displaced persons shifted towards policies of exclusion and limited granting of amnesty.

Such populations have in many ways come to be seen as an economic and security burden to host states, and perceptions of displaced persons have shifted from victims of broad geopolitical conflict to conflict inducing populations and opportunists.

Another shift in policy has occurred in terms of preferred approaches to displaced populations. Prior to the end of the Cold War, it was generally accepted that the nature of the individual's flight meant that return was not generally perceived as a viable option. Integration and third country resettlement were generally preferred as long-term solutions. In the post-Cold War world, however, voluntary repatriation has become a primary focus in the refugee field. This focus has been largely based on the assumption that displaced persons want to return. Although this is very often the case, this assumption has also led to some rather ominous repatriation operations that were far from voluntary. Such was the case in several instances such as the repatriation of Rwandan refugees from Tanzania, refugees repatriated from South Africa to Mozambique, and Tamil asylum seekers forcibly repatriated from Switzerland in an agreement of the Swiss and Sri Lankan governments (Black & Koser, 1999).

This policy shift goes hand in hand with shifting perceptions of displaced persons and the changed nature of war. Such populations are often viewed as hazardous, costly, and detrimental by host countries, particularly in the context of conflict. In some cases where host countries border the conflict region, refugees and IDPs are marginalized and isolated for fear that their presence will encourage the conflict to spill across the border. In other instances, such as is often the case with populations of internally displaced people, displaced populations become a form of leverage in the conflict. Their return becomes wrapped up in the terms of victory for the host country, meaning that their integration into the host society comes to be seen as a sign of accepted defeat. As such, many host countries opt to keep refugees and IDPs separated from the rest of the population, often restricting them to camps or concentrated centers near the border. Policies of

this sort have been seen with Rwandan refugees in Tanzania, Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and with various groups in the Balkans.

This increasingly strong view of voluntary repatriation has also had an effect on the approach taken to conflict resolution in some cases. In many cases, international efforts to resolve conflict focus largely on creating conditions that allow refugees or other displaced persons to return; this was, for example, a prominent approach to the conflicts in the Balkans, and was a significant component of the Dayton Accords (Whitaker, 2003). It is possible to see how this approach may lend itself to a dangerous sense of false resolution: glossing over the roots of conflict in order to create the speediest return possible to normalcy. Furthermore, many NGO's and relief organizations that provide aid to displaced persons are expanding their mandates to include activities in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. While this indicates an honorably broad scope, it also means that organizations and their service providers are being pushed into performing duties that they may not have the capacity or qualifications for (Ferris, 2003).

One can understand why, in most cases, voluntary repatriation would be the optimal long-term solution to displacement. However, the complexities and contradictions of return are greater than they may initially seem. The literature on return and repatriation identifies a phenomenon referred to as the myth of return as central to this issue. The myth of return refers, most basically, to the desire and aspiration entertained by refugees, other forcibly displaced persons, and immigrants to return to their country or region of origin. The term myth is used because this belief is often held in situations where people have been displaced for years or even decades, and where realistically return is highly unlikely. The myth is in many cases a coping mechanism rather than the actual anticipation of returning. It is a way of dealing with the dilemma of living in two different contexts: in the displaced community (even if this community is limited to the family) and in the host society (Al-Rasheed, 1994). It is also important to note

that the myth of return is a term created by outside researchers to describe a particular mindset; the term “myth” is not typically used by displaced persons to describe their own views.

The myth of return occurs not only in individuals but also in displaced communities, where it is often acted out and reinforced. Refugee scholar Roger Zetter (1999) offers a conceptualization of the myth of return as an adaptive coping mechanism. It may be more helpful to think of this phenomenon as the myth of return to home, rather than simply the myth of return, because what is mythologized is the idea of the home that was lost rather than simply the act of returning. The idealization of returning to home is a way of expressing hope for the eventual restoration of what was lost, both physically and symbolically (Zetter, 1999). Zetter conceptualizes the refugee’s world or experience as a triangle, whose three points represent the past, future, and present. The continuity of this triangle therefore represents the continuity to life as we are constantly transitioning from past to present and from present to future. However, as Zetter explains, the experience of forced displacement fractures the triangle and severs the connection between the points of past, present and future. As this occurs the all-important element of continuity is destroyed. In the refugee triangle the parameter of the past is fractured, and the past-present and past-future connections are damaged or jeopardized. As such, contradictory behaviors of simultaneously adapting to place and mythologizing the return home can be understood as parallel efforts to repair or restore the fragmented triangle (Zetter, 1999).

While those such as Zetter attempt to understand the dynamics of this phenomena, others such as Daniel Warner emphasize the idealization that goes on with the myth of return, and the way in which this makes repatriation more difficult and more paradoxical than one may initially believe. Warner argues that the myth is rooted far more in nostalgia than the recollection of reality. Return very often becomes a social and political motto within displaced communities, leading both the community and outsiders to embrace return as a policy and strategy, while overlooking the complexities involved in doing so. There is a “considerable gap between policy

makers' idea of voluntary repatriation and the actual experience of refugees" (Warner, 1999 p.161). Warner explains that the nostalgia of home is in part due to the desire in people to reconcile the present with the past. However, this rift cannot be closed; we cannot go back because that to which we may wish to return is no longer there. Warner also claims that in some ways, our desire to prioritize the return of refugees is, in a way, a reflection of our own desires to return to a world of alignment and symmetry. As a result, voluntary repatriation is inclined to overlook the extreme complexity of what happens to refugees once they find themselves in their country of origin.

The conceptualization of the myth of return lends some depth to the issue of return that policies of voluntary repatriation can overlook or oversimplify. It also provides the realization that for displaced persons, the desire or promise of returning home is probably far more complex and conflicting than it may first appear. In approaching the issues of prolonged displacement and return as significant factors in protracted conflict or frozen conflict it is important to consider the complexity of return and ask what degree to which displaced persons wrestle with doubt and fear about returning.

Field Theory. These questions and issues may be better illuminated by looking at the social-psychological literature about group decision and social change. Social scientist Kurt Lewin's theories on the subject of opposing forces introduce another way of looking at motivation, change, and the resistance to change. Lewin's field theory posits that there are restraining and driving forces at work against each other within an individual's own "field." In this view, a lack of change is the result of "opposing and countervailing 'forces' that continuously operate to produce what we experience as stability" (Brager & Holloway, 1992). Restraining forces work against change while driving forces move toward it, thus when these forces are relatively balanced the result is stability (Lewin, 1969). The framework derived from this theory

is known as force field analysis, which seeks to identify the opposing forces within a given social field with the intent of manipulating these forces to produce a desired change. Today, this type of analysis is most often used in organizational contexts to help plan for and facilitate change within an organization. However, many refugees and IDPs who experience long term displacement often find themselves in a state of limbo, so to speak, unable to return and unable or unwilling to integrate. As such, consideration of the driving and restraining forces within a community of displaced persons may yield some insight into this seemingly stagnant situation.

Lewin's work is concerned with issues of change and planning for change, particularly certain types of social change within group or organizational dynamics. In evaluating prospects for social change, Lewin identifies several factors that influence group action: channels, gates, and gatekeepers. Channels are the means through which the group acts or collects resources. In an experiment aiming to bring about change in the food eaten by selected families, the channels identified are their means of getting food, such as buying or growing it (Lewin, 1958). Gates or gating agents, as well as the disposition of the gatekeepers that control them are a significant part of systems. As Lewin explains: "the constellation of forces before and after the gate region are decisively different in such a way that the passing or not passing of a unit through the whole channel depends to a high degree upon what happens in the gate region" (Lewin, 1958 p.199). An example of this might be university admissions. An admissions board may set up strict policies to keep all but the most qualified students out; however once a student is admitted, the university does all that it can to propel the student toward success. In this case the admissions process is a gate, and the individuals who sit on the admissions board are gatekeepers.

Lewin's theories regarding motivation and his concept of quasi-stationary equilibria may be most illuminating to the discussion here. Lewin's work is offered as an alternative to the prevalent thinking of his time which assumes that action is a direct result of motivation. On the contrary, Lewin argues that this motivation passes through a constellation of conditions which

may or may not lead to action. From this, Lewin derives the concept of a force field containing countervailing forces that either drive or restrain action (Brager & Holloway, 1992). However, this is susceptible to the misinterpretation that the slightest change in either force will produce action, and this is not the case. As Lewin explains, if this were the case “a state of blockage or extremely inhibited action results rather than that clear one-sided action which follows a real decision” (Lewin, 1958 p.203). Rather than either restraining or driving forces gaining a slight edge, what allows decision to be made is when the potency of one alternative is diminished such that the other alternative dominates the situation.

The state resulting from a balance of driving and restraining forces is what Lewin terms quasi-stationary equilibrium. It may be useful to consider long-term displacement as resulting from a long standing state of quasi-stationary equilibrium, where the forces driving and restraining the decision to integrate into the host population (or alternately to return) are balanced. Or, on another level, the stagnation of frozen conflict could be interpreted in this way as well. It could be said that the forces driving the parties towards resolution are on balance with the forces restraining them. Interpreting the status quo of these frozen conflicts as a quasi-stationary equilibrium may illuminate some of the factors impeding progress.

It should be noted this sort of force field analysis is intended for social phenomena that can be regarded as a process rather than a thing (Lewin, 1958). However, it seems that long term displacement can be viewed as a process, a series of group and individual decisions and action. The stagnation of frozen conflict can likewise be considered a process, an active engagement in the status quo. As such it seems that keeping an eye to the conflicting forces that drive towards the resolution of frozen conflict and those that restrain it may be a useful way to approach the inertia that appears to dominate the status quo.

One area where this concept has been applied to conflict is in literature on the concept of inducing ripeness. This concept is based on the idea discussed earlier that there is a certain point

where intractable conflicts become ripe for resolution. As it is conceived by Zartman (2000), ripeness occurs at the point of mutually hurting stalemate – a point where the continuation of conflict is seen by parties to be more painful than the cost of settlement. The concept and literature around inducing ripeness is concerned with finding ways to bring parties to this point of ripeness without having to reach a mutually hurting stalemate or experience the violence and destruction that it often takes to get parties in an intractable conflict to get to that point.

Coleman (2006) lists “fostering ripeness” (p. 549) as a main guideline to approaching intractable conflict, and refers to ripeness as “a commitment to a change in the nature of the relations of the parties from a destructive orientation toward a more constructive state of coexistence” (2001, p. 549). Coleman also notes the value of Lewin’s theory of social change in approaching the task of fostering ripeness in an intractable conflict. “The study of the conditions for change” he notes “begins appropriately with an analysis of the conditions for ‘no change,’ that is, for the state of equilibrium” (Lewin, 1947 p.208) as quoted by Coleman, 2006). Coleman goes on to assert that therefore “to better locate and comprehend the various paths to ripeness in a conflict it is valuable to attempt to understand the dynamic forces that keep a conflict in a state of ‘unripeness’” (Coleman, 2006 p.550). This can be applied to frozen conflict in the same way that Coleman applies it to intractability. Frozen conflict therefore should be viewed as equilibrium whose apparent stability comes from the opposing forces acting upon it, rather than as a static state. This corroborates well with the concerns that Lynch (2004) and King (2001) express regarding the term “frozen” and the lack of activity or motion it implies. As they both argue, these frozen conflicts are quite dynamic and the players and context have changed significantly since the outbreak of conflict. If we view the frozen state of these conflicts as a state of quasi-stationary equilibrium, the change and dynamic nature that Lynch is concerned with is a contributing force to this frozen nature rather than a contrary phenomenon.

Coleman goes on in his discussion of equilibrium to note how this concept from Lewin can be more specifically applied to induce ripeness in a conflict. The state of “unripeness” can be broken by either adding driving forces or removing restraining forces. However, driving forces that can induce ripeness in intractable conflict include the experience of catastrophe, the perception of hurting stalemate, or the threat of physical force (Coleman, 2000), and the addition of such forces to a conflict system will increase tension, aggressiveness and emotionality, and create fatigue. These are less than ideal conditions for peacebuilding. On the other hand, the removal of opposing forces in a conflict system, such as rage, distrust, or hopelessness, can alter the balance in the equilibrium while reducing tension (Coleman, 2000). Furthermore, Coleman goes on to cite the concept posited by Burgess and Burgess (1996, 1997) that due to the zero-sum and non-negotiable issues that are typically at stake in intractable conflicts, it may be more effective for third parties to orient their intervention to focus on the process of the intervention rather than the outcomes of the intervention. Coleman notes that “if their initial attention is focused on creating a fair and effective process, perhaps a range of possibilities will emerge leading to a sense of openness to negotiation in general” (2000, p.306). By combining these two premises on the approach to intractable conflict, Coleman proposes that “interventions aimed at removing resistance-forces related to the conflict process will result in great disputant ripeness than interventions that introduce driving-forces related to the outcomes of the conflict” (2000, p.306).

Conclusions

There are numerous theories and observations offered by various fields that contribute to a better understanding of frozen conflict and the reasons for its longevity, some more compelling than others. Certain theories, factors, and schools of thought stand out as particularly illuminating. The concept of ripeness is central to understanding why these conflicts are so

resistant to moving forward in the peace process. Similarly, explanations offered by Dov Lynch, Charles King and other scholars of the post-Soviet sphere are particularly helpful in identifying the role that the de-facto states play in perpetuating the status quo. While these theories, when synthesized, help us understand why the conflict has not escalated to a breaking point, we require further explanation to understand why the conflicts do not de-escalate. The sizable population of displaced people in such conflicts (Georgia-Abkhazia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Cyprus), and the dynamics underlying their prolonged displacement are a key to understanding the inertia of frozen conflict. Such populations are significant stakeholders in these conflicts, and the fact that after decades of displacement they do not fully integrate into their host population ensures that these conflicts will not fade away or de-escalate while these populations remain in limbo.

This review has discussed the ways in which factors such as de-facto state building, international aid organizations, and other structures act as attenuating factors in the conflict, pushing the level of the conflict's intensity down. However, it may be necessary here to expound on how the factor of IDPs or other displaced populations serves as a force that pushes up on the conflict intensity level. It seems that there are some obvious ways that a displaced population might have this effect. Displaced populations can organize politically to wield influence in their host community and with the parties involved in the conflict. It is also not unheard of for displaced populations to supply recruits for or even organize paramilitary organizations that take on an active role in the conflict. The displaced Palestinian population is just one example of these phenomena. However there are other less obvious ways that a displaced population can act as a driving force that actively pushes the intensity of a given conflict up, or similarly act as a blocking agent that passively prevents the intensity of the conflict from de-escalating. The study in this paper seeks to shed some light on these less obvious ways that a seemingly passive or inactive IDP population can act as a force in frozen conflict.

One such avenue through which a displaced population can act as a force is through their relationship with the governing elites involved in the peace process. As discussed earlier in this review, a displaced population that is unable or unwilling to return home, and at the same time does not integrate into the host society for any number of reasons maintains a particular relationship with the governing bodies of that host society. Generally speaking, host countries should theoretically be highly motivated to secure the return of any displaced population within their borders. In particular, when a host country is one of the parties in the conflict, the presence of a displaced population should provide motivation in the peace process. As Julie George notes in regards to the Georgian government: they

“have many reasons to exhaust bargaining strategies to regain the Abkhaz territory. For one, the IDP situation has exhausted the government’s housing and health resources. Georgian cities were not prepared to accept the onslaught of more than a 1/4 of a million people needing homes, employment and basic care” (George, 2003).

However, as George also notes, political elites often have incentives to maintain stalemate and prevent resolution. In the case of Georgia, which will be discussed in greater detail later, certain government apparatus draw their power and authority from the presence of the displaced population as a distinct and segregated population. Furthermore, if a group of governing elites is able to leverage the displaced population for advantage in negotiations, to win favor from the international community, or for reasons of political popularity, it is possible that these incentives can outweigh the motivations to secure their return through successful peace processes. However, if the attitudes of the refugee population itself are to carry significance and be worth consideration within a realistic assessment of the conflict, these attitudes must somehow support the escalating system hypothesized here. This is the crux of what the proceeding study investigates: the attitudes of the IDP population, and how they play a concrete role in perpetuating the conflict.

Finally, if we view the conflict through the framework offered by Kurt Lewin and field theory the inertia or frozenness with which this paper is concerned appears not so much as a lack of any movement, but rather a point of equilibrium between opposing forces. Furthermore, field theory can be of use in understanding the limbo in which the displaced populations in these conflicts live, perhaps lending clues to why the conflict appears stuck, in the way that the displaced populations also appear stuck.

Focusing on the relationship between frozen conflict and displacement that has developed in this review, it appears that there are two plausible alternative rival hypotheses that explain the stagnation of frozen conflict, and the role of displaced persons in it.

The first hypothesis looks at the issue on the conflict level, and builds on the concepts offered by Zartman and Lynch. This hypothesis posits that the frozen conflict exists at certain equilibrium, at a level of intensity or painfulness that is below a threshold where the conflict is painful enough that parties are motivated to settle, or one might say where the conflict is ripe for resolution. However, this equilibrium is also at a level that is too high to be ignored, or to allow relations between parties to normalize on their own. Some of the drivers that Dov Lynch identifies, such as the state-building projects and de-facto state structures of the secessionist regions, peacekeeping forces, and international organizations push the level of intensity down, keeping it below the point of ripeness. At the same time the sizable displaced population, particularly if organized and politically mobilized, as well as the activities of paramilitary or partisan organizations keep the level of conflict intensity up, preventing de-escalation. Thus the conflict is “stuck” so to speak between these countervailing forces so as to appear immobile or frozen. See figure 2.

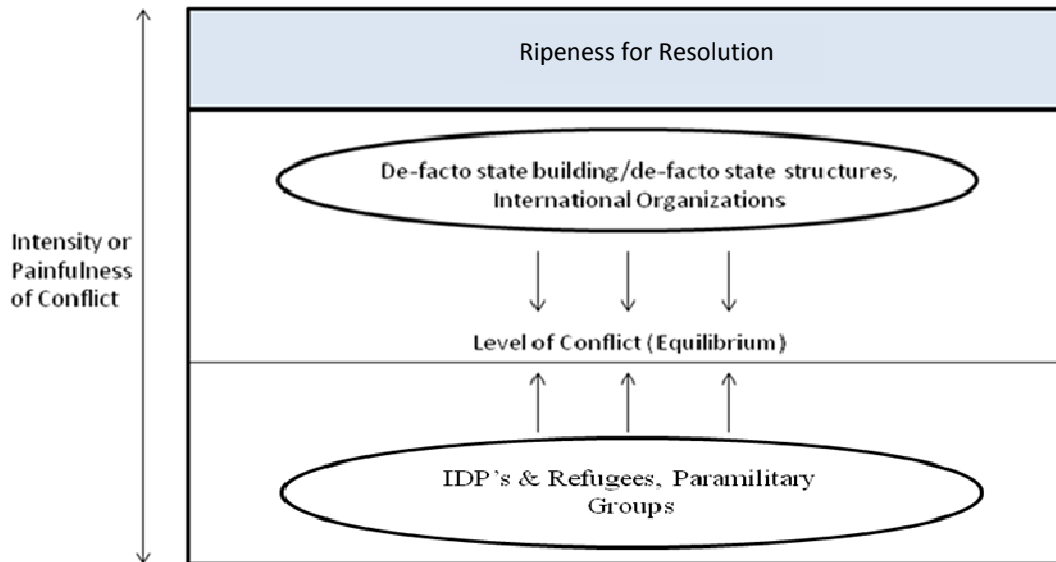


Figure 2: The equilibrium of frozen conflict.

The second hypothesis looks at the conflict at the internal level of the displaced population. This hypothesis posits that although the official claim of refugee or IDP groups is to return to the area from which they were displaced, there are countervailing forces within displaced persons on both community and individual levels. The forces for return and for recompense which are more visible are counterbalanced by less visible forces against return, thus leaving the population in an uncertain state of limbo. The conflict of these forces, acted out in displaced communities, therefore prevents the return of the displaced population while also preventing their integration into the host community.

The remainder of this thesis will illustrate the testing of these hypotheses on a particular case, that of the Georgia-Abkhazia conflict and in particular the IDP population that has resulted from it.

Case Background

Introduction

As the Soviet Union collapsed, much of the world's attention turned to the dramatic events taking place in Russia and Eastern Europe. Revolutions in Eastern Europe, the reunification of Germany, and tumult in Moscow dominated headlines in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Soon thereafter, headlines streamed in about armed conflict in little known places like Georgia and Azerbaijan. In this area the emerging states of Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia were all engaged in open conflict in the early 1990's.

In the newly formed state of Georgia, conflict raged between the metropolitan state and two breakaway regions, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Both conflicts were violent and bloody, inflicted tremendous damage, and carried high costs for both the separatist parties and the state of Georgia. In the years since the conflict, there has been some movement toward resolution between Georgia and South Ossetia. Multiple negotiations have yielded both successes and setbacks between the parties, yet despite the setbacks, there has been movement in the Georgia-South Ossetia conflict, and the movement has been more or less in the direction of resolution. The conflict between the Georgian State and Abkhazia, on the other hand, has made no such progress toward resolution.

This chapter will offer a background of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict and the population of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) produced in this conflict. Like other conflicts in this region, the Georgian Abkhazian war erupted shortly after the fall of the Soviet Union. A ceasefire in 1994 put an end to the armed conflict and, despite occasional eruptions of violent skirmishes, has held since. In the period since the ceasefire, Abkhazian Georgian relations have

been suspended. Abkhazia has been isolated by an internationally mandated blockade and is unable to trade, crippling any aspirations for economic growth. Meanwhile a population of 150,000 - 200,000 IDPs that fled to Georgia have been unable to return to their homes for over a decade. This chapter will discuss the history of Georgian-Abkhaz relations and look at the root causes of conflict that developed before and during the Soviet era.

This chapter will also look at the events occurring in what might be called the frozen period of the conflict (1994-present), including attempts at negotiations and third party attempts at intervention. This case will also focus particularly on the IDP population created in the war: this population's distribution in Georgia, the resources and aid available to them, and their effect on the greater Georgian state. The issue of return is paramount in dealing with this population; and this study will also discuss previous attempts at return, IDP positions on return, and other third party attempts to work with the IDP population.

It is important to bear in mind the context within which the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict has played out. During the span of this conflict the state of Georgia has dealt with civil war, revolution, another secessionist region, South Ossetia, and most recently a brief but intense war with Russia. All of these issues and events have molded the environment in which the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict exists, and have profoundly affected the Georgian government's capacity for dealing with this conflict as well as the way both sides have approached the conflict and its settlement. Meanwhile, Georgia's neighbors to the south, Armenia and Azerbaijan, have been engaged in a similarly frozen conflict involving the secessionist region of Nagorno-Karabakh, while similar separatist tensions in other Soviet successor states such as those between Moldova and Transnistria have also been ongoing. While these conflicts have not necessarily had a profound effect on each other, they are typically discussed by scholars of Soviet and post-Soviet affairs as a distinct group of conflicts, involving similar root causes, key issues, and triggering points. Finally, the events in Kosovo play an identifiable role in the events of the Georgian-

Abkhazian conflict as well as the other Soviet successor wars. The independence of Kosovo, and the support given to it by the Western Powers has not gone unwatched in other parts of the former Soviet Union, and is claimed by separatist regions like Abkhazia, as well as by the Russian government who has supported some of these separatist de-facto, as precedent and evidence for why they are entitled to independence as well.

Roots of Conflict: Pre-Soviet

The conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia certainly has roots in Soviet federal structure and the Soviet approach to national and ethnic groups within the USSR. Yet it also has a history that begins long before the rise of the Soviet Union, and it is worthwhile to examine the more ancient roots of this conflict. The Caucasus region has historically been home to numerous and distinct ethnic groups and many have maintained a distinct identity throughout centuries of rule by outsiders such as the Persian, Ottoman, and Russian empires. Abkhazians and Ossetians are just two of many distinct groups such as Adjarans, Mingrelians, Swanians, and a sizable minority of Armenians whose identity and languages persist in modern day Georgia.

The degree to which the Abkhaz have stood apart from Georgians throughout history varies according to the source. The fact that both Georgians and Abkhazians have spent much of modern history under Ottoman, Russian, or Soviet rule further complicates any attempt to establish historical precedents regarding the two groups' relationship. It is generally agreed upon that Abkhazians and Georgians are ethnically distinct. As Liana Kvarchelia explains:

For centuries, Georgians and Abkhazians, peoples with very different ethnic origins and languages, lived in neighboring territories. There were periods in their history when Abkhazia, as a separate principality, was under Georgian or Ottoman vassalage. There was also a period when the western and some eastern areas of Georgia were part of the Abkhazian Kingdom. (1998, p.18)

However, there is disagreement about Abkhazians' origins, which is relevant to both sides' claims to rightful sovereignty over the modern day territory of Abkhazia. Some claim that

Abkhazian statehood, based in and around modern-day Abkhazian territory, has existed for over 1,200 years (Kvarchelia, 1998). Meanwhile there are other historical theories, espoused primarily by Georgian scholars, which claim that Abkhazians are the relative newcomers to the territory, which was previously under Georgian domain (Kvarchelia, 1998).

When discussing the ancient origins of Georgians, Abkhazians, and their relationship, it is important to bear in mind that the unified political entity that is now called “Georgia” is a relatively new creation. Before Russian rule, the territory that now makes up the modern state that is the Republic of Georgia was essentially divided into two kingdoms or two main groups of kingdoms. Throughout much of its history, Georgia has been divided into eastern and western kingdoms or principalities by the Likhi mountain range that runs north to south through central Georgia. The eastern part, most commonly known as Kartli (or Iberia in classical recordings) is home to the capital city Tbilisi. The western part was known by classical authors and the ancient Greeks (among others) as Colchis, and to Georgians by names such as Imereti or Abkhazeti (Suny, 1988). There are instances of eastern and western Kingdoms being consolidated under one ruler, most notably under Bagrat III in the early 11th century (Suny, 1988), yet such instances are more uncommon than not.

Throughout its long history, Georgia has been dominated by foreign empires, and as the Ottoman and Persian empires rose in the 14th century, Georgia became a crossroads and a battleground between the empires. Although the entire south Caucasus region traded hands between Turkish and Arab powers several times, by the early 17th century East and West Georgia were largely divided by their loyalties. Western Georgia pledged loyalty to the Ottomans while Eastern Georgia ruled at the discretion of Iranian shahs (Suny, 1988). One effect of Ottoman influence in Western Georgia was the adoption of Islam by both Abkhazians and Adjarans (Suny, 1988).

Towards the end of the 18th century, Georgian rulers turned to their increasingly imperial neighbors to the north. Russian hegemony offered protection and security that was seen as preferable to the conflicting and tumultuous rule of either the Persian or the Ottoman Empire. Eastern Georgia, or Kartli, was the first to come under Russian protection, in the late 1770's (Slider, 2005); and by 1804 all of modern day Georgia was officially annexed by imperial Russia. However, as Russian and Ottoman tensions grew, parts of Western Georgia, including Abkhazia, became pawns that great powers played against each other. "During the Crimean War, the Turks stirred up the Abkhaz against Russia at the time of the [Ottoman] invasion of Mingrelia" (Lang, 1962, p.97), and Sukhumi subsequently became a launching point for the Ottoman invasion of Western Georgia (Lang, 1962).

The Russians consolidated their rule in Abkhazia shortly after the end of the Crimean war. During the long era of Russian rule that followed (as part of both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union), Abkhazians would suffer numerous abuses at the hands of these new rulers. The years after the war coincided with the annihilation of the Circassians, a north Caucasian ethnic group with whom the Abkhaz had cultural and ethnic connections (Lang, 1962). Many Circassians were exiled to Turkey, and numerous Abkhazians followed them. This period also saw massive deportations and forced exile from the area in and around Abkhazia. Many Abkhazians and other people of North Caucasus fled or were deported to Turkey. "The first deportations of Muslims from the region by the Russian Empire started in 1828 with the victory in the war" (Tarkhan-Mouravi & Sumbadze, 2006 p.284) while the main flux of Abkhazians went to Turkey during 1864-1878. These people, who became known as the Makhajirs or the Muhajirs, are said to number over 400,000 in Turkey today (Kvarchelia, 1998; Tarkhan-Mouravi et al., 2006). Whether these numbers are accurate or not, they point to the fact that Abkhazians view the period of Russian rule as a time of persecution when Abkhazian national identity was assaulted by Soviet policies of both "Georgification" and "Russification."

Following the Russian Revolution and overthrow of the Tsars in 1917, Georgia declared independence under the protection of Germany in 1918. It should be noted that in this short-lived Georgian constitution, little indication is given to the status or sovereignty of Abkhazia (Coppieters, 2001). Although this independence was recognized by major European powers and even Vladimir Lenin in 1920, it was overthrown in 1921 when Georgia was invaded by the Bolshevik army (Lang, 1962). In 1922 Georgia joined the Soviet Union as part of the Transcaucasian Federative Republic.

Soviet Roots of Conflict

Many scholars and analysts of the Georgia-Abkhazia conflict see it as having roots in the Soviet Period. Some point to the treatment of ethnic minorities under Soviet rule while others point to the Soviet federal structure as a source of conflict. Before delving into these theories though, it may be helpful to outline several key events in the early Soviet period. In the initial years of the Soviet Union, Georgia was incorporated as part of the Transcaucasian Federative Republic, along with Azerbaijan and Armenia. Each of these entities carried the title of Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) within Transcaucasia; and at the outset the Abkhaz also maintained this status as Soviet Republic putting it on equal footing with Georgia (Toft, 2001). This status was codified in Abkhazia's constitution in 1925, which today serves as the legal basis of their claim for independence. Abkhazia was later incorporated as a part of Georgia in 1931, when Stalin reorganized the federal structure of the Soviet Union. At this point Abkhazia became an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic under the jurisdiction of the Union Republic of Georgia (Lang, 1962).

Stalin's policies of terror and purging were felt throughout the Soviet Union in the 1930's and 1940's. The Caucasus was no exception, and any expression of national discontent was targeted as potentially mutinous. However, it was also during this period that Abkhazian national

identity was particularly assaulted. Under various Soviet policies, influxes of non-Abkhazian workers immigrated to the region and the Abkhazian language was subordinated to both the Russian and Georgian languages. As Soviet historian David Marshall Lang explains:

“By 1926, autonomous Abkhazia, covering 3,240 square miles, had a population of 174,000 of which the Abkhazians themselves accounted for less than one third. Under the Second Five-Year Plan, Abkhazia was directed to step up tobacco production substantially, and more Russians, Georgians, Armenians and Greeks were brought in to work on new plantations and industrial projects. The Abkhazians, who resented these encroachments on their cherished autonomy, protested and in the end, fell completely into disgrace with the Kremlin” (1962, p.256).

These policies, aimed at weakening the Abkhaz national identity, were imposed by the Soviet regime and accomplished through policies of “Georgianization,” making it difficult for Abkhaz nationalists to identify the source of the national oppression they experienced (Coppieters, 2003). These policies became a major grievance for Abkhazians and a significant motivator in the conflict that erupted in the early 1990’s. They were further exacerbated by the debate that developed between Abkhaz and Georgia scholars in the 1970’s and 1980’s, in which each camp developed new theories and unearthed new evidence that their own people first inhabited the area around Abkhazia and that the other group (Georgians or Abkhaz) were the relative newcomers to the area (Coppieters, 2001).

Throughout this period, Abkhaz authorities petitioned the Soviet central government in Moscow to remove the Abkhaz Autonomous Republic from Georgian jurisdiction and place it under Russian rule. Each time the request was denied, but certain cultural concessions were given instead, providing greater power in regional government and media (Zverev, 1996). Finally, in 1989 several thousand Abkhaz signed the “Lykhny Declaration” which called for the formation of a Soviet Socialist Republic of Abkhazia, separate from Georgia (Lynch, 2004). This declaration launched an outbreak of violent clashes and a string of events that would develop into the conflict that remains unresolved today between Georgia and Abkhazia.

Outbreak of War

The years 1989-1994 were a remarkably tumultuous time in the Caucasus region, particularly in Georgia. It is important to remember the extent of this tumult when discussing the events leading up to and during the Georgian-Abkhaz war. Within this same time frame the Georgians also declared independence, fought another separatist war with South Ossetia, and experienced a military coup d'état that ousted the country's first president, installed a second president, and resulted in civil war.

Georgian nationalism and the desire for autonomy were growing in the late 1980's and coincided with the signing of the Lykhny Declaration. Georgians, particularly those in Abkhazia, reacted negatively to the declaration. These reactions mingled with the strong anti-Soviet and anti-communist sentiments of the time. Later that year armed clashes broke out in Sukhumi over a schism that developed between Georgian and non-Georgian faculty at the university in Sukhumi. The Georgian faculty left the university to found a branch of Tbilisi State University in Sukhumi (Lynch, 2004; Zverev 1996; Coppieters, 2003), which was subsequently subjected to vandalization and attacks.

In October 1990 Zviad Gamsakhurdia was elected as Georgia's first president, and in April 1991 Georgia declared its independence from the USSR. Gamsakhurdia's election did little to quell fears of marginalization by ethnic minorities within Georgia, as he was known to be radically nationalistic and to support exclusionary state-building policies that alienated minorities (Lynch, 2004). Later in 1991, Gamsakhurdia negotiated an agreement with Abkhaz leadership that would grant Abkhazians over-representation in the regional parliament and guarantee a non-Georgian majority. The agreement was wildly unpopular with Georgians nationwide and generally failed to resolve the tension between Abkhaz and Georgian groups in Abkhazia (Lynch, 2004; Zverev, 1996; Coppieters, 2003).

In the winter of 1991-1992 Gamsakhurdia was ousted by a coalition of military and paramilitary groups, sending him into exile and installing a military council headed by Eduard Shevardnadze. However, even after the violent clashes in Tbilisi had ended, Gamsakhurdia retained substantial support in the western regions of Georgia where “Zviadist” forces were organized (Lynch, 2004). Shortly after taking power, the military council headed by Shevardnadze abolished the 1978 Georgian constitution and replaced it with the pre-Soviet constitution of 1921 in which the legal status of Abkhazia is not specified (Coppieters, 2003). Later in July 1992, the Abkhazian parliament responded by declaring that Abkhazia would revert to a 1925 constitution which described it as an independent Soviet republic.

The eruption of armed conflict shortly followed, with Georgian forces marching into Abkhazia on August 14, 1992 (Lynch, 2004; Zverev, 1996). The reasons for the Georgian offensive are not generally agreed upon. Some sources simply explain that Georgian forces moved in (Lynch, 2004). Others explain that the march was done in response to Zviadist military activity in the area of the Georgia-Abkhazia border which threatened the railroad line running through Abkhazia to Russia. As such, some sources describe the movement of Georgian troops into Abkhazia as a police action (Zverev, 1996; Coppieters, 2003).

At first the Georgian troops overwhelmed the Abkhazian forces, pushing them out of Sukhumi and forcing them to withdraw to Gudauta in the northwest part of the region. However in 1993, bolstered by Russia support in the form of weapons and Slavic officers (Lynch, 2004) as well as fighting forces from the North Caucasus, the Abkhaz launched a series of highly successful counter-offensives. In late September 1993, Abkhaz forces captured Sukhumi, thus expelling the Georgian forces and causing the majority of ethnic Georgians in Abkhazia to flee (Zverev, 1996; Coppieters, 2003).

UN sponsored talks between Georgia and Abkhazian began in Geneva in November 1993, and a formal ceasefire was signed in December. Further talks resulted in an agreement

signed in April 1994 to deploy a peacekeeping force to maintain the ceasefire line. This agreement was not implemented, however, due to disagreement over who should sponsor the peacekeeping force (PKF) and where they should be deployed. Finally in May 1994 an agreement was reached on the specifics of the PKF (Walker, 2000). This agreement specified the creation of security zone (demilitarized zone) within 12 km of Inguri River on both sides. It also called for an additional restricted-weapons zone within 12 km of either side of the security zone (see map on following page). The agreement also specified that the peacekeeping force would operation under a CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) mandate and that troops would come from a number of CIS states. This CIS peacekeeping force would be charged with monitoring the security and restricted-weapons zones, and would “promote the safe return of refugees and displaced persons, especially to the Gali district” (Agreement on a Cease-Fire and Separation of Forces, 1994 p.3). The activities of this peacekeeping force would also be monitored by the UN Observer’s Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). The figure below illustrates the territorial provisions of the agreement.

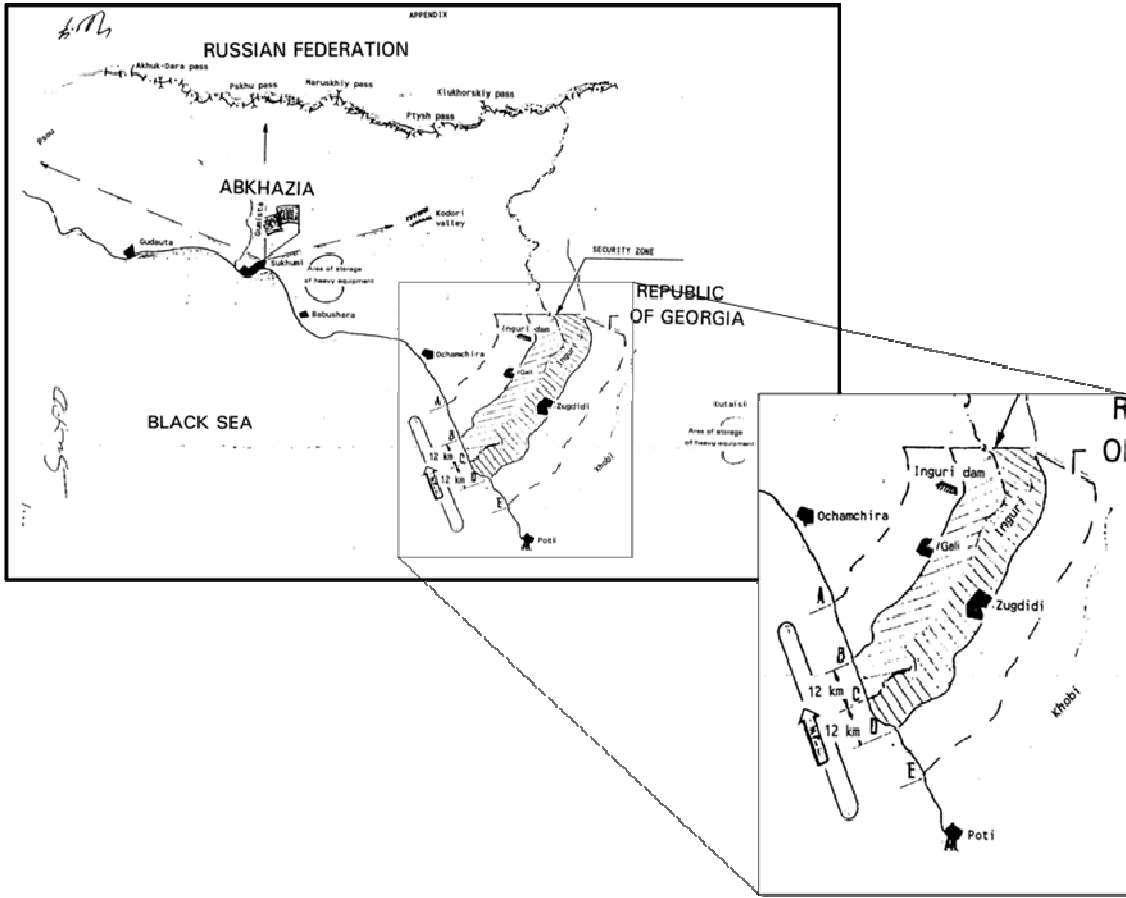


Figure 3: Map of demilitarized area.

Only part of this agreement was implemented, however. A small fraction of the IDPs have been able to safely return, and the “CIS” peacekeeping force is composed entirely of Russian troops (Walker, 2000). Yet, by and large the basics of the ceasefire and demilitarized zones held without incident until August 2008, with the exception of the skirmishes that took place in Gali in the spring of 1998.

Gali is a region in the southeast of Abkhazia, bordering Georgia, and was a major Georgian population center before the war. By the spring of 1998, between 40,000 and 60,000 Georgian IDPs had returned to the Gali region, partly under the supervision of a low-profile UNHCR (United Nations High Commission on Refugees) repatriation program. The program was

relatively successful: conditions in Gali improved and drew significant amounts of humanitarian aid from external sources (Coppieters, 2005; Walker, 2000). However the Georgian returnees were without formal security guarantees, and were frequently harassed by the Abkhazian militia who sought to demonstrate sovereignty over the region. In response, the Georgian guerilla or paramilitary group known as the White Legion adopted the task of providing protection to the Georgian returnees (Nodia, 2000; Walker, 2000). The White Legion, who was openly supported by the Georgian Abkhaz-government-in-exile, carried out raids and attacks on both the Abkhazian militia and the Russian PKF. The Abkhaz responded by moving 1500 militia members to the Gali region, carrying out counter-raids on Georgian villages where the White Legion were believed to be based. Fighting ensued, and in 1998 erupted into what has come to be called the “Six-Day War,” and the majority of the newly returned Georgian villagers, approximately 50,000, fled the area – being displaced for the second time (Nodia, 2000; Walker, 2000). These events made painfully clear the need for renewed efforts at negotiations and in particular “dictated a clear need for regulating the return of refugees to Abkhazia” (Coppieters, 2005, p.287). Today it is estimated that between 10,000 and 20,000 Georgians have returned to the Gali region. These returnees, however, are typically discriminated against by local authorities, and often are unable to register, unable to vote, and are often subject to highly inflated tax rates (Coppieters, 2005). Many other IDPs that live in parts of Georgia near the Abkhaz border now return during the day to work their farmland or orchards in the Gali region.

Since the 1998 outbreak of violence in the Gali region little has transpired in regards to either the resolution of the conflict or the status of the IDP population created in it, and the conflict has remained largely frozen since its outbreak. However, the summer of 2008 saw the renewed heating of tensions along the Georgian-Abkhaz border. The outbreak of fighting between Georgian and Russian forces in August, 2008 began in and around the separatist region of South Ossetia, but a second front of fighting soon opened along the Georgian-Abkhaz border,

with the fighting spreading into the Georgian border city of Zugdidi. One would imagine that this most recent fighting would affect the ability and willingness of Georgian IDPs to travel between their land in Gali and their current homes in Georgia. It has likely also affected those 10,000-20,000 Georgians that have chosen to unofficially return to Gali. However, it should be noted at this point that the study upon which this paper is based, as well as most of the supporting theoretical research, was conducted and compiled well before this most recent round of fighting broke out. As such, it is unable to address in depth the effects that the fighting in the summer of 2008 had on the long-term outlook of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict or the Georgian IDP population. In addition, it is also possible that some aspects of this conflict may have changed since the data in this study was collected.

The preceding section has reviewed some of the historical events and factors that are related to the development of conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia. The roots of this conflict have been attributed to historical factors as recent as the handling of ethnic and minority dissatisfaction during the infancy of Georgian statehood, to the policies implemented during Soviet rule, and as old as the emergence of consolidated kingdoms in modern-day Georgia and Abkhazia as much as 1,200 years ago. The following section will discuss some of the central theories on how this conflict developed and emerged, and what issues are at its core.

Theories on the Conflict

Theories that attempt to explain the outbreak of conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia highlight a number of factors. The federal structure that emerged in the Soviet Union under Stalin's rule is credited by many Soviet scholars with fostering separatist ambitions in various regions across the former Soviet Union after its fall by setting up locally run governing institutions in certain ethnic minority regions and thus endowing these regions with varying degrees of regional autonomy. Not only in Georgia, but in Azerbaijan and Moldova, Central

Asia's Ferghana Valley, and in various Russian regions such as Chechnya and Tartarstan ethnic tensions have arisen that can be traced to the region's status under the Soviet Federal system. In a related but different group of interpretations of the conflict, theories credit the ineptitude of the fledgling Republics in the building of multi-ethnic states and inability to accommodate the concerns of ethnic minorities within their borders. Still others point to the unyielding nationalist fervor that consumed the people of the successor states as well as the autonomous regions within them. This uncompromising nationalism created a political environment particularly hostile to the development of power-sharing arrangements. Most likely, all of the factors emphasized by these theories collaborated to create the conditions from which the conflict was born, but each theory tells a great deal about the position both parties were in during the late 1980s/early 1990s.

The behemoth USSR was comprised of dozens of distinct ethnic groups and nationalities. Bruno Coppieters explains that the Soviet structure was highly contradictory: it was highly centralized politically yet rather decentralized at the administrative level (2003). To dampen the threat of nationalist ambitions and secession, a federative system was created that conferred varying degrees of autonomy and recognition on the many ethnic groups and nations throughout the Soviet Union. The fifteen Union Soviet Socialist Republics, which would later become the same fifteen former Soviet states, enjoyed the highest degree of autonomy under this system. These republics were in theory created around major ethnic groups or titular nationalities, such as Kazakhs, Uzbeks, or Georgians. Smaller national and ethnic groups were often given recognition with varying degrees of autonomy within the other Union Republics. Below the Union Republics were the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (ASSR's), below these were the Autonomous Regions or "Oblasts," and below these, the "Otkrugs" (George, 2001). The Union Republic of Georgia contained three such autonomies: The ASSRs of Abkhazia and Adjara, and the South Ossetia Oblast. During the Soviet era this system worked to pacify and control the many ethnic groups and nations that made up the USSR, often employing a "divide and conquer" strategy in

the process. This ensured that any ambition on the part of these smaller titular nationalities for greater autonomy became the problem of the Union Republics, rather than the central Soviet governance in Moscow. Furthermore, this federal system weakened national unity within the fifteen Union Republics, which in turn weakened their ability to pursue any ambitions of independence they may foster. However, after the fall of the Soviet Union the remnants of these Soviet structures and the nationalist ambitions they often fostered, in many cases exacerbated ethnic tensions that had been kept latent for decades (George, 2001).

Other theorists point to flawed state-building practices at the outset of independence. Monica Duffy-Toft points to the challenges inherent in multi-national state-building and the conditions present in Georgia that made it even more difficult. “The combination of the shock of independence, combined with long simmering nationalist resentments and a large, powerful, imperialist neighbor, made it impossible for Georgia to establish stable institutions capable of moving it towards its goal of a strong, multinational and democratic state” (Toft, 2001 p.123). As a multi-national state emerges, minorities must decide whether to voice concerns to the majority or exit the state; and the rhetoric and policies of the national majority tend to determine this decision. Fierce nationalism dominated Georgian politics at the time, as exemplified by Gamsakhurdia’s radically nationalist and often exclusionary rhetoric. Abkhaz (and South Ossetians, for that matter) interpreted such rhetoric and policy as driving towards a Georgian nationalizing state, making the option of exit the preferred course of action, even if it meant subjugation to another state (Toft, 2001).

In a similar manner, Coppetiers points to the inability of the Soviet successor states to re-federalize the various ethnic groups within their borders. Despite the existence, and success, of the extensive federal system throughout the Soviet era for accommodating nationalist ambitions, newly formed successor states were unable to retain or remodel this federal system to accommodate national minorities. Coppetiers explains that this resulted from the resistance to

power-sharing that emerged. “A strong stand against power-sharing agreements with other national communities was made by all political elites and publics of the newly independent states, including the breakaway republics” (Coppeters, 2001 p.11). This resistance, he explains, was partly due to the way that democratization during the Soviet break-up coincided with mass public mobilizations in defense of national interests (2001).

All of these theories point to a combination of conditions present in Georgia and Abkhazia at the fall of the Soviet Union that enabled the development of conflict while disabling both parties’ capacity for dealing with tensions non-violently. It should be understood that the overwhelming motivation of both the Abkhazian and Georgians in the lead up to conflict should be characterized as fear. Paranoia and uncertainty ran rampant during these tumultuous years, with the actions of both parties usually feeding rather than alleviating the others’ anxiety. The actions of both parties were largely governed by the fear of marginalization. In the face of Georgian nationalism that was so fervent that it often was manifested as an attitude of “Georgia for Georgians” at the expense of minority rights, ethnic groups such as the Abkhazians feared that subjugation to Georgian statehood would equate to destruction of Abkhaz national identity. Likewise, Georgians were shaky in their new and unstable statehood, and feared the prospect of absorption or invasion by Russia. They viewed claims for minority rights or increased regional autonomy as a perilous threat to state sovereignty, and at times suspected such claims to be the result of collusion with Russia. Furthermore, both groups were so traumatized by the experience of Soviet rule that avoiding what they perceived as continuation of this experience became paramount. Unfortunately, as is often the case in ethnic conflict, these fears were more perception than reality.

In summary, the major interpretations of the development of conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia all point in one way or another to the legacy of Soviet rule and the instability surrounding the breakup of the Soviet Union. Some theories emphasize the power given to

regional nationalities under the federal system employed by the Soviets and claim that this system essentially primed a number of regions for separatist conflict. Other theories focus more on the inability of the successor states to adequately accommodate these titular nationalities, either through the structural inability to develop the power-sharing mechanisms necessary for a multi-national state or through the public and moral inability of the majority in these states to make room for ethnic minorities within their sweeping nationalist fervor and nationalist rhetoric. However, fear and the perception of the other party as a potential threat to the independence and autonomy that was so feverishly clamored for at the fall of the Soviet Union is a central factor in all of these interpretations. However, as much as these analyses of events tell about the emergence of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, they do not explain why the conflict has been so resistant to resolution, or why it entered and has largely remained in a frozen state since the implementation of a ceasefire. As such, it is necessary to explore the events and attempted efforts at resolution that have transpired since the initial period of armed conflict ended in 1994.

Attempts at Resolution

Although negotiations have proceeded almost continuously since the ceasefire in 1994, remarkably little progress has been made in them. The status quo that settled in shortly after the ceasefire has more or less remained. As Ghia Nodia explains of early negotiations: “the continuous meetings of delegations were more ritualistic in their character: the parties knew they were expected to negotiate, but believed that in fact the solution depended on Russia, and each hoped to reach a separate deal with the latter. Until then, they could just enjoy visiting places like Geneva” (Nodia, 2000). Increased tensions in Gali, the “Six-Day War,” and the threat that the situation may devolve into full-scale war, injected a new sense of urgency and importance into the negotiations. There was a realization that in order to reduce violence the delegations would

have to work together, relying on their own negotiating skills, rather than focusing on Russia (Nodia, 2000).

Additionally, in June 1997 Abkhazian President Vladislav Ardzinba met with the Georgian Foreign Minister and senior Russian officials. It was reported that a possible agreement was reached during these talks. The details were not made public, but the agreement reportedly specified that the two parties agreed to live “within the confines of a shared state within the boundaries of the Georgian SSR as of 21 December 1991” (Walker, 2000 p.164). The tentative agreement also provided for the repatriation of Georgian IDPs, but did not specify a timetable and allowed the Abkhaz to continue the lengthy process of screening returnees (Walker, 2000).

The tentative agreement fell apart before it was signed. Hardliners in both Georgia and Abkhazia rejected various provisions, and the agreement began to collapse under the weight of this disapproval. Russian officials attempted to resuscitate the agreement with shuttle diplomacy between Ardzinba and Shevardnadze, but to no avail. The groups then turned to the United States and the UN, requesting a peacekeeping force to replace the existing Russian force, but both replied that their peacekeeping forces were already overstretched (Walker, 2000). In August 1997, the two presidents signed a no-use-of-force agreement, which was seen as a major breakthrough, but produced little movement in the peace process, as it did not address the key issues of status and return. Talks continued with increased intermittency, but produced no workable solution to these key issues.

In a more recent attempt to breach this stalemate, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General Dieter Boden released a discussion paper on the conflict in 2002. The paper, commonly known as the Boden Document, attempted to outline a possible compromise between the parties with the hopes of re-engaging them in negotiation. In its essence the document suggests that Abkhazia return to Georgian sovereignty with the greatest level of autonomy and self-rule possible. The document also recommended the gradual return of limited numbers of

IDPs, first to the Gali region and later to other parts of Abkhazia. The Abkhaz authorities rejected these suggestions, and refused to officially acknowledge the document (Coppieters, 2005).

Like the Boden document, most suggestions for resolution offered by scholars involve a return of Abkhazia to Georgian territory with the greatest possible autonomy for Abkhazia. Most solutions to the issue of status suggest that the parties enter a “common state” arrangement, which would most likely take the form of a federal or confederal association (Lynch, 2004; King, 2001, Walker, 2000). Approaches to the IDP question suggest a gradual return of IDPs, starting with a large scale return of IDPs to the Gali region and gradual return in other parts of the region (Lynch, 2004). If this proves to be unworkable, others suggest that the Abkhazian borders be redrawn to place certain former Georgian enclaves (such as Gali or the Kodori Gorge) under Georgian jurisdiction (Walker, 2000).

The IDP Population

One of the largest and most painful effects of the conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia is the population of Georgians from Abkhazia that have been displaced since the outbreak of the war. Abkhazia was an ethnically mixed region at the time of the war, with Abkhazians comprising about 17% of the population, Georgians comprising 44%, and other groups such as Russians and Armenians around 31% (Zverev, 1996). Between 250,000 and 300,000 Georgians fled the region in 1992 and 1993 and very few have returned.

Many (42%) of these internally displaced peoples (IDPs) initially settled in the Samegrelo region, which borders Abkhazia, and particular in the regional capital Zugdidi. Other sizable populations relocated to Tbilisi (33%) and Imereti (12%) (Gotsiridze, 2003). Recently, however, large numbers of IDPs have been relocating to the Tbilisi area in search of work. Nearly half of this population lives with other IDP families in collective housing provided by the government. These facilities are typically large institutional buildings leftover from the Soviet era

such as schools, hospitals, and Sanatoria (Soviet vacation lodging for the proletariat masses). Unemployment is high for IDPs, particularly those living in collective centers, and residents there often subsist off small patches of arable land around these buildings converted to gardens or livestock pens.

“At the most basic level, IDPs are a drain on the resources of the new states” Lynch explains of the cost of the displaced population to the Georgian state (2005, p.95). The aid received by these IDPs is paltry in most ways, yet collectively it is enough to be a costly burden to the government, particularly a government that in recent years has struggled to fund such essentials as a military and police force. In 2001, expenses for the Ministry of Refugees amounted to 57.2 million Lari (GEL), or approximately 27.6 million US Dollars (USD). This amounted to just over 6% of the state budget, equal to healthcare and education expenses combined. However, on the ground this expenditure only amounts to a monthly stipend of 7-11 USD, “bread money” as many IDPs call it, for reasons easily discerned (Gotsiridze, 2003). Furthermore, government subsidies for utilities in collective housing units amounted to 25 million GEL in 2001. Certain services are provided by city governments, such as public transportation: it is estimated that the city of Tbilisi provides such services at a cost of around 8 million GEL per year, 5% of the city’s budget (Gotsiridze, 2003).

The effect of this population, which constitutes between 5-7% of Georgia’s general population, is vast. Their presence has been a significant factor in Georgia’s development and in negotiations with Abkhaz authorities. The IDP question is a major point of contention in the settlement of the conflict, and will most likely prove to be one of the trickiest issues to work through in any successful peace agreement.

The IDP issue in many ways goes to the heart of what the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict is all about. For Abkhaz nationalists the issue of Georgian IDPs is tied to the threat of cultural and national annihilation. Abkhazians fear that a massive influx of Georgian IDPs would make them a

minority in their land once again subjecting them to retaliation and loss of electoral control; and the sheer numbers make this a compelling source of fear. For the Georgians the IDP population not only poses a significant challenge to growth and democratization in the new state, but is also a painful reminder of the unexpected military defeat and loss of a treasured region of the country. The relative social isolation and dependence of this population has negatively impacted the political, social, and economic growth of the state, and return of IDPs has been a central demand in Georgia's approach to the Abkhaz conflict (Lynch, 2004).

As George Khutsishvili explains, the issue of IDP return is a central part of both parties' actual and declared positions as well as part of the best and worst case scenario for each. The positive ideal scenario for Georgians would likely include the "rapid return of all IDPs to their homes," while the negative ideal would see the Abkhaz "expatriate all remaining or returned ethnic Georgians" (Khutsishvili, 2006, p.290). By the same token, the positive ideal scenario of the Abkhaz would require Georgia "not to raise the issue of repatriation of the refugees." Even more telling is the Abkhaz negative ideal scenario which would have the Georgian government "forcibly settle masses of refugees in Abkhazia, giving them a free hand in occupying Abkhaz homes whenever claimed by the repatriates and allowing acts of vengeance" (Khutsishvili, 2006, p.291).

Stalemate over the IDP issue cannot be understood without seeing the perceived demographic threat that they pose to Abkhazian ambitions of sovereignty. Before the conflict erupted in 1992, ethnic Abkhaz made up only about 18% of the population of Abkhazia, while ethnic Georgians composed nearly 42% of the population. Sizable Armenian, Russian, and Greek populations made up the remaining 40%. Thus, even after the expulsion of most of the Georgian population, ethnic Abkhazians are still outnumbered in the region by non-Abkhaz. The return of roughly 250,000 ethnic Georgians to the region poses a threat to whatever demographic and electoral authority the Abkhaz may have now.

This stalemate is then further compounded by the Abkhaz Government-in-Exile. This governing body is comprised of ministers and parliament members from the pre-conflict Abkhaz government that were forced to flee in 1992, and is considered the official representative body of the IDP population in Georgia. This organization wields a significant amount of power and influence in Georgian politics and is notoriously hard-lined regarding IDP return and Georgian sovereignty over Abkhazia. This body consists of 25 delegates and a supreme presidium, and maintains among other things 11 ministries and a department for foreign affairs (Lynch, 2002; George, 2003). The Government-in-Exile also draws a budget from the main Georgian government, part of which is dispersed through this body to provide the monthly pension that many IDPs receive and part of which includes a military budget (George, 2003). The stated purpose of this body, and the group of political elites that run it, is to provide a representative governmental apparatus to the IDP population until the regional government in Abkhazia can be restored. It follows then that the authority and existence of this apparatus is dependant on the existence of the IDP population as a distinct and separate entity within Georgia. This body has not faced election since it originated in 1992 and will likely “continue to represent the IDPs until a new political regime is established in Abkhazia” (George, 2003 p.26). Because this group draws its authority from the ambiguous status quo of the IDP, whereby this population remains displaced but non-integrated in Georgian society, it would follow that this group would have little to gain from either a negotiated settlement or from increased integration of the IDP population (George, 2003).

The way in which the apparatus of the Abkhaz government in exile could be said to bolster the conflict is two-fold. First, as a powerful group of elites within the Georgian political system the Government-in-Exile often takes a hard, radically nationalist line on conflict settlement issues, and are often the first to call for military responses to incidents that arise, and are thus able to impede the ability of the Georgian government to compromise or bargain in

settlement negotiations. Second, this structure of having the IDP population represented specifically by this special government body also gives the rest of the Georgian government a way out of answering directly to the IDP population. It does this by “channeling the political force of the 250,000-strong IDP population” thus acting as a “safety-valve in domestic politics” (Lynch, 2002 p. 844). If the government does not have to answer directly to the IDP population, it is then able to pursue a more hard-line position on Georgian sovereignty in Abkhazia and the return of the IDP population, which is far more politically popular than advocating a settlement involving compromise or power-sharing. This Abkhaz Government-in-Exile therefore links the existence of the Georgian IDP population as a segregated and distinct entity in Georgian society to stalemate producing behavior by government elites. This behavior in turn is largely responsible for the lack of movement in the would-be Georgian-Abkhazia peace process, and serves to entrench the conflict in its frozen state.

Conclusion

This section has attempted to provide the background information about the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict and the IDP population that resulted from it that is needed to understand the context in which the study presented in this paper was conducted. The intertwining histories of Georgia and Abkhazia are long and complex. The origins of the conflict between these actors that remains unresolved today is largely traced to the era of Soviet rule, the systems of regional governance that were set up during that period, and the trauma that both groups were so eager to escape as that era ended. However, one cannot fully understand the claims for independence made by Abkhazians or the claims for sovereignty over that land made by Georgians without understanding the pre-modern and early-modern history of this region. The cascade of events that came during and shortly following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and the rapidity with which the build-up to war occurred shows that latent tensions had surely been mounting between

these groups during the final decades of Soviet rule. The war that resulted, though arguably brief, was intense and highly destructive; and among these tragic results were the displacement of as many as 250,000 ethnic Georgians from Abkhazia, the vast majority of who remain in other parts of Georgia today and continue to live as displaced persons nearly fifteen years later.

This section also looked at the frozen period that developed after a ceasefire was signed in 1994. As this state of “frozen-ness” is the primary concern of this paper, this section has reviewed the major attempts at resolution or negotiated settlement in the attempt to identify events or historical-political factors that may have contributed to the unique qualities of this frozen state that have been thus far discussed in this paper. The history of this conflict as written does not offer sufficient answers as to why such conflicts take on this frozen state and then go unresolved for so long. The following sections describe the methods and results of the study that was conducted in the context of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict and the IDP population involved in it. This study will attempt to shed light on the nature of frozen conflict and on the question of why some such conflicts go unresolved for so long. The review of literature relevant to this question produced two plausible hypotheses on this issue.

One hypothesis suggests that frozen conflict exists at an equilibrium of sorts and is kept in this equilibrium by the opposition of forces that both drive the intensity of the conflict up and those that push the level of intensity down, keeping the conflict below a breaking point that would demand action toward resolution. This hypothesis offers examples such as de-facto state building and international organizations as the de-escalating forces while factors such as paramilitary activity and the presence of IDP populations serve as driving factors that push the level of conflict intensity up. Given the connection between the presence of the IDP population, the power wielded by the Abkhaz Government-in-Exile, and the bargaining behavior of government elites, the following study attempts to identify the degree to which the attitudes of the IDP population in the context described in this chapter does serve as a driving factor.

The second hypothesis suggests that a key to understanding the protraction of frozen conflict lies at the internal level of the IDP population, and in the opposing forces at work in this population. These opposing forces compel IDPs either to stay in the host community or to return, and it is this contradiction of forces that prevents the return of the displaced population while also preventing their integration into the host community. With respect to this hypothesis, the following study seeks to identify and understand the forces compelling the Georgian IDP population to stay and integrate or those forces compelling them to return to Abkhazia, and in doing so attempts to understand the quasi-stationary equilibrium at work in this community (Lewin, 1958). Both of these hypotheses which will be explored in the proceeding study with the intention of generate further understanding and further hypotheses for future study of this issue.

Methodology

Overview

This study seeks to identify causes and variables that help in understanding frozen conflict, its seeming resistance to change, and the role of displaced people in frozen conflicts. The study was conducted with the aim of exploring these issues and relationships in greater depth by investigating a particular population of displaced persons involved in frozen conflict. In the context of this study, the respondents are all Internally Displaced Persons living in Georgia that were displaced from homes in Abkhazia as a result of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict of the early 1990's.

This study is exploratory in nature; it is done with the intent of expanding and deepening the understanding of the relationship between frozen conflict and displaced populations, and of generating, rather than testing, hypotheses. As such the depth provided by studying the experiences and perceptions of individuals within the context of a single conflict study was preferred to the comprehensiveness of a comparative study. This format allows for greater insight into the more intimate dynamics of displacement and this particular form of intractability.

The subject field of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict was narrowed to a study of the IDP population produced in this conflict. This allowed a more in-depth and compact study to be conducted, and focused on a population that is pivotal in the conflict, yet is also accessible, as high-ranking government officials and negotiators typically are not. Furthermore, there are few accessible and published studies of this population, and existing literature proved to be unable to address this study's questions pertaining specifically to the role of IDPs in this conflict.

However, for the sake of clarity it should be noted that this is not a case study in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict. The investigation conducted in the course of this project is a classic survey study; its aim is not to investigate the case of a particular conflict, but rather to investigate players in a conflict who operate under a certain set of circumstances. Specifically it seeks to investigate people who are and have been displaced by a conflict that has come to be considered a frozen conflict. The respondents interviewed in this study are individuals who demonstrate these characteristics who, for mostly practical purposes, all happen to be involved in the same conflict. Certainly there would be advantages to conducting a study that pulled respondents from a variety of conflict contexts. Such an approach would provide a more comprehensive sample, and would allow the investigator to draw more widely applicable conclusions. However, given the scope of this study, as well as logistical limitations such as time and resources, the way to best pursue the goal of developing a deeper and more intimate understanding of the phenomena described in this paper was to focus on a microcosmic slice of this phenomena by choosing to interview respondents from a single conflict context.

Procedure

This study sought to create greater understanding of the relationship between the phenomena of frozen conflict and the populations displaced by it. To do so, the study hoped to explore the thoughts and perceptions of individual IDPs displaced by the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict. The study was conducted on a site visit to the Republic of Georgia in the summer of 2007, and its central focus was the interviewing of Georgian IDPs displaced during the 1992-1994 conflict in Abkhazia. Interviewees varied in age, gender, socio economic status and location. IDPs below the age of 18 were excluded from the study for two reasons. First, the interviewing of minors would introduce complexities and vulnerabilities that the study was not

designed to accommodate; and, it seemed necessary that interviewees be at least 4-5 years of age at the time of the conflict to have sufficient recollection of the events around it.

The subject pool was selected from four cities in Georgia that are major IDP population centers: Tbilisi, Zugdidi, Kutaisi and Batumi. A majority of subjects live in collective centers, the collective housing sites provided to the influxes of IDPs by the Georgian government. Most of these collective centers are converted from large institutional facilities such as hotels, hospitals and schools. Many tend to be on the outskirts of town and are often more self-reliant or subsistent than typical Georgian residences. The primary reason for the prominence of this characteristic in the sample was the difficulty in finding IDP interviewees that lived in private residences.

The research instrument used is a questionnaire developed for the purpose of this study. The questionnaire (see Appendix A) includes both closed and open-ended questions, and was designed to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. It was developed in English and translated into Georgian with the aid of faculty and staff at Tbilisi State University. The questionnaire was then piloted with a staff member at TSU who is also an IDP from Abkhazia. This piloting was conducted to ensure that the questionnaire did not contain any offensive items or language, that the questions were comprehensible to interview participants, and that the questionnaire was translated accurately.

The questionnaire contains two sections. The first section gathers demographic information about the subject such as age, gender, and place of residence before displacement. This section also contains some open ended questions about aid received by participants and their perspective on integration and return. The second section contains questions about subjects' perspectives on conflict, and seeks to gather their perceptions of Abkhazians and feelings about the prospect of future contact and coexistence with Abkhazians'. Within these sections there are clusters of questions attempting to glean information about several central topics: the aid received by IDPs, perceived integration into the host community, feelings toward Abkhazians, feelings

about the prospect of return, desired conditions of return, and experience with conflict resolution processes and willingness to engage in them.

The construction of the questionnaire was largely informed by various theories discussed in the literature review. The overarching structure asks for respondents' thoughts on both the circumstances of their displacement and quality of life since displacement as well as their perceptions of Abkhazia and the prospect of returning there. The questionnaire was constructed as such in an effort to identify forces, as per Lewin's theory of force field analysis, acting on the IDP population pushing/pulling in the direction of either integration or continued desire to return to Abkhazia. In particular, the series of questions that ask about the aid and assistance received by IDPs, as well as items asking about how they feel they have been treated by the host community attempt to identify the forces at work around the integration of the IDP community. Meanwhile, the questionnaire also contains items such as: "if you were to return, what fears might you have about doing so?" and "if you were to return, what part of this would be most challenging for you?" Such items are intended to identify forces acting on the population in regards to the possibility of return.

The literature on prolonged displacement and refugee dynamics covered in the literature review also informed a number of items on the questionnaire. Zetter (1999) describes the contradictory behavior of simultaneously adapting to place and mythologizing return home as part of the myth of return. In this vein, the questionnaire features several items asking respondents if they wish to return and why. These items are followed by a section asking respondents the degree to which they feel integrated in the host community, and asks them to rate the treatment they have received from the host community. This section also asks whether respondents wish to return to the same area or town, or even the same home, from which they were displaced. This ties into Warner's discussion of the myth of return and the nostalgia and idealization it involves.

Later in the interview, respondents are asked to talk about how they feel about Abkhazians in general, and how comfortable they would feel with varying degrees of contact or closeness with Abkhazians. For example, respondents are asked whether they would be willing to dialogue with Abkhazians, and whether they would be able to live in the same town or become friends with Abkhazians. Such items are included in the questionnaire in an effort to get a sense for the level of animosity that may exist between the communities, and in a way to gauge the parties' relationship in regards to ripeness or readiness for resolution, as per the theories of Zartman (2000) and Pruitt (1997) discussed earlier. In addition to asking respondents about their feelings towards Abkhazians, the questionnaire also features several items that ask, in an indirect way, about the political conditions surrounding return. For example, respondents are asked: "under what conditions would you be willing to return to Abkhazia?" and "what would it take for these conditions to exist?" These are asked in an effort to gauge the entrenchment of the community in its positions and the negotiability (or lack there of) of such positions. In this way the questionnaire aims to get a better idea of the general level of intractability of this conflict as seen by the IDP community.

The interviews were conducted in a variety of locations, typically the location of greatest convenience for the interviewee. Several interviews were conducted in classrooms offered by the Department of Conflictology at Tbilisi State University, and most were conducted in the homes of interviewees. Interviews lasted between 20 and 45 minutes, depending on the length of the responses given. The interviews were semi-structured, in that they followed the prepared questionnaire, but that probing and clarifying questions or statements were not scripted ahead of time. This structure let the interviews gather the desired information while allowing participants to expound on topics of particular concern to them. Although interviews were conducted face to face, they were for all practical purposes anonymous, as names and contact information were not

taken from interviewees and in that the researcher could not possibly identify or locate participants on an individual basis.

Out of 45 interviews conducted, 42 were conducted with the assistance of a translator. In most cases this translator also served as a guide, meaning that they had knowledge of where to find IDP enclaves within their city or neighborhood, and helped in locating these enclaves and in recruiting interview subjects. The three interviews conducted without a translator were with interviewees fluent in English, who were recruited through acquaintance with the researcher. Five different translators assisted in the interviews, all of them IDPs. The fact that they were all IDPs was unintended by the investigator, but it should not be extremely surprising that they were. It is entirely possible that the various colleagues and acquaintances that assisted in finding or introducing translators to the primary investigator, given knowledge of the study's topic, would opt to recruit IDPs to act as translator for the study. Subjects in Tbilisi and Zugdidi were located with the assistance of translators, who also served as guides to collective centers with which they were already familiar. Interviews in Kutaisi were conducted through a translator at the offices of the Kutaisi Teachers Union, an educational NGO. Subjects were recruited by staff members of this organization, and include their acquaintances and colleagues. Subjects in Batumi were located with assistance from the Ministry of Refugees in Adjara; and were recruited with the aid of a translator.

The questionnaire was reviewed with all translators prior to conducting interviews to ensure understanding of the questions and their purpose. Interviews were conducted in Georgian language, using the Georgian translation of the questionnaire that had been developed. Responses were translated to English to be recorded. These responses were recorded in writing by the researcher, and when circumstances and subjects permitted, were also recorded by digital voice recorder. Prior to the start of each interview, the nature and length of the interview process, the purpose of the study, and the identity of the researcher were explained to subjects. It was

discovered that it was particularly important that subjects know that the researcher was not working for an NGO or humanitarian aid organization. This was an important practice for two main reasons. The first is that in some IDP communities there appeared to be a degree of animosity felt toward the relief or humanitarian aid community, which likely is connected to a sense of disappointment in relief organizations and the significant drop in aid received by the Georgian IDP community after the Georgian-Abkhazian war ended in 1994. The second reason is that it was critical to the ethicality of the study to make clear to respondents the purpose of the interviews and what would, and what would not be done with the information they provided. Specifically, it was important that respondents not be misled into thinking that the study was part of aid-related or government-related study in which they may believe that their responses could carry certain consequences, such as the receipt of increased aid.

Summary

Data gathered in this study was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Qualitative factors calculated include factors such as place of residence before displacement, age, gender, and current place of residence (in private or collective housing). The data corresponding to close ended items in the questionnaire was also analyzed quantitatively. Responses to open ended questions were analyzed qualitatively for indication or reference to certain themes related to the hypotheses posed here, such as security or return. Themes emerging from the data, such as deference to government and disempowerment were also analyzed. Results of this analysis, as well as faults or limitations of the study are discussed further in the following chapters.

Results

Overview

This study is based on interviews conducted with 45 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) of Georgian ethnicity who were displaced from Abkhazia as a result of the Georgian-Abkhazian war in the early 1990's. The data presented in this section consists of the responses given in these interviews. This study was conducted in an attempt to give further understanding to the questions posed thus far in this paper. The primary question that is pursued here is: what accounts for the longevity of certain conflicts, particularly those that are typically labeled as frozen conflict, and is there a connection between displaced populations produced in these conflicts and their longevity? A review and synthesis of existing literature pertaining to this question has yielded two plausible rival hypotheses.

In brief, the first hypothesis suggests that frozen conflict exists at a sort of equilibrium and is kept in this equilibrium by the opposition of forces that drive the conflict and those that push the level of intensity down, keeping the conflict below a breaking point that would demand action toward resolution. This hypothesis suggests that factors such as de-facto state building and international organizations serve as de-escalating forces while factors such as paramilitary activity and the presence of displaced populations serve as driving factors that push the level of conflict intensity up. Looking specifically at the factor of refugee presence, this analysis seeks to answer whether the IDP population produced in the Georgia-Abkhazia conflict does indeed act as a driving force in the conflict.

The second hypothesis suggests that a key to understanding the protraction of frozen conflict lies at the internal level of the IDP population, and in the opposing forces at work in this

population. These opposing forces compel IDPs either to stay in the host community or to return, and it is this contradiction of forces that prevents the return of the displaced population while also preventing their integration into the host community. With respect to this hypothesis, the analysis seeks to identify and understand the forces compelling the Georgian IDP population to stay and integrate or those forces compelling them to return to Abkhazia, and in doing so attempts to understand the quasi-stationary equilibrium at work in this community (Lewin, 1958).

This body of information is analyzed with a two tiered approach. The first level of analysis looks at the conflict at the level of the IDP community, and looks at responses given by the interviewees with respect to particular questions that attempt to draw out and identify the forces and motivations compelling IDPs to stay or return. The second level of analysis attempts to understand the IDP population as a factor in the broader Georgian-Abkhazian conflict. Rather than looking at the data on an item-by-item basis, this level of analysis looks at the whole body of information collected in the interviews, and identifies themes that emerge from the data regarding the IDPs' perception of the conflict and their role in it. This two-tiered analysis is also preceded by a look at the demographic profile of the subject pool.

Demographics

45 individuals were interviewed in this study. The demographic information recorded in these interviews included age, gender, and current city or region of residence. Interviewees were also asked for limited information about the conditions of their flight from Abkhazia such as the date they left Abkhazia and where they initially went after leaving.

In terms of current residence, interviews were conducted in four cities/regions: Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Zugdidi, and the Batumi Region which includes both the city of Batumi and a smaller nearby town called Khabuleti. The breakdown of individuals interviewed by current location is as follows:

- Tbilisi - 14
- Kutaisi – 9
- Zugdidi – 9
- Batumi – 13

It should be noted that while these four areas represent the largest centers of IDP populations, they are not proportional to the distribution of the IDP population in Georgia today. For example, just over half of the IDP population currently lives in Tbilisi, while Tbilisi interviewees make up roughly one-third of this study’s subjects. (Characteristics and flaws in sampling will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.) The study also found that 62% of the people interviewed currently reside in compact or collective center with other IDPs. These compact centers are usually large buildings previously used as hotels, schools, hospitals, etc. that were converted to house the influx of IDPs during and after the war with Abkhazia.

Persons interviewed hailed from six different areas in Abkhazia: Gali, Sukhumi, Ochamchiri (Ochamchira), Guleribshe (Guleripshi), Kvarcheli (Tqvarcheli), and Gagra (see figure 6).

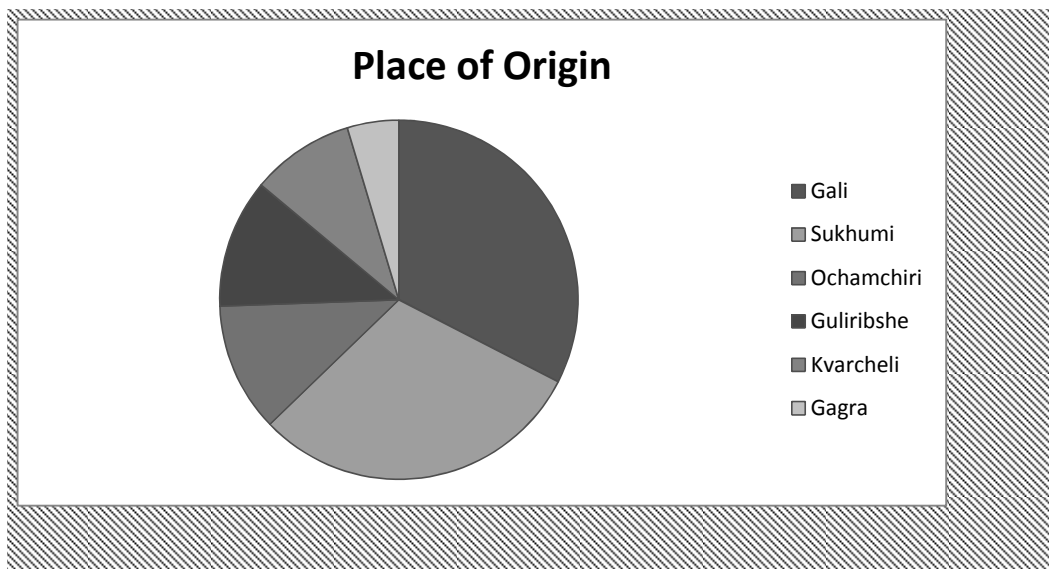


Figure 4: Place of Origin



Figure 5: Map of Abkhazia

A very limited correlation emerged between subject's place of origin in Abkhazia and the area to which they relocated. 7 out of 9 Zugdidi interviewees hailed from Gali, and of the 15 people originally from Gali, 7 relocated to Zugdidi. This correlation is most likely explained, however, by the fact that Gali and Zugdidi are in close proximity, essentially bordering each other. A small correlation also appears between people hailing from Sukhumi and those relocating to Tbilisi (6 out of 14 people from Sukhumi relocated in Tbilisi). This study does not have the capacity to explain such a correlation, but one may speculate that certain evacuation systems may have brought IDPs from Sukhumi to Tbilisi, or the fact that Tbilisi is by far the largest population center in Georgia may also explain this correlation.

Of the 45 people interviewed, there were 14 men 31 women. This proportion reflects a bias in this study's sampling rather than the actual proportion of men to women in the Georgian IDP population.) The subject pool was also broken down by age group as follows:

25 & Under	26-35	36-45	46-55	55 & Under
14 (31%)	6 (13%)	9 (20%)	9 (20%)	7 (16%)

No particular correlation was found between origin and age, origin and gender, or age and gender, indicating that flight from Abkhazia was not limited by age or gender, but occurred across the Georgian population in Abkhazia.

What may be more significant, in terms of demographic data, is information about the circumstances of Georgian IDPs' flight from Abkhazia. Information such as the date on which the interviewee left Abkhazia, or where he/she first went after leaving Abkhazia can provide some information on the nature of this sample.

The IDPs interviewed all left Abkhazia between 1991 and 1993, with the majority (75%) leaving in 1993. The following diagrams show when the IDPs left Abkhazia, Figure 8 shows this by month and Figure 9 shows a day-by-day breakdown of the month of September 1993, during which a sizable portion of respondents left.

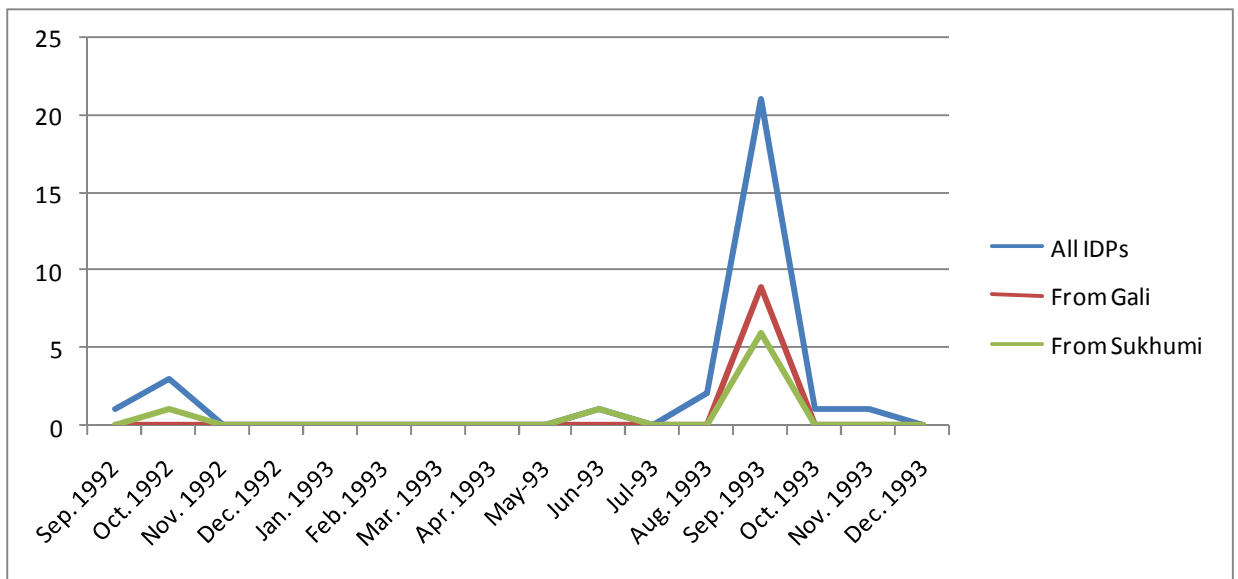


Figure 6: When respondents left Abkhazia: by Month

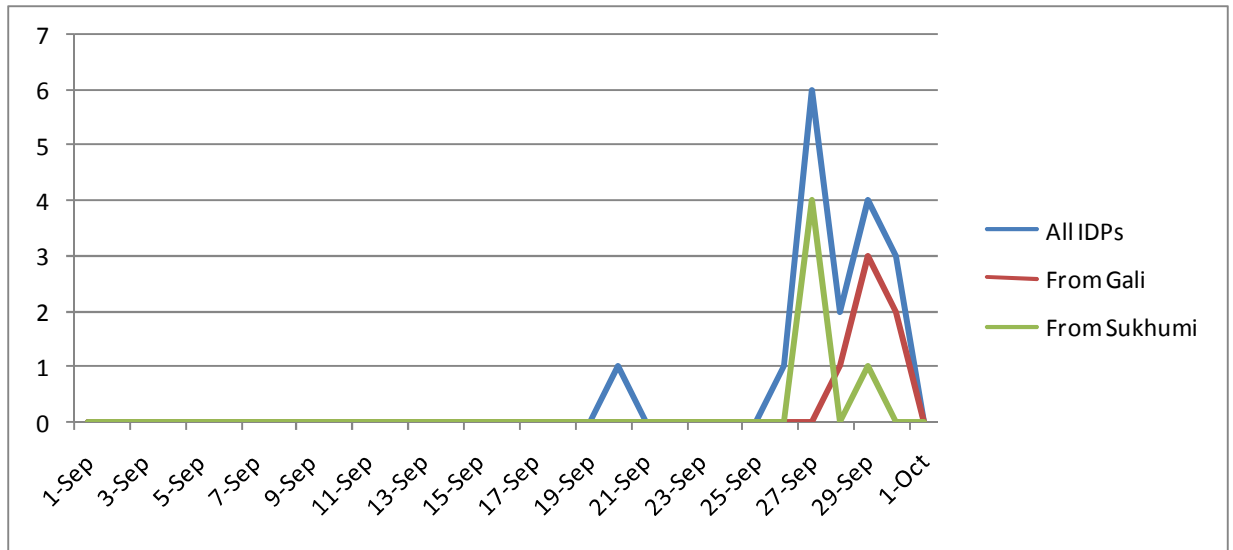


Figure 7: When respondents left Abkhazia: by date

As the figures show, there is a spike in the number of IDPs leaving in September 1993, particularly between September 26 and 29. This corresponds to the events taking place in autumn 1993, namely the resurgence of Abkhazian forces and the driving of Georgian forces from most of Abkhazia. In particular these dates correspond to September 27, 1993, the day on which Abkhazian forces captured Sukhumi and which is known to many Georgians as the Fall of Sukhumi. From the fact that such a large portion of the interviewee pool left within a short period of time, one could infer that those who left were motivated by a tangible sense of threat or fear.

As this demographic data was recorded basically for the purpose of creating boundaries around the study's subject pool, this pool may be summarized as follows. Interview respondents are randomly (if not equally) spread across gender and age groups. They are originally from various parts of Abkhazia, but represent primarily the population centers of Sukhumi and Gali; and they have settled in the larger population centers in Georgia. Many left Abkhazia in the later part of 1993, particularly in late September, 1993 correlating with the fall of Sukhumi to Abkhazian military forces, and a majority of respondents currently reside in compact centers.

This sample roughly represents the majority of IDPs in terms of the characteristics of place of origin, the time of flight from Abkhazia, and place of settlement in Georgia. However it should not be considered as entirely representative of the greater IDP population in Georgia for reasons that will be discussed in a later section. Thus, with a profile of the IDPs included in this study, we can move on to the main substance of the interview data.

Level 1 – Forces within the IDP Community

This first level of analysis addresses the hypothesis largely informed by Lewin's theory of quasi-stationary equilibrium (1958), positing that the stagnation of the IDP community is reflective of the stagnation of the overall conflict. This stagnation in the IDP community is the result of an equilibrium formed by opposing forces that both compel the population to stay and settle in the host country or to return to the conflict area from which they fled, in this case Abkhazia. The section of the analysis seeks to extract from the pool of interview data the forces and motivations compelling IDPs both to stay and to return to Abkhazia. To do this, the interview questions, and corresponding answers, are sorted into groups. These four groups are sorted to address IDPs' desire to return, their current situation in the host territory, the perceived situation in their home territory, and IDPs' perceived skills and ability in handling conflict. It should be noted that the way in which questions are grouped in this analysis does not reflect the order in which they were asked during the interview process. (The questionnaire shown in Appendix A reflects the order in which questions were asked in interviews). Furthermore, in processing the responses for each interview item, the analysis had the capacity to look for patterns based on region, age or gender and will discuss the appearance of noticeable patterns as they come up.

Desire to return. It is logical to first establish what the stated motivations of the IDP community are regarding return. Subjects were asked about their desire to return and the reasons

for wanting to do so. Of the 45 individuals interviewed, 42 said that they wanted to return to Abkhazia. All of these 42 said that they wanted to return to Abkhazia to live there, and would go back to the same town or area that they were from. Of the three who did not want to return, two said they would still want to go back to Abkhazia to visit, but did not want to live there because they had established a life in their current city (Tbilisi in both cases). The third stated that she is too old to make the journey back. As such, it seems appropriate to say that there is a very strong stated desire within the pool to return to Abkhazia.

The subjects gave a variety of reasons for wanting to return to Abkhazia. For the purposes of this analysis, these responses were grouped into positive reasons for wanting to live in Abkhazia and negative reasons for not wanting to live in their host community. In other words, the responses were separated into those that show the drawing or pulling force of living in Abkhazia and those showing a driving force pushing away from integration in the host community. From the 42 interviewees that expressed a desire to return, this grouping showed that 41 positive responses were given while three negative responses were given. (It should be noted that many responses cite more than one factor or reason, so some responses may be double-counted and appear in more than analysis category.)

The negative reasons given all addressed a general dislike of living conditions in the host community. One respondent explained: “I don’t like here, in here it’s very good to be a guest, but in Abkhazia it’s very beautiful country” (Interview T5, 2006), while another said “I think of the whole time I’ve lived here that I am as a ghost” (Interview Z3, 2006).

Overwhelmingly, however, the reasons given for wanting to return referenced aspects of life in Abkhazia that the individual enjoys or longs for. The following groups were the most common reasons given:

- Reference to “my own” or “because it’s mine:” Cited by 18 interviews.
- Reasons of homeland or place of birth connection: “I was born there.” Cited by 12 interviews.

- Love of the land: “Abkhazia is a beautiful place.” Cited by 7 interviews.
- They miss and want to see family and friends. Cited by 6 interviews.
- Reasons of ancestral ties: it is where their parents/grandparents were born. Cited in 6 interviews.
- Superior quality of life. Cited by 6 interviews.
- Desire to regain or live in the individual’s lost house. Cited by 4 interviews.
- Desire to visit graves. Cited by 2 interviews.

The predominant group of reasons given for wanting to return includes those such as: “because it is mine, it’s my land” (T14, 2007) or “because I want to live in my own house” (T3, 2007). It seems that such motivations could be interpreted two ways. At once they seem to represent a sense of rights-based entitlement or ownership. Yet they also seem to reference the desire for a sense of ownership and permanence. It may be noteworthy that 12 of these 18 respondents currently live in collective housing (2 live in private housing, 4 are unknown).

Cross referencing these responses with age groups also found some possible correlation between respondents age 25 and under and reasons in the category of “it is my own country” or “it is my own home” as well as reasons that reference connections to place of birth such as the motherland or homeland (see chart below for the cross-reference of age groups and reasons to return). Note that many interviewees under the age of 25 were quite young (11 or under) when they left Abkhazia, and therefore may not have developed more tangible or material driven reasons for wanting to live there, such as higher quality of life. This suggests that intangible drivers or motivations, such as connection to the motherland, may be quite strong in younger IDPs.

In fact, looking at the breakdown of reasons for returning in the whole sample, we see that intangible reasons dominate tangible ones (36 references to intangible reasons, 26 references to tangible motivations). The strength of these intangible motivations will be important to bear in mind when the analysis looks at IDP perceptions of return and the rather tangible difficulties they anticipate there.

The qualification of tangible and intangible motivations reflects two larger groups that emerged from the responses given. Responses citing the aesthetic value of the land, the desire to visit graves, superior quality of life, longing for friends and family, and the desire to regain houses abandoned in Abkhazia were all considered tangible motivations. Meanwhile, ancestral ties, reasons of homeland or motherland, and references to “my own” or “it’s my house” were grouped as intangible motivations. These classifications require some explanation. Two groupings emerged naturally from the set of responses. Some of these responses were motivations for return that one could begin to grasp and even conceive of ways that such motivations could be satisfied by some alternative means other than returning to Abkhazia. To give an elementary example, if one’s motivation to return is to regain a superior quality of life that they experienced prior to fleeing, then one could conceivably devise ways to elevate that person’s quality of life in another part of Georgia such that it would fulfill the needs driving this motivation. While some of these tangible motivations have more easily conceivable alternatives than others, they are similar in that the possibility of such alternative ways of satisfying the motivation is feasible. On the other hand it would be far more difficult, if not impossible, to conceive of anything that would alternatively satisfy one’s desire to return to their motherland or return to a place where they have ancestral ties. There is nothing other than the place they left (Abkhazia in this case) that can satisfy these motivations.

There is another way to think of this distinction. The motivations in the tangible group all describe or refer to aspects of one’s life in Abkhazia; one’s quality of life, friends and family, the ability to visit family graves, and having a house are all aspects of one’s life or lifestyle. On the other hand the intangible motivations of ancestral ties, motherland/homeland, and “my land/house” are all connected to the essence of that person’s conception of Abkhazia. These intangible motivations do not refer to aspects of their life in Abkhazia that are now absent, but refer to Abkhazia itself, and for that there is no substitution. The distinction between these two

groups of motivations is important to the peacemaking process and negotiation of IDP return. The group’s motivations for returning, and the tangibility of these motivations, affects whether and by what means these motivations and the underlying interests and needs that accompany them can be fulfilled. Tangible motivations are more likely to be connected to earthly and material aspects of one’s life such as one’s house or friends and family. By contrast, intangible motivations are more connected with certain psychological phenomena than with any material aspects of life. As such, a peace process or negotiated agreement on return would have to accommodate these two groups of motivations in different ways, and would have to approach the interests underlying them in different manners.

	Tangible Motivations					Intangible Motivations		
	Aesthetic value of land	Visit Graves	Miss Fam. & Friends	Quality of life	Regain House	“My own,” mine	Ancestral Ties/parents born there	Homeland/ motherland, born there
Total	8	2	6	6	4	18	6	12
- 25	2			1		8	1	7
26-35			1	1	3	2		
36-45	2	1	2	1		4	3	1
46-55	4	1	2	2	1	3	1	2
56 +			1	1		1	1	2

Table 2: Breakdown of motivations by age group.

Situation in host community. Understanding conditions in the host territory is central to identifying the forces that compel IDPs either to stay or to return. This section examines conditions for IDPs in the parts of Georgia where they now live in order to better understand these motivations. In doing this it looks at the assistance that Georgian IDPs have received in the host community, the current aid situation, and their views on integration into their new communities outside of Abkhazia.

The study found that most of the IDPs that were interviewed received at least some sort of assistance directly after being displaced. This assistance is said to have come in a variety of forms and from a number of sources. When asked what type of assistance they received, 37 people out of 45 respondents (82%) reported that they received some sort of aid, including food, clothing, a place to live and other services. They also reported having received this aid from a variety of sources: predominantly from the government, but also from foreign aid, the Red Cross, and local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The tables below show the breakdown of these sources.

Types of Aid

Food	34	75%
Products*	15	33%
Clothing	12	26%
Place to Live	10	22%
Money	3	7%
Job	1	2%
Nothing	8	18%

**Products = non-food groceries such as soap, detergent, toiletries, etc*

Sources of Aid

Government	34	76%
International Organizations (IOs)	11	24%
Foreign Aid	7	16%
Red Cross	12	27%
Local NGOs	8	18%
UN/UNOMIG	2	4%
Do not Know	3	7%
Relatives & Neighbors	2	4%

Table 3: Types and sources of aid received by respondents.

After the initial influx of IDPs, however, the amount and frequency of aid received dropped off dramatically. 37 of 45 interviewees say that now they receive 11 (or 14) Lari² per month from the government. Nine of these 37 reported having received other aid such as light or electricity, or receiving food and products on an irregular and infrequent basis, while the other 28 claimed that they receive only the 11 Lari payment. Seven respondents reported that they receive nothing. As such, it seems that the quality and amount of aid received by IDPs has gone down, and that the assistance situation for many has gotten worse since the initial wave of aid received directly following their flight from Abkhazia.

² At the current exchange rate of roughly 1 USD = 1.5 Lari (GEL), this monthly IDP pension is worth approximately 7-9 USD.

When asked how assistance could be made better, the respondents gave a variety of answers. Many suggested simply that more be done: more money and aid be given, that it be given more frequently, and that more types of help be offered. Some suggested that there be training and job opportunities created for IDPs while others expressed the belief that the effectiveness of aid was hampered by government corruption and problems in distribution. Interview B8, for example, responded that “a lot of humanitarian goods were coming here, but I heard that the Georgian government was exchanging for things they wanted and keeping this” (B8, 2007). Interview B6 similarly responded that “humanitarian aid coming from foreign parties was going to ministry and in their pockets, and was not reaching IDPs” (B6, 2007). Several other approaches were offered as well:

- Give More (money, aid, “help”) - 9
- Do not Know - 6
- Eliminate Corruption - 6
- Improve how aid is delivered/organized - 9
- Return them to Abkhazia- 4
- Give them their own house/property - 4
- Give Jobs - 3
- Opportunities/Education/Training Programs - 2

The individuals interviewed were also asked several questions about their integration into the general population in their area. The study asked participants about the nature of their integration, how well they perceive themselves to be integrated, and how integration could be facilitated. Overall, 56% of respondents reported themselves to be generally well integrated and 31% found themselves poorly integrated. Meanwhile another 13% (6 people) did not directly address the question but rather gave answers such as “the Adjarans have been very good to us” (B8, 2007). This may be explained by the way in which certain subjects were solicited, something that will be discussed in the research discussion. This could also reflect a personal or culturally rooted felt need to be diplomatic or circumspect or not disclose negative sentiments to strangers or outsiders.

Interviewees were also asked to rate the treatment they have received in their host community on a scale from one to five, one being poorly and five being well.

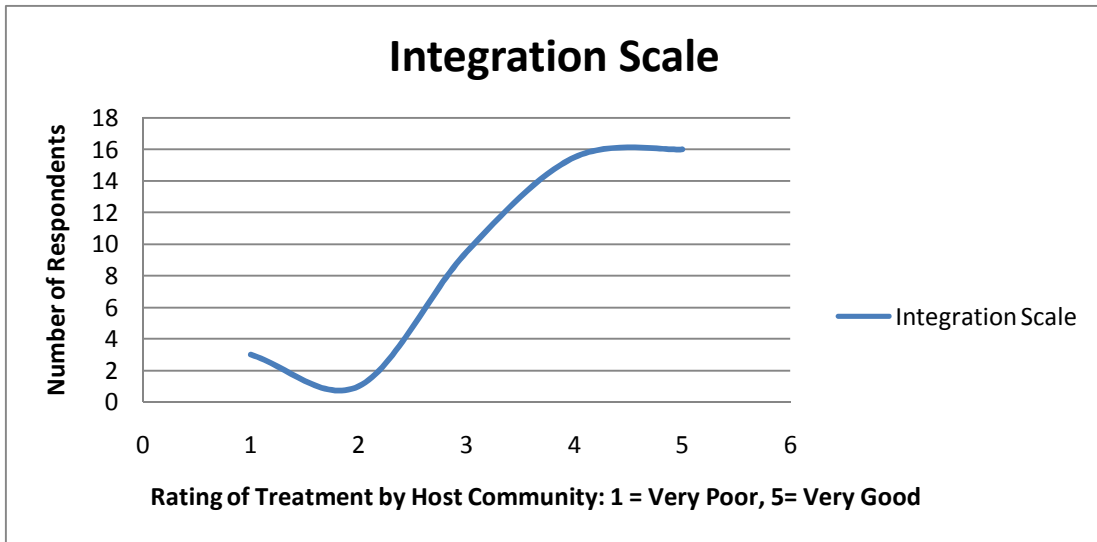


Figure 8: Integration in host community.

As the figure shows, the overall sentiment from the IDPs that were interviewed is that they have been well treated by their host community. In addition 56% of interviewees reported that they consider themselves well integrated. This is somewhat surprising in contrast to the 77% that reported that they currently receive either no aid or only 11-14 Lari per month in aid, as this should demonstrate that conditions have worsened for IDPs during the time of displacement. One may speculate that perhaps participants' views and expectations of other Georgian citizens are quite different from their views and expectations of the government.

Participants were also asked for suggestions of how integration could be improved or facilitated. The most common answers were the need for permanent normal homes, employment and a combination of the two; and, interestingly, improved relations with the local population was also a predominant answer. Also interesting was that the answers of 9 out of 13 interviewees from Batumi were spread between "improving relationships with the local population" and "we can't/won't integrate." This suggests that the relationship between the general population and the

IDP community in Batumi and the Adjara region may be particularly tense. The response to this question breaks down as follows:

- Permanent home/ not live in compact centers (11)*
- Employment (9)*
- Improved relationship with local population (9)
- Rights - 2
- Do not know or can't answer – 5
- We won't/can't integrate so send us back – 6
- Integration is not a problem – 2
- Other - 5

**7 said both a home and employment.*

The data pertaining to IDPs' perspectives on the current situation in their host communities gives us a less than clear picture of the forces and motivations either keeping them in or driving them away from their current homes outside of Abkhazia. On one hand, the aid they receive has diminished to nearly nothing, and although only one third of interviewees considered themselves to be poorly integrated, all but 2 interviewees were able to offer suggestion for how they be helped to integrate more fully, and of these nearly two thirds suggested concrete tangible measures that could conceivably be implemented by the government or other organizations.

This information shows decreased resources and a lower quality of life as a tangible force compelling these individuals to either go back or somehow exit their current way of life. At the same time, the suggestions for better integrations indicate that there is a motivation in the majority of respondents to find employment and private housing if given the opportunity, and in this way more fully integrate with the local community. What this suggests is that there should be little to no motivations for IDPs to remain in their current state or lifestyle, which is that of prolonged displacement and segregation from the general Georgian population. However, the persistence of this lifestyle among IDPs suggests that there are less obvious forces pushing the IDP community both away from integration and away from return. These issues may be clarified by looking at IDP perceptions of their home territory and the prospect of return there.

Perceptions of home country. In order to identify some of the factors that would both draw and repel IDPs from returning to their home territory, the study asked participants a number of questions about the challenges and difficulties they would anticipate if returning to Abkhazia and how they look at the possibility of coexistence with the Abkhaz. Given the breadth of this information, this section is broken into two smaller sections, one pertaining to fears and concerns expressed regarding return and the other pertaining to relationships with Abkhazians. This section also touches on the issue of security, which the information shows is a definite factor in the study of IDP perceptions and motivations.

Participants were asked a number of questions regarding their feelings about Abkhazians in Abkhazia, contact with Abkhazians, and the possibility of coexistence. The study shows that roughly half (47%) of the people interviewed have had contact with Abkhazians since being displaced and roughly half (53%) have not. It also found that, when asked, the majority, 67%, of interviewees expressed positive or innocuous feelings toward Abkhazians, while only 15% expressed feelings towards Abkhazians that were overtly negative or aggressive (do not know or can not say – 9%; other – 9%). The negative feelings expressed included comments such as: “I feel to them aggressive, because they are aggressive, they are aggressor, they who live in my house and who is aggressive to me, why I cannot be aggressive to them.” However, this person then added “I say this about Russians, Abkhazian people are “blind gun” or weapon for them” (T1, 2007). In nine of these responses the participant echoed this sentiment that the Russians or other minorities in Abkhazia (such as Turks or Armenians) are more responsible for their displacement. In fact, there was a certain phrase used in several of these responses that referred to the Abkhazians as a “blind gun,” inferring that the Abkhaz were essentially used as a tool for Russian aggression.

Participants were also asked to rate, in terms of difficulty, certain aspects of coexistence with Abkhazians. Individuals rated these tasks on a scale of one to five, one being very simple

and five being very difficult. They were asked about the difficulty of living in the same town as Abkhaz people, living next door to Abkhaz people, being friends with Abkhaz people, and sharing important things with Abkhaz. The answers are graphed in Figure 11 below.

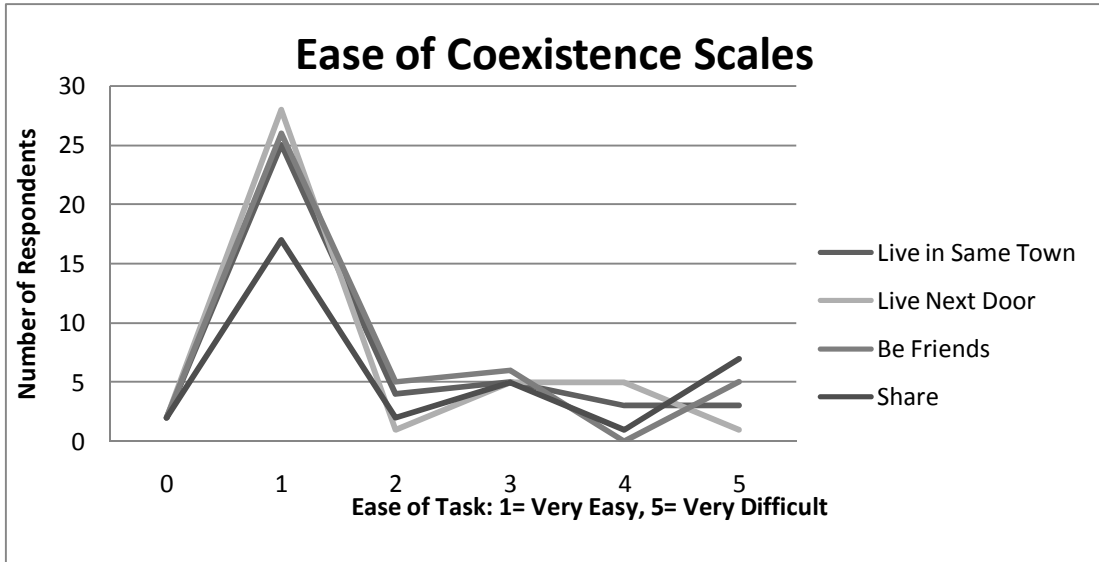


Figure 9: Georgian IDPs ease of contact with Abkhazians

As the figure shows, 1 was the most common rating for all the aspects of coexistence mentioned. However, note that the spike for sharing land is noticeably lower than the others, and has the highest number of 5 ratings. A number of interviewees (14) showed difficulty with this question and answered such as “I don’t want anything of others – I want only what is mine” (B13, 2007) or “if it’s mine, why?” (T11, 2007).

The study shows thus far that a fraction of the IDPs interviewed harbor overtly negative or aggressive feelings towards Abkhazians, while many others appear to have a rather conciliatory or non-threatening attitude. However, the data from the scale questions suggests that if pushed, this conciliatory attitude may give way to a more aggressive stance. As the figure shows, most respondents found the idea of living next door to, befriending, or living in the same town as Abkhazian to be easy and non-threatening. However, the sharing of important things such

as land or other resources enters a gray area, so to speak. Arriving at an agreement of how limited resources are to be shared between two or more groups requires more close work and cooperation than simply living in the same town as someone. As the data shows, there are less respondents that answered one (easy) and more that answered 5 (difficult) for this item than any other, and 14 respondents struggled with the question. This suggests that the level of uncertainty and required cooperation that comes along with the sharing of resources is uncomfortable for many IDPs. However, these are exactly the kinds of challenges that are common in the reintegration or repatriation of displaced populations, and the level of discomfort with such tasks displayed in this study's sample suggest that the IDP population may be less prepared to once again coexist with Abkhazians than they claim to be.

Interview participants were also asked to describe any challenges they would foresee if returning to Abkhazia, and any fears they might have about doing so. A variety of answers were given, and responses were initially separated into two groups: significant challenges and minor or no challenges (which includes responses where there was expressed optimism about overcoming the challenge). 62% of interviewees anticipated significant challenges, while 12% expected minor or no challenges (Other: 11%).

The classification of responses as either significant or minor/insignificant was based on the respondent's perception of that challenge rather than the substance of what the challenge is. For example, many respondents named the need to rebuild their house or find a new house as a challenge. An answer such as "the biggest problem will be reconstructing of everything lost - finding what they had there" (T14, 2007) would be classified as a significant challenge. However, a response such as "after war everything is ruined - lost houses... but if we go back we will rebuild our houses" (B10, 2007) would be classified as insignificant because of the respondent's expressed perception of this as a surmountable challenge.

It may, however, better illustrate the collective response to this question to indicate the types of challenges that are anticipated. Challenges that fall under “starting a new life,” such as finding a home and a job, were the most commonly mentioned (roughly half of the responses). Other challenges included relationship based and emotional challenges (six interviewees) such as: “the most serious [challenge] would be cooperation with Abkhaz and to make friendship” (K2, 2007); as well as challenges to their security such as: “trust... we never know if someone will come to our house at night” (B3, 2007). Meanwhile, seven interviewees responded that they would not expect any significant challenges. For example: “for the government to gain control of Abkhazia (is the main problem) – then it would be very easy” (K4, 2007). Another offered that “the joy of being back would be greater than any problems there” (B1, 2007).

Responses to the question of what fears they may have about returning were broken down into groups of significant fears and minor fears. The responses were grouped by the same criteria as the responses to the challenges of returning. That is, the categorization of the response was based not on the substance of the fear noted in it, but by the significance or severity placed on that fear by the respondent. 49% expressed fears or concerns about returning, while 22% expressed minor or no concern (other or not applicable - 20%). The most common fear mentioned was that of security and protection (13 respondents) followed by the fear of beginning another conflict (seven respondents). Other fears included relational problems such as friendship and acceptance, while several people responded that in regards to return, they had fear but they were not sure of what.

In an attempt to press the issue of fears and concerns from a different angle, subjects were asked about their willingness to confront Abkhazians in different situations. First, subjects were asked whether they would be willing to participate in a dialogue with Abkhazians, and if so, what fears or apprehensions they may have about doing so. Asking about willingness to dialogue allows the instrument to address the present respondents with the possibility of contact in a

different way. The idea of dialogue is more immediate and less vague than the general idea of contact with Abkhazians. Dialoguing presents the respondent with a more precise mental image of contact: being face-to-face with Abkhazians and discussing difficult issues with them. Furthermore, the question about dialogue presents the respondent with a premise of contact with Abkhazians in a controlled and presumably secure situation. 87% responded that they would be willing to participate, while only 11% said that they would not. The fears or concerns expressed by those willing to participate included apprehension about discussing difficult topics, bringing up painful emotions, and first impressions. Only one person expressed any fear of violence or being threatened. Later, interviewees were also asked whether they would be willing to return to Abkhazia under the status quo (i.e. without state protection) provided that they were first able to meet and build relationships with people that would be their neighbors there. The answer was overwhelmingly “no.” Only 6% would be willing to return under these conditions, another 6% said they did not know, and 88% was not willing, with many adding that under no circumstances would they return to Abkhazia without the protection of the Georgian state.

The fact that 88% of this pool demands Georgian protection as a pre-condition to return underscores the seriousness of certain fears and trepidations expressed by the IDP population and discussed in these findings. A common aspect of the fears and challenges mentioned is that many have to do with not experiencing again what the IDP community has already experienced. The fear of beginning another conflict is the most obvious expression of this, yet concerns about security and protection may stem from the threat they experienced that triggered the initial flight from Abkhazia. Furthermore, the challenges of “starting a new life” would not be unlike the challenges that IDPs faced when it became apparent that they would not be returning to Abkhazia right away. One can see how these fears and concerns could be rather strong motivations against returning, particularly without the safeguard of Georgian government control. Furthermore, these fears were compounded in 1998 when roughly 50,000 Georgians that had returned to the Gali

region in eastern Abkhazia were forced to flee again due to pressure from Abkhaz militia groups (Lynch, 2001). In addition to the trauma of this re-displacement in 1998, the fighting in August 2008 and the widespread displacement of Georgians that resulted from it has likely had a deep impact on the Georgian IDP community and likely strengthened the fear of repeating the experience of displacement. This remains to be assessed. Yet recognizing the significance of these events, it is quite possible that the government protection or security guarantee that the IDP community demands before going back is not simply to protect against violence or crime, but also to protect them from repeating the experiences of flight and displacement.

Conflict skills. One force acting on the possibility of return may be the perceived lack of skills to handle the perceived challenges that IDPs may face upon return. The final section of this initial level of data analysis pertains to the interviewees' skills, ability, and confidence in handling and confronting the conflicts they may face in either remaining or returning. If we are to understand the apparent stagnation of the Georgian IDP community as being the result of opposing and counterbalancing forces, then a perceived shortage or surplus of skill and adeptness in handling conflict could serve as one such force. In this section participants were asked about their experience and preferred methods for handling conflict, whether these methods would apply to conflicts they may face if returning to Abkhazia, and given these opinions on conflict, under what conditions they would be willing to return.

To establish previous experience with conflict and cooperation with Abkhazians, participants were asked if they had participated in any peacebuilding or grass-roots reconciliation projects or activity with Abkhazians since being displaced. 25% had participated in such an activity and 75% had not. This 25% may be a misleadingly high figure as subjects were found through purposive convenience sampling, which may have selected for IDPs with more exposure to peacebuilding and conflict resolution methods than the average Georgian IDP.

Participants were then asked to think about the types of conflicts they most often face in their current lives (such as with family or neighbors) and to describe the ways that they usually approach or deal with these conflicts. Responses were categorized as generally as either evasive approaches, proactive approaches, not sure, and other. 42% of people responded with avoiding or evasive approaches to conflict such as “I try always to avoid such situations” (K9, 2007) or “I try to be patient because I fear retaliation” (B3, 2007). 27% of people noted proactive approaches such as “to compromise and [have] supportive attitude to counterpart” (T12, 2007) or in some cases trying to win. However, few gave responses that might be considered aggressive or defensive. The types of conflict that participants expect to face in the event of return to Abkhazia include conflicts about property issues and stolen property, and conflicts about participation in the war and losses experienced because of the war. 29% of people responded that they expected little or no conflict if returning to Abkhazia.

Participants were also asked to think about how they would handle the conflicts that they expected to face in Abkhazia. The various answers given were grouped into approaches that relied on outside authority, such as the government or legal measures, and approaches that self-reliant. 35% gave responses that they would turn to an outside authority to deal with conflicts, while 42% stated that they would use conflict approaches that were self-reliant. Most of these self-reliant approaches were rather vague, however, such as “I will resolve with diplomacy and with talk” (T1, 2007) or “I will try to solve with peace” (Z5, 2007).

These findings show that a sizable portion of the IDPs interviewed tend to avoid conflict and prefer to resolve conflicts and disputes through outside authorities. At the same time, there is another sizable group that cited taking proactive approaches to conflict and preferred to solve conflicts themselves. However, in looking at the proactive and self-reliant approaches that were offered, very few offer anything more specific than “with diplomacy,” “with talking,” or “will solve peacefully.” Even when respondents were probed with questions such as “what if

diplomacy doesn't work" little more specific strategy was given. In addition, 29% of interviewees expect little or no conflict and 75% have had no experience working cooperatively with Abkhazians since displacement. What these results may indicate is that while the IDPs that were interviewed may have some skills and confidence to deal with potential conflicts, they may also be unprepared to deal with conflicts they may encounter if returning.

With these conflict handling issues in mind, Participants were asked about return and the conditions that would be necessary for them to return. It should be noted that this set of questions was developed later in the study, and that it was only asked to individuals that expressed a desire to return. As such this set of questions was asked to 32 of the 45 IDPs that were interviewed.

From these 32, the following conditions were given as necessary for return:

- Peaceful conditions/ no war – 10
- Georgian Jurisdiction- 8
- Government protection/guarantee – 7
- Russians leave – 3
- Just for Abkhazians to say its ok – 1
- Economic improvement – 5
- Restoration/ rebuilding – 2
- Other – 5

**Some respondents gave answers that fell into more than one category, for example listing both economic improvement and Georgian jurisdiction as necessary to return. Such answers were counted for each category they addressed.*

Finally, participants were asked if there were any conditions under which they would return to Abkhazia under the current status quo, or in other words without Georgian control over the territory. Overwhelmingly participants said they would not be willing to return without Georgian jurisdiction: 88% said no, 9% answered yes, and 3% responded that they did not know.

Considering that one third of the IDPs interviewed expect not to face any conflict once they return, and that no one expressed the anticipation of insurmountable conflict, it seems curious that almost all of the people interviewed would refuse to return without the Georgian state having jurisdiction over the region. Similar to the assertions made in the previous section, this

contradiction suggests that protection from Abkhaz may not be the only reason for wanting there to be Georgian state control over Abkhazia. As was suggested in the previous sections, this may be part of a broader desire to avoid repeating the experience of displacement and the various traumas that accompany it. Or, it is possible if not likely, that there is another reason or force connected to this demand for Georgian jurisdiction despite a relatively confident outlook on potential conflict with Abkhazians.

Conclusions. This section of the analysis has identified a number of forces and motivations at work within the Georgian IDP population. However, it has not yet identified a clear group of forces that would explain the stagnation or non-movement of the IDP population. Reviewing these forces, the study finds that a mix of tangible and intangible motivations are pulling and pushing IDPs towards return, integration, and their status quo.

The section regarding IDPs' desire to return showed that the goal of returning to Abkhazia on a permanent basis was nearly unanimous among the interviewees, and that beneath this stated desire was a collection of intangible yet apparently very strong motivations for return. The section regarding IDPs' perceptions of integration and the host community where they currently live showed overall that there are no apparent forces drawing IDPs toward their current status quo. Meanwhile, there appears to be the motivation and ambition toward things that would lead to greater integration such as employment and housing outside of a collective center. What this indicates is that there must, on some level, be forces that are pulling IDPs into their current situation of prolonged displacement and non-integration. While the study has shown that there are certainly deficiencies in the assistance given to IDPs, and that more could be done to facilitate integration, on some level it is ultimately the decision of individual IDPs and IDP families to actively pursue integration. Therefore, there must be something that makes the segregation and limbo of the status quo preferable to integration.

This is all further complicated by the sections about IDP perceptions of the home territory, the possibility of coexistence, and their perceived ability to deal with conflict. When asked about possible fears and concerns about returning, the study found that a majority of respondents expressed some fears and possible challenges about returning to Abkhazia. Furthermore, the most prominent fears were in regard to security, protection, and the fear of starting another conflict. This shows that, despite the stated desire to return, there are very tangible motivations for not doing so. Furthermore, this section shows that as stated a conciliatory attitude towards Abkhazians is far more prevalent than an overtly aggressive one. However, when confronted with the task of sharing or perhaps giving something up for Abkhazian counterparts, a more aggressive attitude comes to the fore in a portion of the interviewees.

At the same time, the section on perceived conflict skills shows mixed and contradictory results regarding conflict handling skills, confidence in dealing with conflict, and needs for return among those interviewed. The study found a high degree of stated confidence in the ability to handle and deal with whatever conflicts IDPs may face if returning to Abkhazia. In fact one-third of those interviewed anticipated facing no conflict if returning. Yet this section also showed little experience dealing with conflict, and tendency to turn towards outside authorities to resolve conflicts. It also showed that the primary conditions required for return are a peace deal, a security guarantee, and Georgian jurisdiction over Abkhazia. In fact, the overwhelming majority of IDPs said that under no conditions would they return to Abkhazia without the Georgian government having control over the region. As this demand seems to contradict the somewhat confident and optimistic outlook on coexistence with Abkhazians, this may suggest that there is something other than simply protection from Abkhazians that IDPs would get from Georgian control. And, as was posited earlier, what IDPs may be looking for in Georgian security guarantees may also be protection against experiencing that which IDPs have already experienced: not simply the peril and fear of flight, but also the challenge and upheaval of starting

over. The table below summarizes the forces for and against return to Abkhazia and for or against staying in their current locations.

	Forces for staying	Forces for returning
+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High stated level of integration • Motivation to integrate (displayed through desire to find permanent housing and employment) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stated desire to return. • “Intangibles” given as motivations for return (i.e. drivers that cannot be replaced or supplanted outside of return to Abkhazia) • Low stated anticipation of conflict. • Conciliatory attitude towards Abkhazians.
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of permanent homes and employment. • Diminishing and insufficient aid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of personal security or threat. • Fear of starting another conflict and threat of reliving the experience of displacement. • Challenge of starting over again. • Lack of conflict skills.

Table 4: Summary of forces for staying and returning to Abkhazia.

Thus what this section has done is highlight inconsistencies and identify places where there should be a strong force acting on IDPs but there does not appear to be. In other words there appears to be a gravity of sorts keeping a large portion of IDPs in their status quo despite their stated preference for the markers of integration such as employment and stable housing. Yet, one thing that this part of the analysis does seem to suggest is that the attitudes and motivations of individuals in the IDP community are behind the forces that act against each other to produce the inertia that keeps this population in the current status quo. This suggests that the attitudes of this population are connected to the status quo that it maintains by neither returning nor integrating. As such this also suggests that their attitudes are connected to elite governing apparatus that rely on the IDP status quo for authority, and in turn use this authority to act as drivers and agitators in the conflict. In the next section, the analysis will attempt to identify and make sense of broad themes present within the whole body of interview data. By looking at the emerging themes the analysis should be able to give a deeper understanding to these gaps, and to identify the role of this community within the broader conflict.

Level 2 – Emerging Themes

The previous analysis yields useful information about the forces and motivations at work within the Georgian IDP community, as well as what might be thought of as black holes within the field of forces acting on and within the IDP community. These are places where a seemingly strong force appears to have less impact on the movement and motivations of the IDP community than it ought to. This would lead one to expect an equally strong counter force to develop in opposition, yet there are places where no such counter-force is readily apparent. These places where it seems that there should be some force either pushing or pulling to maintain the equilibrium, but where no such force is apparent are what may be thought of as these black holes within the field of forces acting on the Georgian IDP population. However, an item-by-item analysis of the interview data can only do so much to provide an understanding of this population, its motivations, and its role in the Georgian Abkhazian conflict. Patterns and themes also emerge from looking at the interview responses as a whole body of information instead of breaking it down by item. This second level of analysis will identify some of these themes, some of which are informed by the literature and others which emerge from the data. These themes speak to the role and position of this IDP community within the theatre of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict as well as having relevance to understanding IDPs in frozen conflicts more generally.

The first level of analysis dealt largely with the first hypotheses about opposing forces within the IDP community, seeking to identify these forces. The second level of analysis deals with the second hypothesis by trying to better inform our understanding of the role of the IDP community in the greater Georgian-Abkhazian conflict. The second hypothesis in this paper asserts that frozen conflict is held at equilibrium between a low-intensity level of non-conflict and the threshold in intensity that can be thought of as ripeness; and that it is held there by forces that both drive and suppress the conflict. This equilibrium remains at a level of intensity high enough that peace is unlikely to develop from de-escalation and fading of the conflict; yet it is at a low

enough level of intensity that peace is unlikely to result from a mutually hurting stalemate and the resolution ripeness it is said to induce (Zartman, 2000). While this study is not able to test this hypothesis in whole by examining all of the factors involved, it can begin to test it by looking at one of these driving or suppressing factors and determining the role that this factor plays.

Selective aggression. There are a number of ways that a given population or party may be identified as a driving factor in a conflict. Driving factors are those which serve to perpetuate or escalate the conflict, and parties may act in this capacity in a variety of ways that are too numerous to list. For example, a group can act as a driving factor directly by taking up arms in the conflict, or more indirectly by supporting a faction involved in the fighting, by demanding that their side continue fighting, or by obstructing the peace process in any number of ways. The Georgian IDP population has acted as a driver for the conflict in some of the more obvious ways that a group can. For example, the IDP population supplied men that fought in the Georgian-Abkhazian war of 1992-1994, and the Georgian-Abkhaz Government in Exile, comprised of Georgian members of the pre 1992 Abkhazian regional government, has been a staunch opponent of any form of Abkhaz sovereignty. However, in the attempt to illuminate the role that the Georgian IDP population has played in this conflict, this study sought to identify some more subtle trends in this population that may either confirm or disconfirm their role as a driving force in the conflict.

One way to begin may be to look for signs of aggression and ill-will towards Abkhazians expressed by IDPs. This may seem like an unpromising direction, as earlier in the analysis the study found that when IDPs were asked about their feelings towards Abkhazians 76% responded with feelings that were generally positive or non-threatening, while only 15% showed overtly negative and malevolent feelings. However, looking for less obvious signs of aggression towards Abkhazians shows some hostility in more than 15% of the interview pool. To illustrate, selective

aggression is shown by some interviewees whereby certain groups of Abkhazians, such as one's neighbors, are viewed positively while other select groups are viewed as enemies, such as Abkhazians who fought in the war. For example, when asked about the prospect of meeting Abkhazians in dialogue one person said "I would be happy to meet my neighbors, but I'm not sure about Abkhaz I don't know – I'm afraid I will get killed" (B9, 2007); another responded: "yes, I meet them if they don't give part in the war – but the people who killed my uncle - I don't want to meet them" (T7, 2007). This is particularly seen in this group of interviews around the subject of the IDP's abandoned house. The sentiment expressed by interviewees in Kutaisi, "people who live in their own house are good people" (K1, 2007), is exemplary of this selectively aggressive attitude towards Abkhazians. What this statement also says is "people who live in my house are bad." Looking at the entire interview data, this study found 30 examples in 22 interviews of this selective aggression towards Abkhazians. This means that about half of the IDPs interviewed demonstrated this theme somewhere in their interview; and, while this is not a great enough portion to make a generalization about all Georgian IDPs, it does suggest that some degree of hostility towards Abkhazians, though hidden or subtle, does exist in the IDP community. Thus it could be said that such hostility would serve to drive the conflict or at the least that aggression and hostility would serve to entrench a group in a chosen position, and that this entrenchment would drive the intensity of a conflict up.

Georgian government control. The entrenchment in just such a position is another theme that appears in the interview data. The insistence on bringing Abkhazia under Georgian jurisdiction is common not only in Georgian political rhetoric, but also among IDPs when talking about return. This sentiment was seen quite clearly in the first level of analysis where 82% of those asked said they would not return to Abkhazia without an official peace deal and without Georgian control over Abkhazia. However, this theme of not wanting to return without Georgian

control is present throughout the data, and it is in the unsolicited references to this demand that one can see clues as to the reason for it as well.

It is not uncommon in conflict for entrenchment in a position to be rooted in a rights-focused mentality and desire to “win,” so to speak. One could speculate that this sense of rights-based entitlement is seen in the interviewees who said they want to return because “it is mine, it’s my land” (T14, 2007), and this is one of the possible reasons that so many IDPs insist on having Georgian control before they return to Abkhazia. However, a look at the interview material shows that the need for protection is a central and very real reason for this demand. 29 references to Georgian control were seen in 27 interviews, just over half of the pool. Of these 29 references, 18 specifically mention protection, safety, or fear, which shows that this is a considerable motivation in the IDP community. One respondent noted, for example, “I would be afraid, I never go back to this territory if I have no guarantee from our government that it is safe” (T13). Another noted: “when the government gives [the] promise of protection [we’ll] return” (K1). Furthermore, 2 interviews made references to the events that occurred in the Gali region of Abkhazia in 1998. “There was once when [the] Georgian government already helped IDPs to go back to Gali, and Abkhazians shoot them because it was not official” (T12). These events are discussed in detail in the Case Background chapter, but in brief this refers to the armed clashes that transpired in early 1998 when a large number of Georgian IDPs moved back to their homes in the Gali region of Abkhazia, but did so without aid or protection of the Georgian government. Clashes between Georgian nationalist militias and Abkhaz forces transpired and resulted in a great deal of violence and the re-displacement of nearly 50,000 IDPs. For obvious reasons, this has become something of a traumatic event for many Georgians, particularly IDPs, and while 2 references is not a sizable portion of the data, it does indicate a sentiment that likely exists through much of the IDP community. As such, the study suggests that a fear-based insistence on Georgian control of Abkhazia as prerequisite to return is a factor within the IDP community. This insistence

contributes to the entrenchment of a position that is difficult to accommodate, and as such shows another way in which the IDP serves as a driving factor in the conflict. Furthermore, the fighting that took place in August 2008 in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, as well as into parts of Georgia neighboring those regions, surely had a traumatic effect on Georgia's IDPs as well as their population as a whole. One could easily speculate that this would have had the effect of underlining and reinforcing security concerns about the prospect of returning and would support fears that returning to Abkhazia without Georgian state protection would lead them to repeat the trauma of displacement yet again.

Disempowerment. At the same time as this insistence on government control, the study also finds that there is a theme of deferment to government authority and of general disempowerment among IDPs. A theme of powerlessness or lack of agency emerged in some interviews. This was expressed in a variety of ways; in some cases it was expressed in terms of deferment to authority or institutions to solve problems. For example, when asked about what conflicts people expected to face if they return and how they might deal with them, a number of interviewees said simply that the government would solve such problems: "everything will be decided by government" (B7, 2007). In other instances there was a tendency towards "I don't know" answers, particularly when asked to offer suggestions for programs or ways to improve certain services. This trend also came up in responses to questions regarding contact with Abkhaz and willingness to participate in dialogue. For example, one person responded: "I'm not a politician and meeting someone like me from Abkhazia wouldn't mean anything, so dialogue has to be on government level" (B7, 2007). In another case, when asked about the prospect of return the respondent answered "I must be president to answer these questions" (T5, 2007).

There were 27 occurrences of responses that reflect this theme of disempowerment found in 20 of the 45 interviews. There is a fair amount of speculating that can be done about the

causes of this trend towards lack of agency, and the significance that it has for the study. It is possible and likely that to some degree this theme, and the trend towards “I don’t know” responses, is descended from the era of Soviet Rule, and the political culture created during that 70-year period during which self agency and autonomy could be limited or subjugated arbitrarily by the state. At the same time it is possible that this tendency is connected to the overall sense of stagnation that is apparent in so much of the IDP community, with such stagnation and hopelessness the task of offering alternatives and solutions begins to appear pointless. The first part of this analysis identified the possible existence of some unapparent force or motivation that pulls a large portion of this community towards the status quo. It is possible that this puzzling pull towards non-integration and segregation is related to the theme of disempowerment and lack of agency that emerges from the data.

In the study of refugees and the psychology of displacement, as was discussed earlier in the literature review, there are certain coping mechanisms that have been observed in displaced communities that may be of relevance here. “Linking” tendencies have been described in this literature in cases where some aspect of life before displacement is recreated or perpetuated in order to fabricate or maintain the connection between the former life, the current life of displacement, and the hope for future return (Volkan, 1994, 2003; Zetter, 1999; Al-Rasheed, 1994). These linked aspects may range from placing undue importance on certain personal items to recreation of the old home to the maintenance of IDP communities and the IDP identity (Volkan, 1994, 2003).

The study of trauma and victimization has also noted that trauma, such as the experience of forced displacement, can severely damage one’s identity and sense of self. As Wilson (2004) notes: “identity involves a sense of self-sameness and continuity” (p. 114), yet traumatic experiences have the effect of severing one’s connections to their past and their identity. Similarly, Herman notes, “the core experiences of psychological trauma are disempowerment and

disconnection from others” (Herman, 1942, p. 133). As such, survivors of traumatic experience such as forced displacement are left with a weakened identity and sense of self. The identity of victim, or in this case the identity of IDP, serves to redress this severed sense of self in several ways. Herman notes that the identity of victim carries with it a “specialness” that the victim must relinquish in the process of recovery (Herman, 1942). Relinquishing the specialness of victim identity allows the individual to regain commonality and belonging in society, but also carries with it “a feeling of smallness, of insignificance, a sense that one’s own troubles are ‘as a drop of rain in the sea’” (Herman, 1942, p.236). When victim identity and the troubles that come with it are as politically charged and carry such consequences as they do in the case of IDP communities, recovery may not be an appealing trade-off for relinquishing this specialness. Furthermore, the social status of victim, and the sense of shared victimization in communities involved in trauma can promote cohesion in such groups (Roe & Cairns, 2003). Membership in such groups can provide the needed sense of identity that is often damaged in survivors of trauma. Furthermore, in the case of interstate and inter-communal conflict, the self-assigned status of victim group can provide strength “vis-à-vis the international community, which usually tends to support the victimized side in a conflict” (Bar-Tal, 2003).

There is both comfort and power in the homeostasis of maintaining the identity of victim. First the displaced person draws comfort and commonality from being part of a displaced community and the opportunity to recreate a lost past that that community provides. Furthermore, the identity of victim carries a certain degree of specialness and power. As such, the degree of power that the displaced community retains by maintaining its identity as a separate community may shed light on the puzzling lack of integration the community in this study shows.

The amount and type of aid or assistance given to displaced persons certainly can either facilitate or restrict the ease and speed with which individuals integrate into host communities. However, on some level it is ultimately the prerogative of displaced persons to integrate into the

host community or to actively pursue the possibility of return by remaining segregated from the host community. By not integrating or perhaps on some level refusing to integrate, displaced persons retain a certain identity and power much in the way that a victim does. By not integrating, displaced communities ensure that they remain an issue for the host country/society and as such they ensure that they remain an issue in the conflict. Nor will the conflict fade away without resolution to the issue of displacement while that displaced population remains visible. By not integrating, communities safeguard themselves against being ignored; they ensure themselves a role in the conflict (even if it is minor) and with that role comes some degree of power in that conflict and thus some degree of control over their own circumstances.

Conclusion

The second level of analysis has identified several themes that suggest that there are sentiments and demands within the Georgian IDP community that may indeed indicate that this community serves as a driving factor in the Georgian Abkhazian conflict. Half of the interviewees display signs of what could be called selective aggression. This means that when asked about their feelings towards Abkhazians, respondents report having no negative feelings towards Abkhazians in general, and only harbor anger towards the certain limited groups of Abkhazians, such as the single Abkhazian that has taken one's house or only towards those that fought in the war. Furthermore, there is a prominent theme in the interviews of demanding Georgian control over Abkhazia, and that return is conditional to this demand. By making this demand, the IDP community places itself as a driver between the level that the conflict is at currently and any possibility of it fading away or de-escalating on its own. If the IDP community does not simply fade into the Georgian population (which it does not appear to be doing) and if this community makes clear that they will not be gradually returning to Abkhazia on their own

(without Georgian protection) then it is unlikely that the conflict of which they are a part will begin to fade drastically in intensity. These forces are illustrated in the table below.

	Forces for staying	Forces for returning
+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power retained by maintaining distinct victim status as IDP community 	
-		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selective or 'hidden' aggression towards Abkhazians • Fear of repeating experience of displacement, exacerbated by violent clashes in Gali in 1998 and events in August 2008.

Table 5: Forces for staying and returning to Abkhazia.

Both the first and second parts of the analysis uncovered signs of a powerful fear at work within the community: the fear of returning to Abkhazia only to have to flee again and in turn experience the trauma of displacement again. This fear is discussed in the first part of the analysis as references to the fear of “starting the conflict again” and is also connected to the theme discussed in the second part of demanding Georgian state control of Abkhazia as precondition to return. Uncovering this fear of re-traumatization is a key part of understanding the entrenched position within this community of requiring guarantees of protection from the Georgian government as a prerequisite for returning to Abkhazia. The issue of IDP return and the entrenchment of both sides on this issue is, in turn, a driving force in the conflict.

This leads to the final conclusion of these results. The first part of this analysis detected that there was some unapparent force towards the status quo of prolonged displacement and segregation that seemingly is stronger than the appeal of integration. Later, the analysis also identified a theme emerging from the data that might be identified as disempowerment or the acceptance of powerlessness, which is most visible in deference to government control. Looking at phenomena that have been observed both in refugee psychology and in the psychology of victimization, the analysis finds that there may be some connection between the resistance to

integration and the issue of power. As was discussed above, by remaining visibly segregated and thus maintaining the identity of a community displaced by conflict, the IDP population is able to retain an undeniable role in the conflict and thus some amount of power. Furthermore, if one takes this phenomena to suggest that there is some degree of intentionality on the part of the IDP community in maintaining the status quo, then the argument can be made that the attitudes of the IDP community do indeed actively drive the conflict. The status quo is maintained through some degree of intentionality, thus the source of authority for the Abkhaz Government-in-Exile is maintained; and as a notoriously partisan organization, that lobbies a hard nationalist line in regards to the conflict and the full return of IDPs to Abkhazia the Government-in-Exile certainly acts to drive the conflict. Thus, one can connect the attitudes of IDPs to the perpetuation of the conflict's frozen state posited in the framework presented earlier.

Discussion

As the reporting of results in the previous chapter should show, the study conducted for this paper is multifaceted and somewhat complex, and produced a sizeable amount of raw data. Although the methods used in this thesis were as appropriate as possible for this subject, there are some limitations to the study and its ability to draw definitive conclusions from the data. The following discussion will outline caveats, shortcomings, and errors in several aspects of the study and analysis conducted. Such caveats are found in the study's design, its execution and data collection, as well as the method and process of analysis.

Study Design

The study was designed to accommodate the information needs of this research within the constraints posed by logistical and financial limitations, a limited period of time in which to collect information, as well as the political limits that exist when conducting field research about an ongoing or unresolved conflict. These various caveats will be discussed in turn.

This study was conducted to better understand the various factors at work in the perpetuation of frozen conflict, and the role that displaced persons play in these dynamics. It pursued this end by studying more closely the population of internally displaced persons that fled their place of origin during the Georgian-Abkhazian war in the early 1990's. It follows that the discussion of this study should begin by briefly assessing the appropriateness and representativeness of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict as an example of frozen conflict. In an earlier chapter the following definition for frozen conflict was offered:

Frozen conflict is a particular phenomenon of intractability where the conflict experiences a long period of what seems to be stagnation or non movement. This period occurs after most of the violence in the conflict is ended by ceasefire, but leaves the conflict unresolved and parties in a state of destructive and painful ambiguity – particularly in regard to parties' legal relationship with each other and with the outside world, which becomes the status quo for those involved.

It could be said that because the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict fits this description almost exactly, that it is indeed an appropriate and representative example for the study of frozen conflict. However, such an evaluation is not so simple. Because there is little theoretical literature available that offers anything resembling a functional definition of frozen conflict, the term is largely defined by the characteristics of the specific conflicts that the term is used to describe. These are primarily the conflicts in Cyprus, Azerbaijan, Moldova, and Georgia. As such, the claim that Georgia and Abkhazia is an appropriate example based on its proximity to this definition is a somewhat tautological argument. However, this problem would present itself if any of the other conflicts often referred to as frozen were examined rather than Georgia and Abkhazia. Furthermore, the legitimacy of focusing on Georgia as a critical case of frozen conflict could be argued based on its importance in ongoing regional affairs and its relevance to policy in the area. Perhaps more than other conflicts in this grouping, the Georgian Abkhazian conflict and its frozen state is poised to have a significant impact on regional and international affairs. First, it appears at the time of writing that Georgian affairs are taking on a significant role in shaping US-Russian and European-Russian relations. Furthermore, the large portion of the Caspian-Mediterranean oil pipeline located in Georgia is often cited as lending international significance to the separatist conflicts in which Georgia is engaged. Finally, the proximity of the Russian-Abkhazian border to the site of the 2014 Olympic games, Sochi, also lends relevance and immediacy to the Georgian-Abkhazian as a critical case of frozen conflict.

Having discussed the appropriateness of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict as an example of frozen conflict, there are a number of other caveats to bear in mind with regards to the specific study conducted. As should be clear by now, the study only collected data and information from Georgians. For obvious reasons, it would have been ideal to conduct studies among populations on both sides of this conflict. It would add greater depth to the study and allow it to draw stronger

conclusions if it were able to provide an Abkhazian perspective on issues and themes such as the return of Georgian IDPs and the possibility of coexistence with Georgians. However, given the limitations imposed by the current political situation as well as risks to personal security associated with traveling in a region not controlled by the Georgian government and where US embassy officials are unable to provide protection to citizens, the collection of data from Abkhazia was deemed beyond this study's capacity.

There are strengths and weaknesses to the size of the sample used in this study. It could at once be argued that the sample is too large in some respects and too small in other respects. A larger sample could increase the representativeness and generalizability of the study and allow for traditional statistical analysis of certain factors. At the same time, the size of the sample presented challenges that a smaller sample would not. Using an instrument that collects both qualitative and quantitative data in a sample of this size runs the risk of collecting more information than can be effectively analyzed. Indeed, it was a challenge to distill the amount of data collected into digestible amounts while preserving the integrity of the information and maintaining respect for the individual subjects and the time they gave to the study.

However, despite the challenges presented by the size of this sample, it proved to be an advantageous sample size for the aims of the study. First, the format of this study would not have effectively served a significantly larger sample than the one studied here. The interviews were semi-structured, which allowed for probing on some questions when needed, and posed open ended questions which allowed respondents to expand on topics when they so wished. As such, the study produced a dense, rich, and highly varied body of data. On some of the open-ended questionnaire items this meant that no two responses looked the same, and that each required individual interpretation in order to extract the desired information. At 45 interviews, it is entirely possible to do this without losing the richness and individuality of the responses. Likely this approach is just as possible with a sample size of 50 or even 60 respondents. However, at a

certain point the sample would become too large to be appropriate for this type of individualized analysis, and would be unable to adequately make use of the richness of the responses given. At the same time this size of sample allowed to study to interview individuals from different regions of Georgia, of different ages, and of various walks of life. This produced a variety and texture that a significantly smaller sample would not generate. Thus, while admittedly this prevented a depth of analysis that is possible with fewer subjects, it gave texture and variety to the data collected that a smaller sample could not have provided.

Finally, it should be mentioned that there are certain challenges involved when targeting for study a group that is widely considered to be a vulnerable population. The term vulnerable population is typically applied to populations such as children, prisoners, the mentally disabled and economically or educationally disadvantaged people (Royse, 2008). When working with vulnerable populations the study must pay particular attention to ensuring that the study and participation in it does not somehow cause harm to the subject. When working with a population that has experienced significant trauma, such as the forcibly displaced, it is particularly important to ensure that the instrument and research methods employed by the study do not cause re-traumatization to the subjects, and that emotions brought up as a result of participation in the study are handled appropriately and with sensitivity.

Data Collection & Sampling

The greatest challenges of conducting the study, and perhaps the most important caveats to discuss, are in regards to the process of data collection and sampling method used. Conducting interviews with the aid of a translator, unfamiliarity with local culture, and finding subjects with limited personal connections presented significant challenges to the accurate collection of data and assembly of a representative sample of subjects. Undeniably, these challenges had an affect on the data collected.

Sampling. A number of caveats should be noted in regards to the demographics of the subject pool and discrepancies between this and the larger Georgian IDP population. The interview subjects in this study were collected through a nonprobability sampling design that would best be described as purposive sampling. Nonprobability sampling refers to a process that unlike probability sampling does not use a mathematically random process to select a sampling element, and is the type of sampling most often used in qualitative, as opposed to quantitative, research. As Newman and Kreuger (2003) note: “qualitative researchers focus less on a sample’s representativeness ... the primary purpose of [nonprobability] sampling is to collect specific cases, events, or actions that can clarify and deepen understanding” (p. 209). In other words, the insight and depth of understanding that qualitative research seeks is favored over the representativeness of a sample and generalizability of a study’s findings that quantitative research favors.

Within the category of nonprobability sampling, this study would best be described as one conducted via purposive or judgmental sampling. Purposive sampling is used in exploratory or field research, and is one where the investigator uses various methods to select cases or subjects for inclusion in the study with a specific purpose in mind or because they possess certain characteristics, often using the judgment of an expert to select the cases (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003; Royse, 2008). One reason that an investigator uses purposive sampling is to study a hard-to-reach or specialized population. In this study, subjects were selected due to membership in the population of Georgian IDPs from Abkhazia, which is a hard-to-reach population about which little statistical information is available. There are advantages and disadvantages to this method of sampling. As Hochschild notes “Obviously, one cannot safely generalize from a sample of this kind to a national population” however, she continues, “intensive interviews are a device for generating insights, anomalies, and paradoxes, which later may be formalized into hypotheses

that can be tested by quantitative social science methods” (1981, p.23-24 as quoted in Neuman & Kreuger, 2003).

Interviewees were selected based on the characteristics of being an IDP of Georgian ethnicity that fled from former residences in Abkhazia during and because of the Georgian-Abkhazian war, and were located using the local knowledge of guides in each area that interviews were conducted. Interviewees from Tbilisi were recruited primarily through acquaintance with translators or the primary investigator. Interviewees in Kutaisi and Zugdidi were found through acquaintance with local peacebuilding and educational organizations, and several of the Batumi interviews were arranged with assistance from the Ministry of Refugees in that region.

There are several main reasons why a random or probability sampling method was not particularly feasible for this study. First, the fact that the study targets a very particular group or population, Georgian IDPs, means that a traditional random sampling method such as random digit dialing would not produce viable subjects or cases for the study. Furthermore, the method of selected a random or statistically stratified subject pool from a list of IDPs living in the given area was not a feasible sampling method either, as the investigator did not have access to such listing if indeed they even exist. It could be argued that some quota sampling methods could have been better integrated into the study. In quota sampling, the researcher identifies certain demographic categories within the wider population, and determines proportionally how many subjects of each category there should be represented in the sample. For example, the study could have aimed to sample such that respondents were roughly half male and half female. However, the ability to apply quotas to the subject pool was limited due to restrictions created by logistical issues such as the availability of the translator-guides needed for most of the interviews, and the limited ability to plan the data-collecting visits to areas outside Tbilisi. Some of the issues around the limited ability of the investigator to successfully apply quotas to the sample are discussed below.

There are several ways in which this sampling method may have affected the data. First, the number of IDPs living in collective centers was higher in the sample than in the general population: 62% in this study versus roughly half in the general IDP population (IDMC, 2006). This discrepancy comes from having greater access to IDPs living in collective centers relative to finding those living in private residences. Furthermore, interviewees were recruited on a volunteer basis, and it became apparent that certain age and gender groups were more available and more willing than other groups to talk about their experiences. First, there was a large representation of women and young people. Part of this is likely due to availability, as middle aged men were often not at home when interviews were being conducted. This issue of timing could perhaps have been addressed by staggering the times when interviews were being conducted. However, this timing was largely subject to the availability of translators and guides. Another reason for this is that men that were 20-40 years old at the time of the war (or 35-55 now) were the most likely to have participated in the war, and because of the trauma they have experienced taking part in this war they may be less willing to talk about their experiences. The proportionately lower number of middle aged men may have affected some of the data collected. It is possible that because of their experience with the war, this demographic would have expressed feelings about the Abkhazians that are more aggressive and less conciliatory than other demographics, and may have shown less optimistic views on the possibility and difficulty of coexisting with Abkhazians. We do not know whether this is the case, but because the sample is lacking in this demographic group the possibility exists that the data and findings may be skewed to present the appearance of more optimistic and conciliatory attitudes within the IDP community than what are actually there.

Furthermore, the associations through which some respondents were recruited may have affected the data collected from them. Namely, this may have been an issue where some of the respondents that were recruited through acquaintance with NGOs in Kutaisi and the

Conflictology Department at Tbilisi State University in Tbilisi, or through the Ministry of Refugees in Batumi. In Kutaisi, IDPs for interview were located with the assistance of an educational NGO that works with the IDP community in that city. Several interview questions are asked that deal with the respondent's willingness to engage in dialogue with Abkhazians, their prior experience with peacebuilding processes, and the ways that they personally tend to deal with conflict in their lives. The associations of some respondents with such groups indicates that these individuals were likely to have a greater familiarity with peacebuilding and conflict resolution practices, and are more likely to have had conflict training, therefore demonstrating greater ability to handle conflict in a non-destructive manner. Within the overall pool of data, these interviews may have had the effect of skewing the data to give the population the appearance of greater exposure and experience with peacebuilding processes and conflict skills than is accurate.

The fact that several interviews in Batumi were arranged with the assistance of the Ministry of Refugees in that region may have had similar consequences in terms of collecting data that might be skewed or otherwise inaccurate. One such interview, number B1, is of particular concern as it was actually conducted in the offices of the Minister of Refugees. This produced noticeable irregularities in the responses given when compared to the responses given in other interviews, particularly regarding the subject of assistance and aid received. For example, when asked about the amount or type of aid that they receive now, a very common response was "we only get 14 Lari (\$7 US) a month," or something similar to this. However, the respondent in interview B1 responded to this question by saying enthusiastically "we get 14 Lari every month" and noted that this was greater than the amount they used to receive. A thorough understanding of the dynamics and relationship between the IDP community and the Ministry of Refugees is well beyond the scope of this study. However, it is safe to say that the fact that the interview given at the Ministry was far less critical of the Ministry and Georgian government overall shows that

some of the responses given in this interview may not have been entirely ingenuous. Some other interviews in collective centers in Batumi were coordinated by the Ministry. Specifically at the collective center where interviews B5-B11 were conducted, it appeared that someone from the Ministry had called in advance of the interview session to ensure that it would be possible to conduct interviews there. Again, the relationship between the Ministry of Refugees and the IDP population in Georgia, and the degree of disconnect between ministry rhetoric and the reality of IDPs' experience is certainly related to the subject at hand in this paper, but is not its focus nor is it the main problem with which this paper is concerned. Certainly there is a level of questioning required when data is collected in this context with the aid of government officials. However, the data collected in interviews B5-B11 did not differ in any noticeable or dramatic way from data collected in other regions and situations. It certainly did not depart from the main body of data in the way that interview B1 did. As such it should not be considered to be exceptionally biased due to the assistance of government officials in its collection.

Data collection. A number of logistical challenges also presented themselves in the collection of data. Foremost among these was a set of challenges presented by the use of a translator. Six different translators were used in the process of conducting this study. Because of the low-budget approach with which the study was conducted, different translators were hired to conduct interviews in each region or cities where interviews were conducted. This presented the challenge of making sure that each new translator understood the questionnaire and purpose of each item, and usually meant reviewing the questionnaire in a relatively short period of time. It also meant that each translator brought their own preconceptions and interpretation of the questionnaire to the interviews that they helped conduct. For example, when asking the question “would you be willing to return without state protection, provided that you were able to build relationships with the people that would be your neighbors there?” one translator interpreted this

as “would you be willing to return under Abkhazian sovereignty?” This way of asking clearly creates a loaded and significantly different question.

An additional factor to consider about the translators and guides that assisted in the study is that all of these translator-guides were also IDPs. While this was entirely unintended by the researcher, it presents certain issues in the data collection process that are worth considering. The fact that the translators assisting in the interviews were also IDPs gave them a closeness or intimacy with the subject of the interviews that has both advantages and disadvantages. The negative aspects of this factor are that, given their proximity to the issues, there is a risk that the translators might make inaccurate assumptions about participant responses or assume the ability to interpret on their own responses or questionnaire items rather than asking for clarification. However there are also advantages that come from having interpreters that have personal experience with the topic of the study. First, this deeper understanding means that they are more likely to understand certain regional expressions and idioms used within the IDP community, as well as references to certain places and events. Furthermore, the fact that these translators were members of the community being studied significantly increased access to this community, and created a baseline level of trust between investigator and subjects that would otherwise have taken a great amount of time to build. Given the advantages of deeper understanding of issues and access to the IDP community, as opposed to the disadvantages mentioned above, it was likely a great benefit to the study that translators involved were all IDPs.

The use of a translator also presents challenges to recording the responses given in an interview. When these responses come through a translator, they are often truncated and the word choice is often dictated by the translator’s knowledge of English rather than by the subtle differences in meaning that word choice typically connotes. This has implications for data analysis in that the data must be analyzed for substance rather than for content or word choice. It

also means that the study likely lost some comments or details that translators found insignificant, even though they may have been significant in analysis.

Finally, it should also be noted that some technical difficulties prevented the researcher from recording all interviews as was intended in the study's design. This presents similar issues as the use of translators does, in that the researcher was not able to record every word and thought expressed by the respondent.

Analysis Methods

A number of challenges that appeared in the process of collecting data reappeared in the process of analyzing it. These primarily are issues that stem from conducting interviews in Georgian or Russian while attempting to analyze them in English.

It is likely, if not certain, that a degree of meaning was lost in the process of translating responses to English and consequently of interpreting these translations. First, there were a number of responses that even with notes and a recording, were incomprehensible in regards to the question asked. Without the ability to go back and clarify some of these responses, the analysis had to group some of these responses as "other," effectively losing the information in them. Similarly, in order to be able to quote responses in this paper, the wording of some responses had to be adjusted to make them logical and comprehensible to an English speaking audience. And, as is always a problem when working in multiple languages, certain words and sayings lose their full meaning in translation. This is also the case with the existence of cultural connotations to certain terms and phrases. While a translator can interpret the words spoken by respondents, they cannot translate the cultural context in which they are spoken. It should be a given fact that references and associations were made by interviewees which the researcher could not have understood and that the translator would have thought to explain.

It is important as well to note why the data collected in this study did not undergo statistical analysis to determine, for example, the statistical significance of certain differences in the data. First, the purpose and intentions of the study do not lend themselves to statistical analysis and significance testing. This research was conducted as an exploratory study, with the intention of exploring a topic about which little data has been produced and in turn identifying important issues in this topic and generating hypotheses and questions for further research. The intention of the study is not hypotheses testing, which is the purpose of using inferential statistics. Testing for statistical significance is done to establish whether the study's results were due to chance or due to the hypothesized relationship between variables (Neuman & Kreuger, 2003). Furthermore, inferential statistics and significance testing rely on probability sampling. However, as discussed earlier, this study utilized purposive sampling, which is categorized as a non-probability sampling method. As such, it is neither necessary nor logical to include statistical testing in the analysis of the data collected in this study.

Conclusion

This section has highlighted a number of caveats that one should bear in mind when reading the findings and conclusions of this study. The non-random sampling method used means that the representativeness of this pool is limited, and its findings should not be generalized to the greater Georgian IDP population. Furthermore, middle aged men were under-represented in the subject pool, while IDPs that were involved with local NGOs, had participated in peacebuilding activities, or had received some form of conflict training were over-represented. This may have the effect of skewing the data to make the IDP population appear more conciliatory towards Abkhazians and better prepared to handle conflict than they actually are. Finally, the use of translators and the challenges presented by translating interviews also means

that some of meaning in the responses as they were originally conveyed may have been lost in the translation and transcription process.

However, the reader should also bear in mind that many of these flaws are inherent in the type of study that was conducted. Qualitative interviewing, collecting data in another language and culture, working with a translator, and working with what is considered to be a vulnerable population are all elements that complicate the execution and accurate analysis of a study. However, these are all factors that enrich such a study as well. The obstacles presented by language, culture, and logistics were all necessary in order to gather the thoughts and perspectives of a population about which little is known; and it would be impossible to accurately understand the role of this population in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict without attempting to understand what they perceive their role to be.

All things being said, the existence of multiple shortcomings in this study is apparent. However, this should not entirely discount the results and conclusions that it has produced. While these challenges may have affected the representativeness of the data collected, they have not affected the study's ability to identify issues and sentiments that exist within the IDP community. And, after all, the identification and understanding of such issues, and not hypothesis testing nor the establishment of statistical certainties about this population, was the stated purpose of the study.

Conclusions

This thesis has attempted to explain the dynamics of the phenomenon referred to as frozen conflict and to answer the question of why it goes unresolved for so long. In order to do this, this paper first attempted to provide a working definition of the term “frozen conflict” and what it implies about conflicts that are labeled as such. A review of literature from the subjects of protracted social conflict, intractability, and post-Soviet conflict provided the pieces of an understanding that classifies frozen conflict as a particular type of intractable or protracted conflict. This type of protracted conflict is distinct in that violence is almost entirely halted after the signing of a ceasefire, but the conflict itself and the legal status of participants in relation to each other remains in limbo for years or even decades.

In order to answer the question of why frozen conflict experiences this extended period of stagnation or a freezing of the peace process, the literature review turned to a number of fields and subjects ranging from settlement and peace agreements, power sharing, the former-Soviet Union, and refugee studies. This review helped to identify a number of central factors in the freezing of certain conflicts, from which two plausible rival hypotheses were developed about the dynamics and causes behind the stagnant nature of frozen conflict.

First, however, the review uncovered a number of insights into the nature of what have come to be called frozen conflicts. Scholars of the Soviet successor wars such as Dov Lynch (2004) and Charles King (2001) have suggested that the term frozen is inappropriate for these conflicts, as it misconstrues them as inactive or static when, in reality, these conflicts and the parties they involve can be highly dynamic. The legal status of the conflict and the parties remains unchanged in such conflicts, but the parties themselves change a great deal, and with that

the issues at stake in the conflict can change as well. As suggested in the literature review, it may be more fruitful to think of frozen conflict not as a static state but as being in a state of equilibrium. Borrowing from Lewin's theory of force field analysis and quasi-stationary equilibrium (1958), this paper suggests that frozen conflicts are held in equilibrium by opposing forces acting against each other. There are forces that act to drive or push the intensity of the conflict up and there are opposing forces that push the intensity of the conflict down and keep it below the threshold beyond which the pain of stalemate would be great enough to motivate the parties to settle. The conceptualization offered here refers to this threshold as ripeness for resolution, borrowing the concept from Zartman (1989). This conceptualization of frozen conflict as being in a state of equilibrium allows for an understanding of the phenomenon as something that feigns the appearance of being static because little to no progress is made toward resolving the political and legal status of the conflict, but underneath this surface is dynamic and changing. This conceptualization of frozen conflict also opens avenues for further study of this phenomenon in identifying and analyzing the various forces acting on a given conflict. From this understanding of frozen conflict two plausible rival hypotheses emerged.

The first hypothesis suggests that, in terms of intensity, frozen conflict exists in a state of equilibrium somewhere between peace and a threshold of intensity that might be considered as akin to ripeness for resolution. The conflict remains at this equilibrium due to a number of factors that either dampen the conflict's intensity, keeping it below this ripeness for resolution threshold or push the intensity of the conflict up, ensuring that the conflict will not simply dissolve or fade away. Some of the factors that post-Soviet scholars identify as those that keep the de-facto states afloat could also be identified as these de-escalating forces. Such factors might include the de-facto state-building projects that take place in the separatist regions involved in these conflicts, and the involvement of international organizations which provide just enough aid and assistance to make the pain of stalemate tolerable for the parties involved. Meanwhile the escalating or

conflict driving forces would include factors such as IDP populations and the activities of paramilitary groups or militias.

The second hypothesis suggests that a key to understanding the protraction of frozen conflict lies at the internal level of the IDP population, and in the opposing forces at work in this population. Informed by Kurt Lewin's theory of force field analysis and quasi-stationary equilibrium (Lewin, 1958), this hypothesis posits that the seeming stagnation of long term displacement is the result of opposing forces at work in the IDP community. These opposing forces act on the IDP community compelling them simultaneously both to wish to stay in the host community and to desire to return to their home territory, and it is this contradiction of forces that prevents the return of the displaced population while also preventing their integration into the host community.

This study opted to isolate one of the factors in this equilibrium framework with the intention of further exploring this factor and the role it plays in the conflict as a force maintaining this frozenness. As such, the hypotheses were explored through a study of a select IDP population operating within the context Georgian-Abkhazian conflict. This conflict, between the Republic of Georgia and the separatist region of Abkhazia, erupted into war between 1992 and 1994 and has since gone unresolved. This study focuses on the sizeable population of ethnic Georgians who were displaced from Abkhazia as a result of this war. This study, based on interviews conducted with 45 Georgian IDPs during the summer of 2007, explored these hypotheses within the context of this conflict. In regards to the first hypothesis, the study attempted to determine whether this community does indeed act as a driving factor in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict by identifying trends within the stated beliefs and perceptions of the IDP community that reflect this role as conflict drivers. To address the second hypothesis, the study attempted to identify the forces and motivations towards either return, integration or the status quo at work within the IDP population. These forces were identified by collecting information regarding IDP integration and impressions

of their host community, perceptions of their home territory, and thoughts on the prospect of return. All of this was done with the intention that the study's results would provide greater understanding of the forces at work within this community, as well as point to one hypothesis as more compelling than the other in describing the dynamics responsible for the stagnation behind frozen conflict.

The study conducted for this project revealed a number interesting factors and issues at work within the Georgian IDP population, and raised a number of additional questions about the nature of frozen conflict and the role that displaced populations play in it. Both levels of the analysis uncovered a number of interesting and thought provoking issues that would merit further study. The first level of analysis was intended to identify and uncover the opposing forces acting on the community of Georgian IDPs involved in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict. The analysis identified a number of strong motivations and forces at work in this population, and also found several interesting contradictions within this field of forces. The study found that most respondents reported a low expectation of conflict in the event of being repatriated to Abkhazia, and the attitude towards Abkhazians among respondents was also found to be quite conciliatory. Yet at the same time, in regards to the prospect of returning to Abkhazia, respondents reported strong fears of starting another conflict and fears of personal security.

In another contradiction, when asked about quality of life and integration in parts of Georgia where they currently live, respondents cited overwhelmingly a lack of aid or state support that contributes to a rather poor quality of life. However, they also reported being very well integrated into Georgian society and demonstrated a strong motivation to be better integrated through steady employment and more fixed housing. Thus, while this section of the analysis did not point to one hypothesis as a more compelling diagnosis of the situation, it did reveal some key contradictions within the IDP community and its motivations to either return or integrate. Most interesting, however are the forces that were not identified. The IDP population has been

displaced for nearly fifteen years at the time of writing this, and remarkably few have undergone what most would classify as integration into Georgian society. Much of this population still lives in collective centers that were set up as temporary housing for them over a decade ago. Most people in these centers are unemployed and remain largely segregated from broader Georgian society. As such, one would expect to find a set of forces in this analysis that draws this population towards this non-integrated status quo. However, the forces that were identified seem to push or pull this population in all directions other than that of the status quo. Therefore, in the force-field- analysis inspired approach to this population, it would appear that there is some force pulling the IDP population towards the status quo that was not identified in the first part of the analysis.

The second level of analysis was done to identify broad and emerging themes within the interview data, and in doing so address the role of the IDP community as a driving force in this conflict. According to the second hypothesis posed in this study, displaced populations, in this case the Georgian IDP population, are examples out of a host of factors that serve to drives the intensity of the conflict up. The analysis showed that while some findings from the first part of the analysis would negate the role of the IDP population as a driving force in the conflict, this second analytical approach found several broad trends that showed more subtle ways that they can act as a driving force. First, the analysis identified a trend in the data towards what is termed here as selective aggression. When identifying the degree to which a certain population serves as a driving factor in a conflict, one obvious factor to look for is the level of hostility and aggression they display towards the enemy side. The first part of the analysis showed that when asked, respondents heavily (76% of respondents) stated that their feelings toward Abkhazians were conciliatory and friendly. However the second part of the analysis showed that aggression towards Abkhazians does emerge from data in more subtly stated ways, such as showing aggression towards select parts of the Abkhazian population like veterans of the war.

Entrenchment in a polarizing position is another way in which a party to a conflict can serve to drive that conflict. A trend toward this kind of entrenchment also appears in the data in regard to the multiple references to Georgian control over Abkhazia as a precondition to return and the demand of the IDP community for security guarantees from the government. A number of these responses that reference traumatic events in the IDP community's history belie the need for protection that lies behind these demands, and the fear of returning only to experience the trauma of displacement again that lies behind this entrenchment. The entrenchment in this position of course places the IDP population as a driving force between the current level of conflict equilibrium and the possibility of it de-escalating. If the IDP community does not simply fade into the Georgian population (which it does not appear to be doing) and if this community makes clear that they will not be gradually returning to Abkhazia on their own without state protection then it is unlikely that the conflict of which they are a part will begin to fade drastically in intensity.

Finally, the analysis also produced an interesting finding in regards to a seeming deference to outside control, particularly to the government, or a lack of agency among respondents in regards to the out come of the conflict and their ability to impact it that also emerged as a trend in the data. A return to the literature on refugee dynamics suggests that this disempowerment may have connections to the trauma of displacement that they have experienced and to the identity of victim that comes with such trauma. Some literature on psychological phenomena related to victimization and trauma, such as that of Volkan (1994) and Herman (1942) suggest that the identity of victim, or in this case the identity of IDP, provides certain means of coping to the individual. These include a sense of cohesion and community among the traumatized group, as a degree of power stemming from what Herman (1942) refers to as the "specialness" of victim identity. As such, the lack of agency displayed may have to do with

maintaining the role of IDP and with it the identity of victim and various means of coping that come with it.

Looking at the numerous insights and issues raised in both parts of the analysis it would appear that the most interesting and useful conclusions that can be drawn from this data are not those which point to one hypothesis or the other as more compelling. Rather, the conclusions that can be drawn from the synthesis of both levels of analysis say more about the role of IDPs in these conflicts. By comparing the conclusions of both levels of analysis, the study found results that suggest the existence of interesting and unexpected dynamics within the IDP population with regards to its role in the conflict. Namely, these findings suggest the possibility that there may be certain psycho-social phenomena at work in this population whereby the IDP community draws a degree of meaning, identity, and even power from their role as victims in this conflict. By maintaining the IDP identity as something distinct within the broader Georgian social fabric this community is able to safeguard a distinct role in the conflict and with it some degree of power in a situation in which they have otherwise been powerless. Furthermore, it is by remaining a distinct and segregated entity in Georgian society that the attitudes of this population translate into action that drives up the intensity of the conflict. The segregation of the IDP population and their continued existence as a separate entity in Georgia is where the Abkhaz Government-in-Exile draws its authority. This apparatus has significant influence in Georgian politics, and pushes for a hard-line approach to the Abkhaz conflict, actively acting as an agitating force and a blocking force, preventing the conflict from de-escalating through negotiated settlement by rejecting the compromises that would be necessary in a peace agreement. Thus, by passively providing continued power and authority to the Government-in-Exile, the maintenance of the status quo by the IDP, and whatever degree of intentionality there is in doing so, plays a role as a driving factor in the conflict.

These conclusions may not specifically answer the question of “why does frozen conflict go unresolved for so long,” but it does lend an understanding to the role that IDP or refugee communities play in the conflicts that displace them and to the dynamics of prolonged displacement. Specifically, these findings suggest that the degree of power or powerlessness that a displaced community is able to maintain may be connected to their ability to integrate into a host community or their perceptions of repatriation. Yet further research is required into this particular finding to draw any more solid conclusions from it.

This research leaves a large number of unanswered questions and avenues for further research. In order to more fully understand the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict further research is required, first and foremost, into the thoughts and perceptions of the Abkhazian general population. In particular this research raises the need to understand Abkhazian views on the conflict, on the Georgian IDP population, and on the prospect of IDP return. Outside of the conflict context studied here, there are a number of questions raised in the review of theoretical literature that have only begun to be addressed in this exploratory study. In order to better understand frozen conflict and its dynamics, further research is needed in regards to other factors that affect the frozen nature of these conflicts, such as the role of militia or paramilitary groups as driving factors, or the role of international organizations in dampening the intensity of such conflicts. Similarly, further understanding is needed into how the various factors that hold the equilibrium of frozen conflict in place could be augmented or manipulated to mobilize the peace process. Furthermore, this research begs the question of whether these findings have any applicability to other conflicts: either other frozen conflicts like those in Cyprus or Nagorno-Karabakh, or other intractable conflicts that involve sizable displaced populations. It would be worthwhile to know whether the findings presented here are specific to the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, to frozen or separatist conflict, or whether these findings about the role of IDPs in conflict is in some way applicable to all populations displaced by conflict.

In addition to these possibilities for further research, there are also a number of trends and questions that this study was unable to explore due to its structure, limitations, and sampling methods. There were a number of dominant sentiments and positions among respondents that could be verified through a study with a more generalizable sample. For example, such a study could be done to confirm that a majority of the IDP population, as opposed to a majority of the participants in this study, would demand Georgian state protection before willingly returning to Abkhazia. Furthermore, the exploratory nature of this study also raised several new issues for future research. For example, it would be valuable to our understanding of the role of displaced populations in conflict to pursue the relationship between victim identity and power and how this relationship plays out in the identity as displaced person within a host society.

There are a number of areas and subjects in which the findings and the new questions generated in this study could be applied. The most obvious area where these findings have significance is in further developing the concept of frozen conflict as a particular phenomenon under the umbrella concept of intractability. This study and its suggestions for further investigation also hold significance for the various ongoing conflicts that are categorized as frozen. Looking at the broader implications of this study, the findings and insights discussed here could carry significance in the area of refugee aid and integration. In addition to societies engaged in frozen conflict, these conclusions also have significance for conflicts where sizable displaced populations are a significant factor in the conflict's resolution, and for societies that are host to sizable displaced populations. This study's findings have suggested the idea that the maintenance of refugee or IDP identity through segregation from the host community could be connected to a way of maintaining a degree of power in the conflict and its outcome. It also suggests that when this resistance to integration is combined with entrenchment in a polarizing position in regards to return, that IDP communities can indeed act as a driving force in the equilibrium of frozen conflict. This suggests that power and voice may be more important to displaced communities

than they are typically credited as being. The important role that voice plays in peacebuilding and in trauma healing has been recognized by theorists and practitioners alike, and numerous fields of psychological study have recognized the “critical link between voice and identity” (d’Estree, 2006 p.107). Yet it is typical that when displaced populations are mentioned in relation to a particular conflict they are regarded one-dimensionally as a cost of conflict, or as part of the overall destruction caused by an armed conflict. All too rarely are displaced populations regarded as stakeholders in a conflict, and more importantly as key players in a conflict’s resolution.

There is an emerging emphasis within the fields of humanitarian and refugee aid and trauma healing towards the distinction between victim and survivor. This line of thinking posits that in treating someone that has experienced trauma as a survivor carries with it a greater emphasis and recognition of that individual’s dignity and autonomy than regarding them as a victim. In turn, this thinking also emphasizes that in order to truly be of aid to the traumatized or forcibly displaced, one must above all else treat them with dignity (Van Arsdale, 2006). In a similar vein, this study’s conclusions suggest that it would be worthwhile for societies, governments, and agencies that work with or host displaced communities to look into ways of approaching these populations that treat them as stakeholder in a conflict, rather than simply as victims. These findings raise the question of what would be the result if displaced populations were more actively incorporated in the peace process. What would happen if refugees and forcibly displaced persons were treated and regarded as the conflict stakeholders that they are? If the governments involved in such conflicts worked with refugee communities on this level, would this ease the struggle for power and control and thus facilitate temporary integration? If indeed taking an alternative approach to displaced populations could facilitate integration (temporary or permanent) then it could conceivably also help ease the tension around the issue of displacement. Being that this is often one of the more irreconcilable factors in the conflict, particularly those

involving separatist dynamics, this alternate approach to displaced populations could conceivably help ease protraction and facilitate movement in the peace process.

The results of this study also carry some implications and specific recommendations for interventions carried out by non-governmental organizations and other groups involved in this conflict. There are implications here for both the types of interventions being done and how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operate in this context. First, a number of NGOs that are engaged in grassroots peacebuilding conduct projects that attempt to improve relations laterally between Georgian IDPs and Abkhazians. The idea behind this would be to ease the prospect of return for both the IDP population and for Abkhazians by developing relations between the two communities on the grassroots level. However, the results of this study have suggested that in regards to the prospect of returning to Abkhazia, the issue of security is paramount. Their attitudes overwhelmingly suggest that the IDP population perceives the Georgia government as the only entity able to provide sufficient protection from harm and from the prospect of being displaced again. Therefore, these findings call into question the utility of lateral Abkhaz-IDP peacebuilding and the ability of such projects to address the pertinent needs of the conflict and the parties involved.

At the same time, the findings that power may play a role in contributing to the status quo of the IDP population also carries some implications for interventions and projects by NGO. The results here suggest that involving the IDP population in the official peace process to a greater extent would be a possible way to address this disempowerment. As such, it may be beneficial to focus on building “up-down” relations and connections between the IDP community and the various bodies that are said to represent their interests at the elite level. Part of increasing the fluidity with which concerns and attitudes pass from the IDP community up through the ranks of government is obviously to mobilize key individuals that can move among these levels of society (Lederach, 1997). However, there are a number of ways in which NGOs could foster

greater empowerment and involvement within the IDP community. For example, advocacy training within the IDP community might serve to foster greater political involvement in this community not simply on the issue of the conflict, but on improving quality of life among the community and pushing for a meaningful way of addressing their situation and the issue of integration. Finally, on another note, this study has also suggested that the provision of aid can also serve to further entrench the status quo of the conflict when it is given as a sort of “life-support” providing both the IDP community and people in the separatist regions just enough support to get by. This makes the status quo bearable but does not provide enough resources to change or improve it. This suggests that aid providers to both the IDP and Abkhaz community should attempt to channel resources to fund the improvement of the quality of life such as investing in infrastructure or food production tools and supplies, rather than continuing to provide subsistence-oriented aid.

Perhaps the most immediate areas of relevance for this study are for the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict. At the time of writing, the outcomes and status of the conflict between Georgia and Russia are uncertain as of yet, and little talk of negotiations or peace processes have been made public. However, roughly six months after the brief outburst of violence between these states dominated news headlines it has become apparent that neither side is approaching the issues of the separatist states and the populations displaced from them in a way that departs significantly from the approach taken in 1994 when the initial ceasefire was signed. That is to say, the governments and international organizations involved in this conflict failed miserably in the mid 1990’s to confront in a fruitful and productive way the more contentious issues in this conflict, particularly the issue of IDP return. The consequences of this failure are obvious: the conflict has gone unresolved for roughly fifteen years and the population displaced by the conflict has remained in a state of prolonged uncertainty and limbo during that time.

Six months after the “August War” of 2008 ended, the analysis and debate over this brief but intense conflict still tends to center on issues of Russia’s military conduct, questions of “who started it,” and what these events mean for the former Soviet Union and the West. Yet, it would be a significant loss if at some point this debate does not shift to the question of: “how did this happen?” The unresolved status of South Ossetia and Abkhazia cannot be blamed entirely for the recent outburst of violence between Georgia and Russia, but it did play a role in triggering and allowing the most recent round of fighting there. As the international community watches events unfold in and around Georgia, it should eventually be asking itself why these conflicts were allowed to go unresolved for so long, and why the peace processes that began with ceasefire in 1994 and 1995 (in Abkhazia then South Ossetia respectively) were able to linger and stagnate for so long without reaching any formal agreement on status. As these events continue to unfold in the Caucasus, one can hope that the issue of the displaced persons involved and the question of repatriation will be approached with the urgency, seriousness and inclusiveness that they clearly merit.

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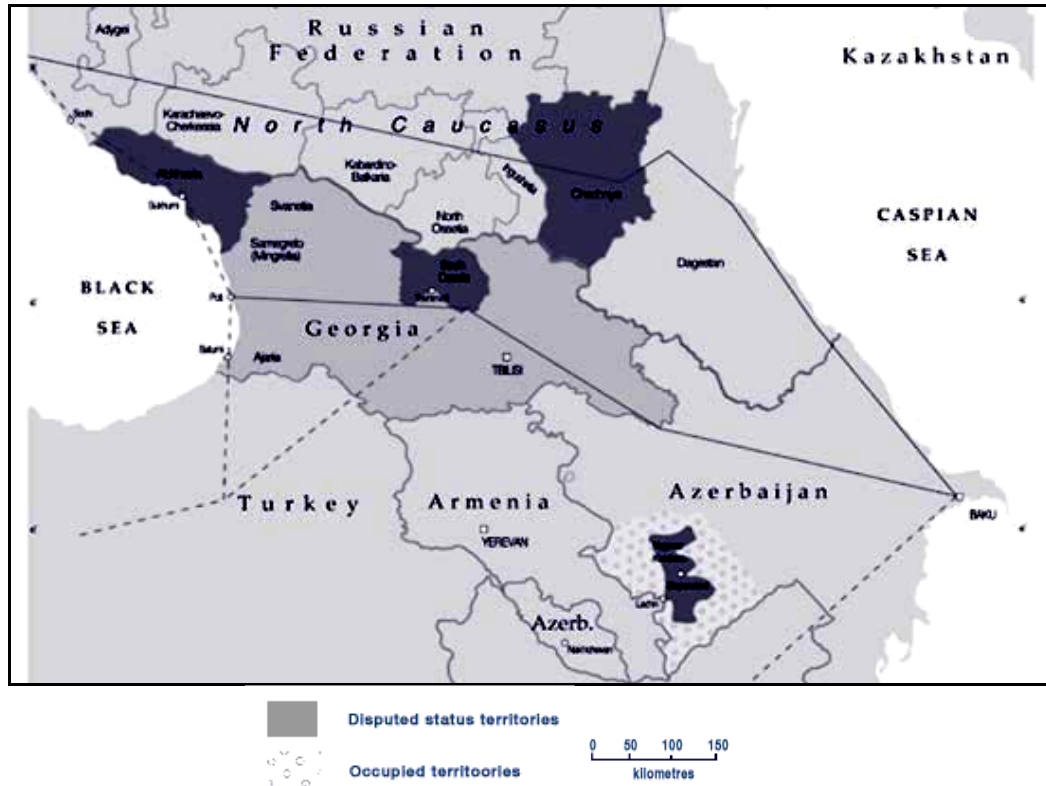
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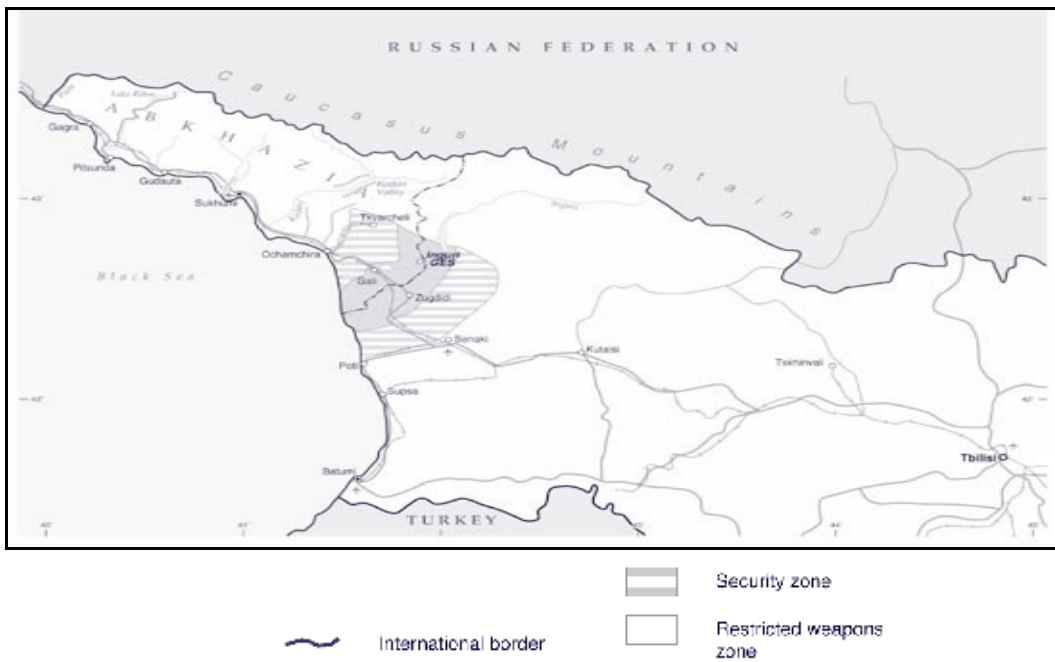
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Appendix A: Maps



Map of Caucasus Region (<http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/georgia-abkhazia/images/caucasus.jpg>);



Map of Georgia & Abkhazia and demilitarized zones on their border (<http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/georgia-abkhazia/maps.php>)

Appendix B: Interview Questionnaire

Section A – Displacement and Assistance Information

General Information:

1. In what area/region did you live before being displaced?
2. When did you leave?
3. Where did you initially go after being displaced? How long were you there?

About Assistance:

4. What kind of assistance did you receive immediately following displacement?
5. Have there been any changes between the amount and type of support that you used to receive and the support that you receive now?
6. To your knowledge, what have been the sources of this assistance: government, international agencies, NGO's?
7. In your opinion, what are some ways that providers of aid and programs could be more helpful to IDP's?

About Return & Integration:

8. Do you seek to return to the area from which you were displaced?
9. If yes, is it to live permanently, to visit, to collect belongings, or for another reason?
10. Why do you want to return (or why do you not want to return)?
11. To what degree are you integrated (ie having permanent place to live, having a job, becoming part of host community) here?
12. On a scale of 1 to 5, Are you treated well by people who live in the host community (5 being very well, 1 being very badly)?
13. Do you see your integration here as permanent or temporary?

14. What do you need for you and your family to be integrated here with native dwellers, and to feel part of the community?

Section B – Experiences With and Thoughts on Conflict Resolution

1. If seeking return on a permanent or residential basis, do you intend to return to the specific town/area where you resided before you left?

2. What are your feelings towards those who live in the region where you used live? How would you characterize these people?

3. Have you had any contact with Abkhaz since being displaced? If so, how did you react to it? How would you describe the experience?

4. If you were to return, what part of this would be most challenging/most difficult for you?

5. If you were to return, what fears might you have about doing so?

6. On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being most challenging, 1 being the easiest), how challenging would it be for you to:

-Live in the same town as Abkhaz people?

-Live next door to Abkhaz people?

-Be friends with Abkhaz people?

-Share land or other important things with Abkhaz people?

7. If you were to return, do you think that you would find it helpful to talk or meet with an Abkhaz person before returning?

8. If given the chance would you be willing to participate in a dialogue or other meeting with Abkhaz people?

a. If yes, what worries or fears might you have about doing this?

b. If yes, what would you expect to gain by participating?

c. If no, why not?

9. Have you ever participated in a project or activity (since being displaced) where you worked or met with Abkhaz?

a. If yes, please describe the experience.

b. If yes, please describe what was challenging and rewarding about this experience.

10. As you know, different people tend to handle conflict and disputes in different ways, for example, some people try to avoid arguments or disputes, others see it as a competition that they can win. Could you please tell me about the kinds of disputes that you typically face? (For example: small disputes or arguments with neighbors, friends, or family?) How do you usually deal with these conflicts?

11. What kinds of disputes do you think you might face in your community if you were to return?

12. How would you imagine that you would handle these types of disputes?

a. If this first approach doesn't work?

Additional Questions if respondent wants to return to live permanently:

13. Under what conditions would you be willing to return?

14. What would it take for these conditions to exist?

15. Would you be willing to return without state protection if you were able to build relationships or friendships with the people that would be your neighbors there?