THE POLITICS OF HELPING: MOBILIZING SUPPORT FOR INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS AFTER THE 2008 RUSSIA-GEORGIA WAR

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Abstract

Georgia has one of the largest shares of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world, amounting to nearly 6 per cent of the population. A significant portion of Georgia's IDPs are persons who were forced to flee their homes during a series of armed tensions in the 1990s, while the 2008 war with Russia created a new wave of displaced persons. The IDPs that were displaced as a result of the 1990s' conflict received little governmental and societal help, while persons displaced as a consequence of the 2008 war received much greater assistance and attention. This article asks why and how attitudes and responses in Georgia have shifted in the past two decades towards internally displaced persons. In order to comprehend the reasons behind the increased mobilization in helping IDPs in 2008, I examine the political narrative of the 2008 war in Georgia. The questions of inclusion and exclusion, helping and marginalizing are most extensively addressed in the social and political psychology literature produced under the social identity tradition. I rely on self-categorization theory in arguing that the politics of helping cannot be taken for granted. Instead, help is actively mobilized through disputing and redrawing social and national category boundaries, norms, and interests. The findings of this article illustrate that the Georgian political elite was actively engaged in (re)constructing national category norms and boundaries throughout and in the immediate aftermath of the 2008 war, and subsequently encouraged the expression of solidarity and the extension of help towards both cohorts of the displaced population. I argue that while ethnic/cultural similarity is not enough in itself for mobilising help; the social construction of internally displaced persons as part of the national in-group triggers intensified support towards IDPs.

Keywords: Internally displaced persons (IDPs), Russia-Georgia War, politics of helping, narrative analysis, self-categorization theory

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Introduction

Over the last few decades, the problem of large-scale forced displacement inside recognized state borders has radically worsened around the globe. In 1982, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) roughly amounted to 1.2 million worldwide (Ayata &Yükseker, 2005). However, this number has grown disproportionately and by the end of 2013 over 33 million people were displaced due to armed conflict and violence (NRC/IDMC, 2014). At first, IDPs were described as "persons forcibly uprooted inside their countries by persecution – in other words, persons who would be refugees if they crossed a border" (Cohen, 2013, p. 8). Yet, many academics, activists, and policy makers argued that the refugee experience cannot "accurately depict the variety of root causes of displacement" (Cohen & Deng, 1998, p. 18) and advocated for the inclusion of natural and human-made disasters as key causes of displacement when defining IDPs. Reflecting these considerations, the Guiding Principles of Internal Displacement defined IDPs as:

> Persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border (United Nations Commission on Human Rights, 1998, p. 2).

Initially seen as a temporary condition, internal displacement has in fact caused lasting vulnerability among displaced groups and individuals. The recent acknowledgment of the fact that the vast majority of displaced persons live in severely protracted displacement (Loescher, et al., 2008) and experience discrimination in their respective recipient societies pushed various advocacy efforts towards prioritizing the displaced persons' local integration instead of exclusively focusing on their return to their home regions (Walicki, 2011). But, according to existing accounts, local integration has proven to be an uneasy process due to the lack of societal and governmental efforts to support IDPs (Cohen, 2013). Although the concerned governments are responsible for ensuring the security and wellbeing of IDPs, "they are often unable or unwilling" (Shekhawat, 2012, p. 49) to fulfil this responsibility. As such, despite remaining within the borders of their own countries, IDPs nevertheless face stigma and hostility from receiving communities thereby becoming "outsiders in their 'own' society" (Conciliation Resources, 2009, p. 7). In order to better understand the reasons behind the marginalization and exclusion of displaced persons it is important to ask why some societies are willing to provide more help to the displaced persons than others. The literature on internal displacement only partially answers this question by proposing that racial, ethnic and cultural differences between displaced populations and recipient societies intensify discrimination against IDPs (IDMC, 2012; Porter & Haslam, 2005). However, even in the cases where such differences are absent, recipient societies and governments greatly diverge in their willingness to help IDPs and facilitate their integration.

Through discussing the case of IDPs in the post-soviet state of Georgia – which has one of the largest percentages of internally displaced persons in the world amounting to nearly 6 per

cent of the population (IDMC, 2012) – this article aims to explore the reasons behind the mobilisation of support (or the lack of it) in helping internally displaced persons. Georgia experienced two waves of armed violent conflict, the first occurred in 1991 to 1994, between ethnic Georgians on the one hand and ethnic Abkhazians and Ossetians on the other. The conflict between Georgia and the de facto independent South Ossetia resurfaced in 2008 and grew into what has become known as the Georgian-Russian war. Both conflicts induced the internal displacement of ethnic Georgians from Abkazian and Ossetian territories to the Georgian controlled territory. According to recent estimates, over 230 000 persons displaced since the 1990s live in areas controlled by the Georgian government (Ferris, Mooney, & Stark, 2011). They are commonly referred to as the "old" IDPs and live in a situation of protracted displacement for over twenty years. They were joined by 17 000 of "new" IDPs who have been unable to return to their homes since 2008. Although both, "old" and "new" cohorts are ethnically Georgian and culturally similar to the recipient society, each cohort has undergone a different treatment. The IDPs that were displaced as a result of the 1990s' conflict received little governmental and societal help, while persons displaced as a consequence of the 2008 war received much greater help and attention. *How have attitudes and responses shifted in the past two decades in Georgia towards forced displacement and internally displaced persons and communities? Why did the Georgian government and society mobilize to help the IDPs in 2008, while ignoring the concerns of those displaced in the 1990s?*

In order to comprehend the reasons behind the increased mobilization in helping IDPs in 2008, I propose that the research on internal displacement should utilize existing theories in social and political psychology literature concerning primarily "helping behaviour" and bystander intervention. The research in the field of social identity studies, particularly self-categorization theory, argues that the drive to help and the ensuing politics of helping cannot be taken for granted. Instead, efforts to help can be actively mobilized through disputing and redrawing category boundaries, norms and interests (Reicher, et al., 2006; Reid, 1987; Turner et al., 1987). From this theoretical standpoint, both the presence and absence of mobilised help and support for IDPs can be studied by analysing how IDPs are discursively placed inside or outside of salient social categories in the dominant discourses of recipient societies. Using the conceptual framework that self-categorisation theory provides, I examine the political narrative of the 2008 war in Georgia. The findings of this article illustrate that the Georgian political elite actively engaged in (re)constructing national category norms and boundaries throughout and in the immediate aftermath of the war, encouraging the expressing of help and solidarity towards the displaced population. I argue that while ethnic/cultural similarity is not enough in itself for mobilising help; the social construction of internally displaced persons as part of the national in-group triggers intensified support towards IDPs.

The two Waves of Displacement in Georgia

Existing literature on internal displacement identifies the lack of integration in the receiving society as one of the main challenges facing any group of IDPs (Ferris et al., 2011; Mooney, 2011; Samuel Hall, et al., 2012). National governments tend to be incapable of or unwilling to provide assistance to the displaced, and the general population is often reluctant to accept the displaced as equal members of society. The lack of support places the IDPs on socio-economic margins and hence reinforces their discriminatory exclusion overtime (Eschenbacher, 2005). If the national response is the main determining factor in deepening or limiting the IDPs' vulnerability, then it not only becomes crucial to understand why some governments and

societies provide assistance willingly and support integration schemes, but also *how* the public is mobilized in order to help the displaced. Societal and governmental responses to internal displacement in Georgia provide an exceptional opportunity to explore these questions.

From the 1990s until 2008, a number of successive Georgian governments provided very little material or social assistance to the displaced. The administrations mostly focused on the IDPs' right of return and discouraged integration while ignoring the IDPs' pressing socio-economic needs. This position increased the IDPs' marginalization and exacerbated their socio-economic hardships, as Mooney explains:

> Indeed, the government even restricted IDPs' ability to fully access their rights… until recent years, the government effectively held IDPs hostage to that goal [return] by going so far as to put legal, administrative and political obstacles in the way of IDPs who wanted access to alternative solutions" (Mooney, 2011, p. 214).

Further, the displaced were excluded from privatization processes that were initiated after the declaration of independence in 1991. They were also deprived of the right to vote in local elections; often resided in segregated areas, and studied in segregated schools (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2009). The lack of governmental attention was accompanied by the wider population's relative disinterest towards the problems facing the displaced. While there were individual efforts in helping the IDPs in navigating their living conditions, the displaced persons were never accepted as full, equal members of the Georgian society. The receiving population saw the displaced as a group that is temporarily sheltering in the territories unaffected by the conflicts, and as an unnecessary burden on the already impoverished Georgian state. The displaced persons were subjected to various negative prejudices, and even the Georgian term denoting the displaced, 'ltolvili' (a refugee), acquired a negative connotation. The international agencies studying the conditions of the displaced document the extent and the nature of the social exclusion that the 'old' displaced have undergone:

> Internal displacement has become powerfully associated with a series of negative stereotypes associated with poverty, dependency and marginality. Despite their centrality to the conflicts, displaced persons in such contexts have often found themselves to be outsiders in their 'own' society. They are treated with suspicion as 'newcomers' competing with surrounding societies for scarce resources. Unable to effectively compete with surrounding societies in an already strained market for jobs, education, healthcare and other social services, they have been relegated to the margins of society (Conciliation Resources, 2009, p. 7).

The revolutionary change of government in 2003 did not alter the existing approach towards the displaced persons. The new government considered the international humanitarian agencies' recommendations and adopted the State Strategy for Internally Displaced Persons. The strategy aimed at providing durable solutions and improving living conditions for IDPs in the places of their residence. However, the government did not attempt to implement the new plan and exclusively focused on the IDPs' right to return: "rhetoric on the issue of IDP return has been especially strong in the run-up to elections, with promises made, including by the president, to restore the territorial integrity of Georgia and thereby enable IDPs to exercise their right to return" (Mooney, 2011, p. 183).

A drastic shift in the governmental as well as societal responses to the needs of the displaced occurred after the war of August 2008. For the first time, the political elite publicly acknowledged that the return of IDPs is untenable in the foreseeable future and initiated a search for long-term solutions (Tarkhan-Mouravi, 2009, p. 17). Only a few months after the war ended,

over 22 thousand "new" displaced persons received durable housing. The majority of IDPs were placed in newly constructed rural settlements; while others were resettled in refurbished apartments, or were offered vouchers amounting to 10 000 USD. Moreover, the government made a commitment to resolve the housing problems of the "old" cohort of displaced persons and assisted around 68 000 IDPs. Overall, more than a third of all displaced persons were supported by the government's housing programs by 2010 (Mooney, 2011). The international observers assessed the situation as a partial success:

> The government has made considerable efforts to improve the situation of IDPs, especially in recent years. It has developed a legal framework to regulate their rights and duties, established a national coordinating body, trained government officials, raised national awareness of the internal displacement problem, collected data on the number and location of IDPs, devoted resources to assist them, supported the Public Defender's Office in monitoring IDPs' rights and cooperated with international and regional organisations (IDMC/NRC, 2012, p. 9).

The post-war mobilisation of the Georgian civil society was even more noteworthy. As the war unfolded, persons displaced from conflict zones sought shelter in public facilities (primarily schools and kindergartens) in non-affected cities, mainly in the capital city Tbilisi. The receiving communities mobilised to help the IDPs more quickly than the government or NGOs. The inhabitants of Tbilisi and other cities visited areas where the displaced sought refuge either collectively or individually, bringing food, clothes, blankets, hygiene items and other basic goods. While the government, alongside local and international humanitarian agencies soon began providing aid, the attention expressed by the wider public was essential in filling the gaps of the government's and NGOs' organized response, and in ensuring that the traumatized population received moral and psychological support immediately.

Documenting the significant increase in governmental and societal support to the IDPs does not amount to claiming that the problems of the displaced were fully resolved, or that the assistance had no shortcomings. First, the observers have criticized the poor quality of state provided housing (Transparency International Georgia, 2009). Second, the government was often accused of a lack of transparency in managing the resettlement processes. Third, the displaced remained a category of concern and continued to be relatively disadvantaged in comparison to the wider population (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2009). Despite these and other persisting problems, it still holds true that the national response to the needs of the IDPs has significantly improved since 2008. Considering that Georgia remains one of the poorest countries in the region, the governmental efforts of 2008 seem impressive when compared with preceding administrations, as well as when compared to responses from neighbouring countries such as Armenia and Azerbaijan to IDPs in their territories.

The significant shift in helping the IDPs after the War of 2008 brings us back to the broader question of what leads governments and societies to provide help in one instance and not in another. In the academic literature on the Georgian case, it is commonly assumed that the reoccurrence of armed conflict forced the Georgian government to adhere to long standing international recommendations and recognize the necessity of supporting the integration of the "new" and "old" displaced cohorts (Mooney, 2011; Walicki, 2011). However, this observation does not explain why the war forced the government to provide more assistance, and why the government sought and listened to suggestions from international NGOs only after 2008. What has prevented the political elite from prioritising the return of the IDPs before 2008? Furthermore, it is unclear why the wider Georgian public mobilized to support the displaced

while the very same public had marginalized the older cohort of displaced persons for almost two decades.

To address these questions, the following analysis focuses on the days immediately following the outbreak of the 2008 war (August to September). This period witnessed a substantial increase in helping efforts towards the IDPs that can be characterized as exceptional when compared with the two-decade long neglect of the "old" cohort of IDPs. Further, current research in self-categorization theory suggests that helping in emergency situations cannot be viewed as a natural de-politicized reaction: "Helping is neither a fixed function of personality nor automatically invoked by context. Rather it is something that can be actively created through argument. Helping is not something individuals come to alone through internal processes. It is something that can be publicly mobilized" (Reicher et al., 2006, p. 53). Thus, in order to understand why helping occurs in one situation and not in another, the chosen period offers a particularly insightful ground from which to explore the helpers' underlining motives and examine the significant shifts in popular discourses on the IDPs in Georgia.

Helping in the Social Identity Tradition

The questions of inclusion and exclusion, helping and marginalizing are most extensively addressed in the social and political psychology literature produced under the social identity tradition (Brewer, 1979, 1999; Campbell & Levine, 1972; Tajfel& Turner, 2004). The ways in which groups or individuals are treated, helped or discriminated against, depend on how they are categorized: "when people view others as belonging to the same category as they do, they are more likely to trust, respect and cooperate with them; they are more likely to offer them help and solidarity and they are more likely to seek out an agreement with them" (Reicher, et al., 2005, p. 625). The way people view themselves and others in the context of intergroup relations can serve to motivate social change as well as to legitimize and retain existing inequalities. Thus, examining how IDPs are categorized by the recipient societies is crucial to understanding why in some cases discrimination against internally displaced persons persists, while in others cases, societies mobilize for help.

A number of studies in social and political psychology show that group and intergroup interactions define helping behaviour and bystander intervention in support of the victims. Early works employing a group level perspective illustrated that the motivation to help and intervene in emergency situations increased when victims were perceived as part of the in-group (Cialdini, et al., 1997; Dovidio, et al., 1990).Collective identification with the in-group has proven to positively affect the willingness to volunteer for the benefit of the group (Simon, Stürmer, & Steffens, 2000), and engage in long term charitable behaviour (Stevenson & Muldoon, 2010). Self-categorization theory (Turner et al., 1987) expands this argument, showing that people's responses to others' plight will vary based on which of the social identities become salient in a specific context, while also showing that the saliency of more inclusive categories increases the scope of helping (Levine, et al., 2002; Levine, et al., 2005). However, evoking even the broad categories of identification such as nationality, understood as "a set of people sharing a social identity"(Reicher et al., 2005, p. 626), does not guarantee that an entire population of a country will be conceived as part of the nation. The category boundaries, or the criteria of group membership define who will be included and who will be excluded from the in-group, therefore who will receive preferential treatment and who will receive discriminatory treatment. For example, the treatment of others can be conditioned by the adoption of civic or ethnic conceptions of nationalism (Wakefield et al., 2011). The criteria deployed for national belonging

can influence anti-immigrant prejudice (Pehrson, Vignoles, & Brown, 2009) and shape negative attitudes towards migrants (Heath & Tilley, 2005).

Not only is it important how we define the victim, or if we perceive the victim as part of the social category that we identify with, but it is also crucial how we define ourselves, and which norms we ascribe to the category of belonging. In other words, we might help someone because we share a social identity with him or her, or we might help them because we think that as members of a certain group carrying certain values we are expected to express solidarity to another human being (Reicher et al., 2006). In summary, the existing literature suggests that helping depends on: first, which set of social identities is salient for the helper in a certain context; second, how the helper defines the boundaries of the salient category; and lastly, which norms the helper associates with category membership.

On the one hand, the argument that category definitions condition the preferential treatment of persons perceived as part of the in-group explains the persistence of social inequalities. On the other hand, as the boundaries and norms ascribed to certain identities are "flexible and amenable to re-definition" (Stevenson & Manning, 2010), the re-conceptualization of these norms and boundaries has the power of altering inequalities and divisions. To understand how the categories are constructed and reconstructed, self-categorization theorists like Reicher, Hopkins, Levine and others look at the rhetorical dimension of category definitions (Levine et al., 2002; Reicher& Hopkins, 1996a, 1996b). The political elite and social movements that intend to shape public opinion can be considered as "entrepreneurs of identity", as they will primarily argue over the definitions of a particular identity category while mobilizing support for their political projects (Reicher et al., 2005;2006).

In line with the arguments and methodological suggestions proposed by self-categorization theorists, the change in governmental and societal support towards IDPs in Georgia can be understood by examining how the IDPs and the receiving population were (re)categorized throughout the war. Moreover, the shifts in the government's position towards the IDPs can also be explored by observing how the government constructed the identity of the Georgian public and identity of the IDPs in the context of the 2008 war. As I will demonstrate, the government can be viewed as a central "entrepreneur of identity" who actively attempted to shape the public opinion concerning the war and redefine the displaced as war victims. Therefore, looking at the governmental rhetoric sheds light on its own motivations as well as those of the wider population in their renewed efforts to help the displaced.

Methods and Data

The research methodology that I adopt in this article is informed by the methodological approach developed by Reicher et al. in the influential paper "Saving Bulgaria's Jews: An analysis of social identity and the mobilization of social solidarity" (Reicher et al., 2006). The authors investigate the ways in which Bulgarian society mobilized against the forced deportation of Jews during the Second World War. They convincingly demonstrate that in opposing the deportations, civil society actors and politicians relied on discursively (re)defining *category boundaries, category norms,* and *category interests*. Following a similar categorization method, I observe whether and how the Georgian political elite (re)defined Georgian identity and subsequently outlined potential helpers in order to include the IDPs as part of the national in-group. I also follow the ways in which the political elite argued that helping the IDPs was demonstrative of in-

group norms and crucial for in-group interests[1]. Based on these observations, I argue that the shift in the Georgian government's discourse and helping behaviour as well as the change in the public's attitude towards the IDPs occurred primarily because the government redefined the IDPs' and the receiving population's identities in a way conducive to mobilizing the needed support.

Narrative analysis serves as a powerful tool in accounting for the rhetorical dimension of category construction: "By focusing on narrative, we are able to investigate, not just how stories are structured and the ways in which they work, but also who produces them and by what means, the mechanisms by which they are consumed, and how narratives are silenced, contested or accepted" (Andrews, Squire, &Tamboukou, 2013, p. 2). Narratives shape the ways groups and individuals comprehend the meanings of events, interpret reality (Shenhav, 2006; White, 1980), argue, persuade audiences and mobilize societies for "progressive social change"(Riessman, 2008). Recently, Hammack and Pilecki have proposed that narratives can serve as "an ideal root metaphor for political psychology" through which we can consider "thought, feeling, and action in [a] political context" (Hammack&Pilecki, 2012, p. 79). As such, narrative analysis is a central lens from which to untangle discourses of helping and observe the alterations in public and governmental attitudes towards IDPs.

The following analyses examines the speeches and statements of the President of Georgia, Mikheil Saakashvili, who at the time of the 2008 war enjoyed extensive executive power, represented the government and the ruling party, and was the key public speaker responsible for interpreting the causes and consequences of the war for the domestic and international community. Georgia is a newly democratizing country in which political leaders exert significant political influence on mass communication channels. Therefore, the presidential speeches were of particular significance in shaping public opinion throughout the war.
The official transcripts and the English translation of the presidential speeches were retrieved from the website of the Administration of the President of Georgia[2]. Six texts were selected from 23 publicly available speeches made in the course and immediate aftermath of the war (August-September 2008):

Document 1. The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili met the refugees. August 16, 2008.
Document 2. President Mikheil Saakashvili convened the session of the National Security Council of Georgia, August 22, 2008
Document 3. The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili met the members of the Parliament bureau, August 24, 2008.
Document 4 . Statement by the President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili. August 26, 2008.
Document 5. The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili addressed the participants of live-chain [*sic*] from Freedom Square, September 1, 2008
Document 6. The President of Georgia Mikheil Saakashvili's annual speech presented in the Parliament of Georgia,September 16, 2008.

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[1]The methodology applied in this research differs from that used by Reicher and colleagues in two respects. First, instead of employing Structural Analysis of Group Arguments (SAGA), I focus on the narrative of the war as presented by the Georgian government in the immediate aftermath of the 2008 conflict. Given that the change in the discourse concerning the IDPs was not the result of publicly available group argumentation, but rather a reversal of the governmental position itself, I analyse governmental speeches in the period when the transformation of the discourse took place. Second, I do not merely focus on the arguments related to the inclusion of the displaced, but locate the issue of the IDPs in the broader context of interpreting the causes and outcomes of the war.
[2]The texts were last accessed in October 2012 at http://president.gov.ge/en/ . The article uses the official translations as provided on the website of the Administration of the President of Georgia and the texts at times contain infelicities of language.

This selection emerged after careful consideration of all the available speeches from August to September 2008.I selected speeches that were presented in diverse contexts (for example, in some speeches the president directly addresses the public at a peaceful demonstration or during presidential meetings with the IDPs, while in others he addresses the National Security Council and the parliament) and those that discuss the War of 2008 in a lengthy and elaborated manner. All of these speeches were repeatedly broadcasted on TV channels during and in the aftermath of the war, and their English and Georgian versions were publicly available on the presidential website.

The Narrative of the 2008 War and the Displaced

The Political Context of the War of 2008

The war between Georgia and Russia in August 2008 was triggered by the reawakening of ethno-territorial conflicts in Georgia that had first erupted in the early 1990s. Warfare between Georgia and the two breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia halted by 1994 with the signing of the Moscow Agreement, but no viable long term solutions to the conflict were found or implemented, thereby leaving room for tensions to resurface. The Georgian side has continued to insist on its right to territorial integrity, while the two regions seek independence. In August 2008 the military conflict reignited between Georgia and South Ossetia. Russia, which has served as the peacekeeper in the region, stated that the Georgian side had broken the peace agreements thereby pushing Russian forces to engage in the war in defence of South Ossetia. The Georgian side however claimed that Russia was fully responsible for initiating the war. While international observers have been very critical of Russia's engagement in the war, they also clearly pointed out that Georgia's military attack on the capital of the de facto state of South Ossetia had played a part in triggering the war, (Tagliavini, 2009) thus shedding doubt on Georgia's claims of innocence. The same mission reports that the outcomes of the war were unfavourable for the Georgian side: "Since the conflict erupted in August 2008, the situation in the conflict region has hardly improved.

The political environment for a settlement of the conflict has in fact become more difficult" (ibid, p. 37). In addition to deteriorating the prospects of a long-term resolution, the war caused large civilian and military casualties and considerable damage to the Georgian infrastructure and economy. Under such circumstances, the Georgian government sought to mobilize the international community to support the Georgian position while at the same time assuring the Georgian population of the government's ability to resolve the conflict and compensate war-induced damages. In constructing this specific narrative of the war, the Georgian government also actively addressed the issue of internal displacement. The below analysis of governmental speeches focuses on arguments concerning in-group norms as well as interests and boundaries in relation to the IDPs, and it also uncovers the overall logic of the governmental interpretation of the war.

IDPs as part of the National In-group – Category Boundaries

> Extract 1. (D.2) Sisters and brothers, the main work is starting from now. First of all we have to reconstruct houses for all people, whose apartments were damaged and to build houses for those, whose houses were burnt… All families, the victims of the aggression, should receive compensation as well, so that [the] government ensures their better material standing.
>
> Extract 2. (D. 5) It is impossible to imagine the future development of Georgia if we don't help Ms. Mediko [IDP] and people like her. First of all we must be a humane society that takes care of the weak and undefended people.

> Extract 3. (D.2) The members of our society have demonstrated the [sic] great solidarity towards each other.
> People take displaced children to their homes to take a shower, to sleep well; people collect mattresses and clothing for them. I also know that barbers are serving them for free. Coaches of various sports are training children for free and thus support their adaptation. Besides, children can attend movies for free. This is internal solidarity [sic] of the European society.
> Extract 4. (D.6) We have tens of thousands of families who have no housing; they need warm flats and big support. Winter is close by and none of them must be left without shelter by this period of time.

These passages from the speeches of the Georgian president explicate that the displaced persons are part of the national in-group, and are not categorized as a separate group. In extract 3, the president affirms that Georgians have shown solidarity towards each other. Formulating the help of the wider population towards the displaced persons as help to "each other", the passage indicates that both displaced and non-displaced populations are equal parts of the Georgian society and share the same identity. Extract 1 is also a good example where the displaced and non-displaced population is portrayed as an identical group. In this extract, the president underlines the need to compensate for the war induced losses. He does not distinguish between the needs of the displaced and the non-displaced population. Instead, he states that both, repairing damaged houses as well as building new accommodation for those whose houses were burnt down comprise one, general project. In fact, persons whose houses were damaged and those whose houses were burnt were different types of victims. The houses of the inhabitants in the Georgian controlled territory were damaged, while the houses of the persons displaced from South Ossetia were burnt. The latter would not be able to return back to the places of their residence, and the Georgian government was not in a position to repair their houses as it did not exercise control over the territory. Yet, on the rhetorical level, these two categories were treated as part of the same problem. Irrespective of whether they were ethnic Georgians coming from South Ossetia, or the inhabitants of the Georgian controlled territory, both groups were regarded as similar victims of the war and equal in their need of assistance.

While defining IDPs as part of the national in-group, the political narrative even included the older cohort of IDPs in the president's renewed definition. In extract 2, the president talks of Ms. Mediko Jikia, who is an "old" IDP, displaced in the 1990s. He argues that society should help her and others who are similarly "weak and undefended". Through placing the emphasis on the weakness and vulnerability of the persons of the same community, this passage marginalises the importance of any other dividing line between Ms. Mediko Jikia and the rest of the society. Moreover, this passage extends the concern to the "old" IDPs, and proposes that the persons displaced in the 1990s should also receive support and attention. The same passages outline in-group norms, and claim that solidarity and caring for each other is at the core of Georgian national identity and values. Thus, by placing the displaced as part of the national in-group, and by emphasizing that solidarity is one of the main characteristics of Georgian identity, the speeches intend to mobilize the wider public in support of the displaced. On the one hand, the presidential speeches encourage the public to express support; on the other hand, the same speeches illustrate that the government itself takes the responsibility to ensure that no one will be left without shelter (extract 4) and assistance (extract 1).

Defining the Georgian Nation – Category Norms

Assuming responsibility towards helping the displaced is only one part of how Georgian national identity is constructed in the war's political narrative. In other words, the unity of the nation is at

the core of the narrative, while helping the displaced is one of the signs or expressions of this unity. In the following excerpts, Georgian national identity is portrayed most extensively in contrast to the perceived identity of the enemy; the Russian identity.

> Extract 5. (D.6)The president of Russia- better to say the two leaders of the country must answer questions, why they have driven out independent journalist[s], [and] controlled every TV channel. They threaten people with further repressions. Many countries could say, in the period of war, less democracy and much control [sic]. We say: for Georgia, freedom and [a] progressive democratic future is the most important.
> Extract 6. (D.1)We are better because we have dignity and humanism, they [Russians] are simply more [numerous] than us [sic]. The world is watching us now and everyone knows what our fight was. This is not a conflict, this is the war between civilization and non-civilization.
> Extract 7. Our fight for freedom is a fight between justice and injustice; this is the fight between a big, brutal force and a small united nation.
> Extract 8. (D.3) In Georgia was created real European society [sic], real European State apparatus and real European political class.

These extracts illustrate which norms are associated with Russia, and which are associated with Georgia. Russia is portrayed as an authoritarian, uncivilized, unjust and aggressive society, while the Georgian nation is depicted as freedom loving, humane, peaceful, united, democratic, and progressive, etc. In addition to giving a contrasting picture of Russian versus Georgian values, the Georgian government evidently attempts to define the in-group norms along the lines of what it perceives to be western liberal norms. It claims the Georgian nation can find a place among civilized European countries, while the Russian society is seen as the polar opposite of what Georgia and the liberal west are. The next question is why were these particular forms of identity and values claimed in the political narrative; and how does the portrayal of Georgia as European, civilized, and united serve Georgian national interests?

National Interests – the political project behind mobilizing the Georgian population

Governments often evoke nationalism to mobilise social support in the wake of conflicts with other states. As Klein et al. claim, when a nation's existence is threatened "mobilizing the population into protecting it is crucial for its preservation"(Klein, et al., 2000, p. 133). Relying on nationalist appeals enables the political elite to convince individuals of supporting the state as "the political embodiment of the nation" (ibid, p133). Just as many other governments have done before, the Georgian government articulated national preservation as a main in-group interest and tried to mobilize the society to attain this interest. The aim of preserving the nation-state necessarily depends on defining and perceiving an external threat. In order to locate the threat, the Georgian political elite devised a specific interpretation of the enemy's intentions. Arguing that the enemy's actual achievements came short of its original intentions, the war's political narrative presented the post-war reality as a victory of the Georgian nation over the Russian "ill-wisher":

> Extract 9. (D.3) The main thing that our ill-wisher has failed to see is [a] scared Georgia; the main thing that they failed to see is [a] Georgia left alone; the main thing that they have failed to see is Georgia running away and [a] ruined Georgian state and its government.
> Extract 10. (D.1) The Russians put every country, they entered by force like this on the knees [sic]. This happened in Czechoslovakia, in Hungary and Afghanistan. Look how we are resisting. They are wandering in our villages and towns, they could not find anyone to rely on, they couldn't defeat the government and the society. Our society raised up flags, and this is very important.

> Extract 11.(D.4) Russia's all actions were directed towards leaving Georgia without supporters as it was the case in 1921 [sic], when the Bolshevik Red Army invaded Georgia.
> Extract 12. (D.5) Today Russia is not a winner. The victory of Russia would be the defeat of the Georgian democracy and taking a control over the Caspian and Central Asian energy resources [sic].

The Georgian elite proposed that Russia's main goal was to compromise Georgia's sovereignty and regain geopolitical dominance over the South Caucasus. The Georgian president argued that Russia intended to destroy Georgia's statehood by attempting to: scare and demoralize the Georgian society (extract 9, 10); remove the existing Georgian government from power (extract 9); and alienate Georgia from the international community and undermine Western support for it (extract 9, 11). As Russia failed to achieve these aims, the narrative concluded that Russia "is not a winner" in this war thereby proving that Georgia managed to successfully cope with the Russian aggression.

As these passages illustrate, international support is perceived as a crucial factor in defending statehood. The fear of being left alone against the big neighbour stems from the fact that Georgia was seen as guilty for igniting the war. Thus, in addition to claiming victory in the war, the Georgian political elite also claimed their innocence in initiating it. The presidential speeches continuously emphasized that conflict escalation was not in Georgia's interests and that Russia never supported the peaceful resolution of past conflicts and thus was entirely responsible for instigating the war of 2008:

> Extract 13. (D. 4) This was many months, and possibly years, ago planned military aggression and interventions…[sic] Up to now we had to permanently speak out [sic] that these are not Georgia's internal problems, that Russia is part of it, that Russia is not a peace-loving country and Russia is not an impartial 'peacemaker'.

In sum, evoking a discourse on the peaceful, civilized nature of Georgian national identity was central to supporting the government's selective war narrative in which it blamed Russia for igniting the conflict and asserted its own success in overcoming the Russian aggression. Under this narrative, the unity, strength and other characteristics of in-group identity were presented as crucial for the Georgian nation in realizing the primary in-group interest of preserving the state's sovereignty.

Discussion of the Findings

As self-categorization theorists argue, the construction and reconstruction of category boundaries and various interpretations of category norms and interests can be seen as part of the "entrepreneurs of identity" political project (Levine et al., 2005; Reicher & Hopkins, 1996a, 1996b; Reicher et al., 2005). Arguing over category norms and category boundaries – which in the discussed case led to placing the IDPs inside the national in-group – was part of the wider discussion concerning the reasons and results of the 2008 war. The examination of the political narrative of the war leads us to conclude that the aim of the Georgian government's political project was to convince national and international audiences that the Georgian side was not the initiator of the war. Furthermore, it interpreted the outcomes of the war so that Georgia seemed to be the winner of a war it lost according to all other accounts (Tagliavini, 2009). [3]

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[3] It should be noted that the Georgian government successfully mobilized the international community in support of Georgia and enjoyed considerable diplomatic and financial assistance (the post war International aid was worth of 4.5 Billion USD)

In order to convince the various audiences of the validity of its proposed interpretation of the war, the Georgian government upheld the Georgian national identity as peaceful, European like, civilized, etc. Acclaiming these category norms, or praising Georgian national identity, was needed to convince the audience that Georgia could not possibly be an aggressor. Retaining the unity, peacefulness, and solidarity throughout and after the war was seen as evidence that the enemy did not manage to destabilize and demoralize the society. Constructing the identity this way, the governmental rhetoric also encouraged the demonstration of specific values that it ascribed to the category. In other words, the Georgian population as well as the Georgian government itself had to prove that they lived up their own image, construed through governmental narration on the war. The help of the displaced was part of the wider imperative of demonstrating, or performing the constructed identity.

Thus, the government's rhetorical efforts to mobilize the public in help of the IDPs can explain why the governmental and societal responses and attitudes towards IDPs changed during and after the war of 2008. The Georgian public was explicitly and repeatedly told that demonstrating unity and solidarity was crucial for the preservation of statehood. For the population threatened by the war, attaining the goal of national preservation can be equated with physical survival and the securing of one's livelihood. Thus, the act of showing support to the state and providing help to the displaced became the act of safeguarding one's own and collective security. The Georgian government, as the political representative of the nation, also had to comply with the norms it constructed. As self-categorization theorists argue, "of all the rhetorical efforts expended by politicians, perhaps the most intense are devoted to constructing themselves"(Reicher et al., 2005, p. 629). In this light, providing support to the displaced was an integral part of conforming to the imagined and selective values that the government set for itself.

Conclusion

Internal displacement causes immense material and non-material losses for millions of displaced persons all over the world. Stigmatisation and lack of public support that the displaced persons frequently face inside their own countries contributes to their lasting marginalisation. In this article I examined how the portrayal of IDPs in mainstream state narratives about recipient societies can significantly shape attitudes and responses to the question of IDPs. Through examining the shift in the treatment of IDPs in Georgia I have argued that defining IDPs as part of the national in-group, or as similar to the recipient society, triggered an intensified support towards the IDPs. In the Georgian case, the internally displaced persons were denied governmental support and were subjected to discrimination for two decades prior to the reigniting of conflict in 2008. During those two decades, the Georgian government chose to focus on the return of IDPs in its political discourse. In doing so, it discouraged the local integration of IDPs and avoided responsibility for the IDPs' security and wellbeing. The displaced were perceived as temporary guests that belonged elsewhere, and their prolonged stay was not welcome by the recipient communities.

This situation changed by 2008 when the government began emphasizing the need to provide long-term solutions for the displaced persons. Throughout and in the immediate aftermath of the 2008 war, the Georgian political elite actively constructed the IDPs as part of

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(Transparency International Georgia, 2010). The Georgian public was also successfully manipulated into believing that Russian side was entirely responsible for the war.

the national in-group and called for public mobilisation to help the displaced. Consequently, the Georgian civil society showed exceptional support towards the displaced persons, and the governmental efforts to assist old and new cohorts of displaced persons intensified. While it seems obvious that helping should occur in times of crisis, numerous examples, among them Georgia's experiences prior to 2008 show that this is not always the case. Instead, helping is something that can be mobilised through processes of redefinition and arguments over category norms and boundaries.

The observations made here add to existing academic knowledge on internal displacement and encourage researchers as well as practitioners to observe the category constructs that define relations between the displaced and receiving societies, as well as between the national governments and the minorities that the governments are supposed to support but rarely do. The existing research in the field of conflict induced internal displacement has already pointed to the importance of the governmental discourse in shaping processes of displacement. This literature proposes several interrelated arguments. First, politicians' exclusive focus on the return of the displaced causes the social exclusion of the IDPs (Mooney, 2011). Second, governments understand return and integration as mutually exclusive policies, while it is possible to support both – the right to the return and right to integration – simultaneously (Ferris et al., 2011; Walicki, 2011). And third, governmental discourses and policies on displacement differ depending on the political positions that the states take concerning the conflicts that induced the displacement(Conciliation Resources, 2009).This article lends support to these existing arguments, but more importantly, it identifies the psychological mechanisms through which the governmental discourse can affect the type and amount of support that it and the public offer to the displaced. The article further suggests that social inclusion of the displaced can be mobilized through defining the IDPs as part of the national in-group; through emphasizing solidarity as part of in-group norms and as crucial to in-group interests. Therefore, the very support or rejection of integration as a discourse and as a policy depends on how the displaced persons are categorised vis-à-vis the receiving population.

Finally, the observation that governments adopt the role of 'entrepreneurs of solidarity' only to support their political projects, is problematic. In the Georgian case, the government's ultimate goal was to promote a positive image of Georgia, of Georgian people and most importantly of the Georgian government itself. Emphasizing the solidarity among the citizens of Georgia was a necessary tool in legitimizing the governmental interpretation of the War of 2008. Hence, supporting the displaced was to an extent a side consequence of the broader political project. The above case analysis illustrates that inclusion or exclusion of the displaced in itself can be less of a concern for a particular government compared with how it will affect the government's own image. Even if this is the case, the argument that category constructions shape the social relations and life prospects of vulnerable groups, remains important and potentially empowering. Defining the displaced as part of the in-group and as a category of concern compels the concerned government to raise its efforts in support of the displaced. If the government's position is a constraint to the integration of the displaced, then national social movements and international actors can convince it of the necessity of focusing on integration through contesting category norms and boundaries, instead of merely promoting integration as the best practice.

Similarly, these non-governmental actors can also mobilize local communities to help the displaced through underlining the similarities in the identities of the displaced and those of the receiving societies instead of framing their projects as particularly targeted toward the IDPs and

therefore unproductively underlining the differences among the displaced and non-displaced population. For the national governments, local and international NGOs and movements, and the persons excluded as a result of being seen as "outsiders", it is empowering to realize that definitions of the categories used and understandings of identities are amenable, and that the inclusiveness of category definitions can serve to reduce social inequalities.

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