

Dwelling in the temporary: The involuntary mobility of displaced Georgians in rented accommodation

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Latest submitted version 2014, published in 2016 as:

Brun, C. (2016) Dwelling in the temporary: the involuntary mobility of displaced Georgians in rented accommodation. *Cultural Studies* 30(2) Special issue on (Im)mobilities of Dwelling, edited by L. Meier and S. Frank.

Abstract

This article responds to the call from forced migration studies for increased engagement with the mobilities paradigm, as well as to criticism of the mobilities paradigm for not engaging sufficiently with immobility and power relations. The article analyses the experiences and strategies of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in rented dwellings in Tbilisi, in the South Caucasus state of Georgia, who are among the most mobile groups of IDPs in that country. To understand the relationship between mobility and immobility, the article applies Heidegger's notion of 'dwelling' and more recent developments of that notion, together with the discussion between Honneth and Fraser on 'recognition'. First, the article introduces internal displacement in Georgia. Second, it discusses the housing situation for the IDPs. Third, the theoretical concepts of 'dwelling' and 'recognition' are developed to enable analysis of experiences and practices of mobility and immobility. Fourth, the various trajectories through which IDPs have come into their rented dwellings are discussed, and processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization and the experience of recognition through the dwelling are analysed. The conclusion addresses the role of dwelling and recognition for efforts to understand the relationship between mobility and immobility.

Keywords

internally displaced persons, renting, (im)mobility, dwelling, recognition, Tbilisi

Staying in one place makes you into someone.... I do not move homes, I just move houses. (displaced 33-year-old Georgian man from Abkhazia, living in rented accommodation in Tbilisi with his mother)

Introduction

Since the early 1990s, approximately 250,000 Georgians who fled Abkhazia following its battle for independence from Georgia have lived as internally displaced persons (IDPs) at different locations in Georgia. The experiences of these IDPs parallel those of many people displaced by war across the globe: Displacement by war is more often than not protracted. The IDP status is a temporary one and is only intended as a short-term measure for when people need extra protection and assistance while a more permanent solution is sought. However, the temporary status of displaced persons and refugees often lasts for 5, 10, 20 or more years and is experienced by many as a permanent temporariness (see Brun 2008, Brun and Fàbos in progress). There seems to be, however, a reluctance on the part of national and international actors to solve the various displacement crises that have become a symptom of our time: these are crises that are not inevitable, but result from political action and inaction (Loescher and Milner 2009). The image of the visible, encamped and passive displaced person often stands in contrast to the many self-settled IDPs and refugees in the world. Self-settled IDPs and refugees are people who live with family and friends or in rented dwellings, often in urban areas. Frequently less visible than people in organized settlements, often not living in the place where they first registered as displaced – if they registered at all – and having less access to assistance and protection, self-settled displaced people represent a

heterogeneous group about whom we know much less than we do about the paradigmatic victim¹ of the encamped refugee.

In this article, I analyse the experience of self-settled IDPs residing in rented dwellings, who are among the most mobile of the displaced people in Georgia (DRC 2011). IDPs renting their residences move reluctantly but frequently from dwelling to dwelling – some as often as every year. They thus experience a double temporariness. First, their temporary status as IDPs is conditioned on a possible future return to where they were displaced from; they wait for return and in the meantime reside temporarily in their current dwellings. Second, people do not stay very long in one rented dwelling before moving on to the next; they live very temporary lives in the dwellings they occupy. The relationship of these individuals to their temporary dwellings is conditioned by their humanitarian status as IDPs, by their socio-economic status, and by the strong desire within Georgian society to keep people in the IDP status because the existence of these IDPs and their possible return to Abkhazia symbolize the hope of regaining control over Abkhazia.

The current globally accepted status of ‘IDP’ is a complex category that involves political, legal, humanitarian, social, cultural and economic dimensions. Despite the mobility of the internally displaced, people falling into this category have been fixed in significant ways to particular territories and particular locations. Understanding the mobility of the self-settled IDPs in Georgia may thus respond to the call from forced migration studies (Gill et al. 2011, Hyndman and Giles 2011) and carceral geographies (Moran et al. 2012) for a more sophisticated understanding of power relations in research on mobility (see also Faist 2013). Inherent in this call is a critique of the tendency of existing mobilities research to draw a connection between mobility, autonomy and freedom (Moran et al. 2012). The publications

¹ I borrow the term ‘paradigmatic victim’ from Chua et al. (2000). It has also been used in the context of refugees by Lubkemann (2008).

that introduced the mobilities paradigm opened up for research on the relationship between movement and moorings, and even mentioned forced migration (see Hannam et al. 2006, Urry 2007, Sheller 2011), but such perspectives have not been particularly prominent in mobilities research until recently. In addition, refugees and internally displaced persons – once displaced – are often depicted as immobile and passive (see Malkki 1992, Hyndman and Giles 2011). There is scope for more discussion across the two fields of mobilities research and forced migration regarding the extent to which mobility indicates agency, and immobility the inability to move. Further problematization of the relationship between mobility and immobility – or what in this context would more appropriately be called ‘stillness’ (see Gill 2009, Cresswell 2012) – will improve the way in which we view society through the lens of mobility. In this context, it is particularly the ways in which people’s mobilities are regulated, the ways in which people challenge the regimes set to control them, and the role of humanitarian categories or statuses that are most relevant. Inspired by the call from Hyndman and Giles (2011) to engage with the mobilities paradigm in forced migration studies, I seek to illustrate the tensions inherent in the experience of mobility and the role of the status of ‘IDP’ in this experience. I will examine the relationship between mobility, immobility and the role of the IDP status by applying Heidegger’s notion of dwelling and Honneth and Fraser’s discussion of ‘recognition’.

I explore the relationship between mobility and immobility through an analysis of the experience and practices of dwelling in the temporary by examining, first, internal displacement in Georgia and, second, the housing situation for the internally displaced. Then, third, I engage theoretically with ‘dwelling’ and ‘recognition’ to develop an understanding of how to analyse the experience and practices of mobility and immobility. Fourth, I discuss the various trajectories IDPs have had into their rented dwellings before analysing processes of

deterritorialization and reterritorialization and the experience of recognition through the dwelling.

I seek to apply the conceptual approaches mentioned above to material gathered as part of a larger project on homemaking in temporary dwellings during protracted displacement. In the larger project, I interviewed 39 IDPs in the urban centres of Tbilisi and Kutaisi during two periods of fieldwork in Georgia in 2010 and 2012 (Brun 2012, in progress a,b). Of those interviewed, nine were renting, while two interviewees had rented earlier. I also interviewed representatives from 15 UN and nongovernmental organizations and two government departments. As I discuss below, people in rented accommodation are difficult to find as they are relatively invisible. The networks I used to access interviewees in rented accommodation differed from those of my earlier research in the country in 2003, and I relied on organizations and research assistants for finding research participants. Since I do not speak Georgian, the research assistants also acted as interpreters. All quotations are thus the interpreters' translations from Georgian to English.

Internal displacement, territoriality and the governance of mobility in Georgia

As the new postcolonial nation-states emerged following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, nationalist movements led to the 'unmixing' (Brubaker 1995) of some ethnic groups and what could be termed a 'reclaiming of the past' (Kuzio 2002). In 1992, when Abkhazia declared independence from Georgia, 46% of the population in Abkhazia was ethnic Georgians. The Georgian authorities refused to accept the secession claim, and Georgian forces entered Abkhazia to regain the disputed territory. During the fighting and after the defeat of the Georgian forces, the ethnic Georgian population, fled their homes in Abkhazia and the majority moved in to Western and central Georgia. The conflict left an estimated 10,000

people dead and some 250,000 displaced (Amnesty International 2010). In 2014, the conflict may be described as being frozen, with periodic outbursts of war – most recently the war between Russia and Georgia in August 2008. Since the 2008 war, many scholars believe that Georgia has de facto lost control over Abkhazia (Kabachnik 2012), but the nationalist discourse of a unified Georgia, including Abkhazia, remains strong, and the internally displaced play an important role in keeping alive Georgia’s hopes of regaining control over Abkhazia.

Georgia’s territorial claim on Abkhazia continues to influence policies towards the IDPs. Most of those displaced in the 1990s have retained their IDP status until now. The Georgian government readily accepted the individuals fleeing Abkhazia as IDPs and established a number of initiatives to assist them with housing and living costs. A law on IDPs was adopted in 1996, though a state strategy for IDPs was not put into place until 2007 (Government of Georgia 2007). This inertia in establishing a formal state strategy may be partly accounted for by the fact that return was strongly desired both by the IDPs themselves and by the Georgian government. Indeed, return is still believed by the government and most IDPs to represent the only valid solution to the displacement and the conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia. Kabachnik (2012) describes the discourse on return, and the accompanying uncertainty and fear surrounding questions related to Georgian nationality and territorial integrity, as ‘Georgia’s cartographic anxiety’. He likens the gaining of independence by a separatist region to an “amputation”, leaving “wounds” and “scars” (Kabachnik 2012, p. 47). Accordingly, the return of the IDPs to Abkhazia is a concern not just for the IDPs themselves, but for the whole Georgian nation. The prolonged IDP status must be understood in the context of this need for a continued inclusion of Abkhazia in Georgia.

The ethnic Georgian IDPs that settled in Georgia after their displacement were often born in Abkhazia and, although ethnically Georgian, were more often fluent in Russian than

in the Georgian language. Though well educated, they struggled after their displacement to find employment in the collapsing labour market of the newly independent state. Most IDPs settled and continue to live in Western Georgia and in and around the Georgian capital Tbilisi. The government of Georgia regulates their mobility in various ways, but a substantial number – perhaps as many as half – live in places other than where they are registered as IDPs (DRC 2011). Since 2008, it has become more difficult for IDPs to transfer their displacement status from one place to another, and it is no longer possible to transfer this displacement status from a place in ‘the regions’² to Tbilisi. Before the new state strategy was put in place, the location of registration did not affect people’s status or access to IDP benefits. However, as housing became a primary focus of assistance, the importance of the location of registration changed, as this location formed the basis for where housing assistance would be provided.³

The multiplicity of dwelling(s)

In the context of the new state strategy, people are categorized according to their dwellings. The main categories cover the collective centres, which are mainly provided by the government of Georgia, and accommodation in the private sector. Collective centres comprise a heterogeneous set of buildings, such as student dormitories, hotels, kindergartens, hospitals and accommodation built for factory workers but occupied by IDPs for the last 20 years. These centres are generally not designed for permanent occupation or for families.

The collective centres are the most visible form of dwellings for IDPs. There is a degree of social stigma attached to living in these centres, but at the same time they also

² The ‘regions’ is a term for most areas of Georgia outside Tbilisi and its surroundings.

³ Although it has been impossible to find an official statement declaring that assistance is provided on the basis of where one is registered, this seems to be the common practice.

represent an important social base for many of the residents and are considered a relatively stable form of housing.

Private-sector accommodation is believed to have accounted for approximately half of the dwellings of IDPs when the state strategy was established in 2007. There is little available information about the ‘privately accommodated IDPs’, but it is common to distinguish between three types of dwellings: owned, borrowed and rented. According Georgia’s Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation (MRA), there were 4,396 families who *owned* their dwellings in 2007 (MRA 2010). The second type of dwelling in the private sector is *borrowed dwellings* – that is, where people stay with family and friends or in an empty house without paying rent. The latter is more common in rural areas and regional capitals than in Tbilisi, where housing is scarce. The third category, which will be the focus in the remainder of this article, covers *rented dwellings*. The second and third categories in the private sector are believed to encompass approximately 40,000 families (MRA 2010).

Through the government’s ‘durable housing solutions’ from 2007,⁴ housing assistance to the displaced has largely concerned transfer of ownership⁵ of IDPs’ existing living spaces

⁴ ‘Durable housing solutions’ is a term that plays on the discourse of durable solutions in forced migration, where it refers to attempts to find solutions in which forced migrants cease to be forced migrants. A durable solution is believed to be achieved when internally displaced persons have been integrated into the local community in which they settled after displacement, when they have been resettled and live permanently in another location within their country as local citizens of that place, or when they return to the place from which they were displaced (see Brun 2008 for a discussion of these principles in the context of internal displacement).

⁵ I use ‘transfer of ownership’ here to distinguish this process from the general ‘privatization’ of property that took place in Georgia from 1992 (following independence). While collective centres were not privatized in the first wave of post-independence privatization, privatization of buildings that housed collective centres and had commercial value has gradually taken place, making IDPs living in such buildings vulnerable and

in the collective centres (MRA 2010). So far, it is primarily the transfer of ownership of uncontested spaces in the collective centres that has been completed. Some people in collective centres that were privately owned have been asked to move and given compensation of USD 7,500, which the MRA considers a ‘durable housing solution’. No new dwelling spaces are planned for IDPs living in Tbilisi under the national strategy, but there are plans to build new houses in the regions, and work on this has already begun in some places. IDPs who already own a house will be provided with a one-off monetary payment. The strategy states that it is not known how many in the private sector will need housing or monetary support, and no specific plans have been made for those in rented accommodation. The state strategy is vague on the issue of how assistance might be provided to IDPs not living where they are registered. To help people where they are currently living has been listed as one of the goals, but it seems that assistance is being offered to people on the basis of where they are registered, not where they dwell. People living in rented accommodation have seen the assistance that the more visible group of people in the collective centres has received and are waiting for the state to look in their direction and recognize their needs and dreams for more stable dwellings.

Dwelling in a temporary status

As both a noun and a verb, dwelling implies a particular place or locale and an activity; it gives no indication of time, nor that the place or locale in question is static, so one can dwell both temporarily and permanently, and one can dwell while in motion (Long 2013, p. 332).

The expression ‘a dwelling’ refers to a residence, an abode, but ‘dwelling’ may also be a verb – it is a way of being, a way of doing and a way of relating. In this article, these two

forcing many to move, a subject to which I will return below. There is no information available on how many Georgians currently live in rented dwellings.

meanings of ‘dwelling’ – as a verb and as a noun – overlap. The notion of ‘dwelling’ has become inseparable from the (later) work of Martin Heidegger. In his famous essay ‘Building Dwelling Thinking’, dwelling is about being in the world; it is to live and to be at home in the world, rather than merely existing: ‘The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth is *Buan*, dwelling’ (Heidegger [1954] 1971, p.145). Being in the world is about being somewhere – a place where we make the world meaningful (Cresswell 2009, p. 171). Dwelling in Heideggerian terms may be described as a form of ‘nest, where people open a space of being, and initiate and secure bordered place, sheltering themselves from the outside world’ (Gielis and van Houtum 2012, p. 800).

Heidegger’s ‘dwelling’ – despite the implicit nationalism and authenticity embedded in the concept (Elden 2001, Harrison 2007) – has been interpreted in many different ways within the social sciences. It has come to dominate much of the writing on dwelling and home in the booming research trend on home that we have seen in recent years (see Mallett 2004, Blunt and Dowling 2006). Dwelling has been used in the humanist tradition of togetherness, belongingness and wholeness, as well as in the post-humanist/anti-humanist tradition, and could be seen as a precursor to actor-network theory and the latter’s notion of the ‘fourfold’ (Harrison 2007). A common denominator for much work inspired by Heidegger is the emphasis on the relational nature of dwelling (Latimer and Munro 2009). Keeping things, enabling the caretaking of material and non-material relations of which we are a part, is essential for how dwelling will be understood in the remainder of this article. Through their dwelling people become involved with their surroundings, and the dwelling is the starting point for how people become involved in society and how people can build social relations. The notion of dwelling has the potential to enable improved understanding of the relationship between the inside and the outside, the public and the private; dwelling is a space of both the self and the other (Varley 2008).

How, then, might Heidegger's notion of dwelling be a relevant starting point for studying the relationship between mobility and immobility? Two fundamental dimensions of 'dwelling' emerge from the interviews I have analysed. The first concerns the urge to find or establish a place in society, a struggle that corresponds with dwelling as being in the world. For IDPs in rented dwellings, the meaning of mobility in the process of dwelling becomes crucial, as I show below. The second dimension considers how dwelling is meaningful and influential for how the internally displaced are considered by society, how IDPs relate to others in that society, and how society relates to them.

A meeting point in these two understandings of dwelling is the seeking of recognition by the displaced. Though citizens of the country in which they reside as internally displaced, Georgian IDPs often express a feeling of not being recognized as members of that society, suggesting that their status as internally displaced excludes them from full membership because they are always only temporarily present: there is a societal expectation that they will return to Abkhazia. In order to frame the analysis of dwelling and include power relations, I introduce the process of 'recognition', which makes it possible to see how this involuntary mobile population can find its place and relate to others in Georgian society. This process of recognition engages with a multiplicity of scales, and concerns people's identity and societal status. Discussions between Axel Honneth and Nancy Fraser on the meaning of recognition provide an important example of how recognition may be engaged with at different scales (Fraser and Honneth 2003). Though Honneth and Fraser see their models as irreconcilable,⁶ I find it useful to consider the two models together. Inspired by Hegel, Honneth (1995, 2002) considers recognition as key to specifying the conditions under which human beings can form an identity, and thus focuses on three modes of recognition (Kofod and Simonsen 2012): the

⁶ For example, Honneth's emphasis on authentic identities is problematic in this context. See Zurn (2003) and Bankovsky and Le Goff (2012) for further discussion of Honneth and Fraser's conversations on recognition.

private sphere, the legal sphere and a sphere of achievement. In his understanding, it is through these spheres that an individual's self-confidence and sense of membership in a community is established. In the private sphere, Honneth (1992, p. 193) describes recognition as the emotional ties that are developed in families and among friends, where 'people acknowledge each other with special feelings of appreciation'. In the legal sphere, it is the mutual recognition that persons have in identifying each other as persons who share equal rights and responsibilities. Recognition takes place, according to Honneth (1992), when individuals see themselves as sharing the same legal rights as all other members of their community. Finally, the sphere of achievement represents social acceptance – even acceptance of 'unconventional lifestyles'; it is a form of solidarity experienced between members of a society. These spheres of recognition set out a moral infrastructure that is a precondition for a social life-world able to protect its members.

Honneth emphasizes that the identity model of recognition does not outline an institutional framework in which these forms of recognition may be realized. Here, Nancy Fraser's status model of recognition⁷ becomes useful for including the institutional mechanisms that contribute to realize people's social standing in the society. Her formulation of the status model of recognition is a response to Honneth's identity model, which she accuses of simplifying group identity and hence obscure the complexity of people's lives (Fraser 2001). Fraser emphasizes an understanding of recognition that helps to reintroduce redistribution as an important dimension of the struggle for recognition. Redistribution is related to socio-economic injustices such as exploitation, economic marginalization and being deprived of an adequate material standard of living. According to Fraser, misrecognition takes

⁷ Axel Honneth (2002, p. 505) discusses the variation in the meanings of 'recognition' between English, French and German. In German, the 'concept appears to denote essentially only that normative situation associated with awarding a social status, whereas in English and French it encompasses the additional epistemic sense of "identifying" or "knowing again"'.

place when institutions structure interaction according to cultural norms that impede parity of participation. Examples of such institutional practices might include the ways in which mobile populations are treated in a society, or property laws and social welfare policies that stigmatize certain groups in a society. The aim of the status model of recognition is to ‘establish the subordinated party as a full partner in social life, able to interact with others as peers’ (Fraser 2001, p. 25).

The status model of recognition has been accused of attempting to analytically separate redistribution and cultural identity (Young 1997), and of inconsistency (Armstrong 2008). Nevertheless, I find Fraser’s work meaningful and an important contribution when used in combination with Honneth’s spheres of recognition to analyse dwelling and status as a way of understanding (im)mobility and protracted displacement. For example, the IDP category changes content during protracted situations of displacement, as it shifts from a humanitarian category to a social category (Brun 2010). The IDP category becomes part of people’s identities shapes the experience of various social positions. There is a tendency to treat people only as displaced, whereby the humanitarian status becomes more prominent and visible than other statuses and categories. By introducing the status model of recognition, with its more direct emphasis on redistribution and recognition and misrecognition, we can better understand the relationship between dwelling (as a noun and a verb), the temporary status and mobility.

Trajectories towards the rented dwelling

There are two different renting systems in Georgia, both for IDPs and non-IDPs. The first is called *Kira* in the vernacular. In *Kira*, rent is paid on a monthly basis and the period for which the dwelling is rented is often not specified. The second system is called *Gira*, which means ‘mortgaged apartment’, under which a deposit is paid to the owner/landlord and property is

rented for a specified number of years, normally two or three. A contract is made between the renter and the owner that states that when the contract period is over, the owner must give the deposit back. In the meantime, the owner has access to money that can be invested in other projects, and thus the deposit may be considered a type of loan. There are substantial risks involved in *Gira*. One problem is the possibility of a decrease in the value of the currency during the contract period. Those I interviewed paid between USD 10,000 and 15,000 for their *Gira*, which is less than the cost of a flat on the outskirts of Tbilisi. Of the interviewees in the material analysed here, three were renting under the *Gira* system.

Trajectories towards and into rented accommodation varied considerably among the people I interviewed, but some common paths may be identified among this most mobile group of IDPs (DRC 2011). Many interviewees moved from the regions and into Tbilisi quite early on in the history of their displacement, following the intensive urbanization that has taken place since independence. They managed to find vacant rooms in a collective centre and later had those rooms transferred to their ownership. However, people did not stop coming to Tbilisi after vacant rooms in collective centres became scarce; people's mobile lives towards rented dwellings are distinguished by the search for livelihoods and better life chances. Before arriving in Tbilisi, some people lived in collective centres in the regions, but others were renting. Those who were renting often could no longer pay the rent where they were living and had to move. Wages in Tbilisi are higher than in the regions, but living costs are also higher. Some people moved to Tbilisi from the regions, but were later provided with a dwelling in the region in which they originally registered; however, when they returned to occupy that dwelling, they were often unable to find employment and decided to move back to Tbilisi and rent a dwelling in the city.

The first place we lived after displacement was Senaki [Western Georgia]. Our registration is in Senaki. We want to change our registration to Tbilisi, but we cannot do that. We were renting a house

in Senaki. My father worked in the army. But later – when the economic conditions in the country deteriorated – we could not pay the rent. So we had to move from there. After I finished school, we moved from there and we rented a room in Tbilisi. Then for two years we lived in a collective centre, but we were kicked out from there when the collective centre was sold. My mother went to Russia, my father moved back and forth between Tbilisi and Senaki where he has started an agricultural business. We have lived in this place [a rented room in a collective centre], and we are waiting for the government to give us a room (young displaced man, just finished a degree at Tbilisi University).

Some buildings used as collective centres were handed over or sold to private owners, and their residents had to move and were given USD 7,500 in compensation. Many found, however, that the compensation was insufficient to buy a dwelling in the city. The money they received was used for rent and other outlays, such as medical expenses in the privatized healthcare system or the deposit in the *Gira* system.

One family I interviewed lived in a collective centre in a village close to Batumi (in Adjara, Western Georgia). When their collective centre was to be sold, the family was reluctant to move as they had employment and friends and relatives in the immediate vicinity. However, they were forced to do so and given the standard compensation of USD 7,500. One of the sons in the family worked in the military in Tbilisi, and the whole family (husband, wife, wife's father, two sons, a daughter, a daughter-in-law and a baby) decided to move to the city. Their *Gira*-rented flat in Tbilisi had one small bedroom, one living room, a kitchen and a bathroom.

Another category of internally displaced in rented dwellings are those who have been abroad for some period of time during their displacement. Many individuals and families went to Russia after their displacement from Abkhazia. There were already close links with Russia. Many people had studied in Russia or had family members there. Additionally, until the 2008 war, Russia was the main destination country for labour migration from Georgia. However, with the relationship between Russia and Georgia turning sour, many irregular and regular

Georgian migrants in Russia returned to Georgia. Some were deported and others left because of the increasing difficulty of being Georgian in Russia. Georgians who had lived in Abkhazia were granted IDP status when they returned from Russia. Along with the IDP status, they were also provided with USD 2,000 to help them begin their new lives. Many people had lost their savings on the journey back to Georgia or were unable to access those savings. While some found a living space in a collective centre, mainly assisted by family and friends, others ended up in rented accommodation in Tbilisi.

Displacement has taken place over a period of 20 years, and the second generation of internally displaced is now gravitating towards the city. In Georgian society, many children continue to live with their parents after marriage, but some move out to find their own living spaces. Georgian proposals for durable housing solutions, however, contain no measures for the second generation. Solutions are formulated on the basis of the original family that moved from Abkhazia 20 years earlier. The fact that those who were children during displacement have now grown up and started their own families has not been taken into account. Members of the second generation need to find their own places in society and may move from the regions towards the city for education and employment.

Deterritorialization/reterritorialization

I do not remember how many places I have stayed for the last 10 years, maybe nine or ten? ...

Sometimes I was living there for a couple of years, sometimes for a couple of months. Often when you arrive at a new place, it is not in the condition that the house owner promised, so you immediately start looking for a new place. And then you move again. Another time we rented and didn't know the house was for sale, and then soon after we had moved in, the house was sold and we had to move. It is difficult to move houses all the time (displaced man, aged 33, living in rented accommodation with his mother).

There have been attempts to bring Heidegger's notion of dwelling into conversation with the work of other scholars in order to reorient 'dwelling' (Harrison 2007). Gielis and van Houtum (2012) explore the relationship between Heidegger's *monadic* (being, permanence) and Deleuze and Guattari's *nomadic* (becoming, temporality) understanding of dwelling. They suggest a continuum in which monadic and nomadic form the outer extremes of dwelling – in many ways represents a classic tension in much of the literature on migration, diaspora and mobility, between roots and routes, between bounded place and free flow (Kaplan 1996, Brun 2001, Malkki 1992, Massey 2005, Sheller 2011). The disassociation of Deleuze and Guattari's understanding from Heidegger's *dwelling as being* is made clear in the authors' statement on 'becoming and heterogeneity, as opposed to the stable, the eternal, the identical, the constant' (Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1987, p. 361). The relationship between being and becoming, between the monadic and nomadic, is clearly illustrated in their discussion of the migrant and the nomad – which is a symbolic way of distinguishing between being and becoming. While a migrant dwells by reterritorializing, a nomad dwells in deterritorialization – in an open space 'without borders or enclosure' (p. 380).

It is individuals' socio-economic status that determines what kinds of dwelling are possible to find where. It is also their socio-economic status that determines the continued mobility between rented dwellings. Most people I interviewed did not have a contract when they were renting in the *Kira* system. As mentioned above, among IDPs from Abkhazia, it is those in rented accommodation in Tbilisi that have the lowest levels of housing stability. According to a survey by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC 2013), IDPs living in rented dwellings in Tbilisi tend to expect to change accommodation within a year. The housing instability is often caused by circumstances outside their control, and renters in the *Kira* system describe considerable vulnerability and insecurity. They tend to live in fear of the owner increasing the rent, which would force them to find a cheaper dwelling. A young

woman renting a flat in a suburb of Tbilisi with her parents and brothers stated that they were always looking for somewhere else to live so that they could move in a controlled fashion rather than being forced to leave at short notice. This volatility also affects individuals' social networks and social capital. Building and maintaining relations becomes difficult in the temporariness of the rented dwelling, as another young woman, Monica,⁸ states:

Everyone here knows that we are renting. They know that today or tomorrow we will be leaving.

Neighbours are only considering us to be here for a short time (Monica, came to Tbilisi to work in a factory when she was 17, and has lived in somewhere between 10 and 15 places in Tbilisi since she arrived in 1999).

Echoing Simmel's notion of the stranger, the internally displaced in Georgia often feel like the stranger who comes today and stays tomorrow (Brun in progress a). However, for IDPs in rented dwellings, they are the strangers who come today and *leave* tomorrow. They are the deterritorialized migrants who struggle to reterritorialize but have no power and resources to do so. Their deterritorialization does not necessarily lead to reterritorialization; rather, as Haesbaert (2013) notes, moving towards a new territory corresponds to a process of increasingly precarious territorial constructs. According to the NRC (2013), if given a choice, most people in private accommodation would prefer to stay in the place, city or village in which they are currently living. When considering the rented dwelling of IDPs, we need to understand the living space in the context of the more common rural-to-urban movements that are taking place. As Monica's husband (who is not an IDP but a migrant from the regions) said: 'it is easier for us non-IDPs because we have a place to return to if we cannot make it in the city. If you are an IDP, you do not have a home to return to'.

The deterritorialization that results from the unwilling movement involved in becoming an IDP, and later from the movements between rented dwellings, prevents IDPs

⁸ Not her real name.

from reterritorializing and find that new place, and consequently limiting the possibility of a home. One can be mobile as a migrant as long as there is a particular centre of gravity – a location that may be termed home – or an opportunity to reterritorialize. When the possibility of home disappears, mobility becomes unbearable. This, I think, reflects many IDPs' experiences of the temporariness in their mobile lives. As Heidegger ([1954] 1971, pp. 143–144) suggests, 'The truck driver is at home on the highway, but he does not have his shelter there; the working woman is at home in the spinning mill, but does not have her dwelling place there; the chief engineer is at home in the power station, but he does not dwell there.' Mobile IDPs find it difficult to feel at home anywhere accessible to them:

It is difficult to change places so often and adapt to new places. After living there for two or three years, I have become used to a place. But when I am just about to get used to a place I have to move again and have to re-establish again.... Since I left Abkhazia, I do not move homes, I just move houses.

Interviewer: What is home to you?

It is the place where there is a house that belongs to you, you decorate it as you want, you live there for as long as you can get adjusted to the environment and to that space. It is not just a house, it encompasses a neighbourhood, the people you learn to know and then you become familiar. It is the surroundings in general, a home is much more than a house in my view. (displaced man, aged 33, living in rented accommodation with his mother)

Relational dwelling: Mobility as misrecognition

Dwelling is relational, and the way in which dwelling forms a starting point for social relations, the keeping together of things and relations, was one of the main topics raised by interviewees. Being unable to improve one's living conditions, having no control over one's

physical space, is experienced as a loss – a primary deprivation in terms of making a life and finding a place within Georgian society.

Now we have to start looking for a new place, our [*Gira*] contract expires in four months. I wish we could get our own house. As we are not in our own city, at least if we owned our house, it would feel more like home. I want to be able to improve my living space, to decorate and to invest in the space... My daughter always says, we do not need new clothes, let us save for the fridge we can have in our new flat (a woman, approximately 50 years old, who came from Russia in 2007).

Living spaces are often substandard, with plumbing frequently a problem, windows draughty, walls damp, and floors stripped of wood or other covering. The flats I visited were sometimes furnished when rented out, but sometimes not. Common for all flats was that the families living there would have few of their own belongings – they were not investing in things before they knew they had a space they could control. Monica's family had bought one lamp and a baby cot for their newborn baby – otherwise they were reluctant to invest money or energy in the rented dwelling. The low material standards of the dwellings form a reminder of people's status. Lack of control is felt both in relation to the immediate physical space and in relation to the politics of mobility towards IDPs. People renting in Tbilisi are anxious that the only assistance they might be able to access is a government-provided residence outside Tbilisi, far away from their current livelihoods. This would be another form of forced movement. In addition to the lack of security in the material dwelling itself, the dwellings and the process of moving are also significant in the identity formation and notions of self developed by the internally displaced:

I always have to reinvent myself when I move to a new place (a woman in her 40s, living in rented accommodation since the family's return from Russia in 2008).

The two forms of recognition – identity and status – come together in the dwelling. The dwelling constitutes and symbolizes in this case Honneth's three dimensions of recognition:

the personal, the legal and the social. Though a private space, the dwelling determines one's status both socially and legally.

When renting you are no one in the society. You are not going to stay, so people cannot be bothered to be in touch (displaced man, aged 33, living in rented accommodation with his mother).

We are IDPs and we are living in the private sector. No one knows about us. From the outside we are invisible. No one cares about people like us. There are so many people in the collective centres, and the government and organizations are only interested in them (woman, approximately 50 years old, who came from Russia in 2007).

In this case, misrecognition is experienced as a depreciation of one's identity and status by the surroundings (Honneth 2002, Fraser 2001). We need to understand how the movement of IDPs is normatively evaluated in Georgian society.⁹ As noted earlier, there is an interest in keeping people in the IDP category and, consequently, IDPs are excluded from becoming full citizens. IDPs are wanted as long as they abide by their IDP status and the expectation that they will stay put. Exclusion takes place when people move away from where they were registered as IDPs, because that movement challenges the understanding of the place of IDPs within Georgian society. How people make sense of the world is intimately related to how people are recognized in the society. In Georgia, the IDPs from Abkhazia are needed to help maintain the notion of a whole/unscarred Georgia. As a result, people are stuck in a humanitarian category that has been emptied of much its original content. At the same time, they are fixed to the places where they first registered rather than where they dwell.

Recognition and misrecognition may be identified by identifying people's level of participation in society (Fraser 1995, 2001) and their experience of that level of participation. In the case of IDPs in rented accommodation, there is a lack of participation which is experienced through their invisibility. One example of invisibility is related to voting. People

⁹ I have borrowed this argument from Faist (2013), who uses it in the context of international migration.

in rented dwellings can only register their names at the flat if the owner agrees. It was not common among the people I interviewed to register their names with the address of the flat, which meant that their invisibility was experienced at many levels. First, they were not known to the state: they were still considered as living at the location where they and their families first registered when they became IDPs in the 1990s. Second, they cannot vote where they reside because they are not registered. Third, there is no recognition in their neighbourhood. They are the strangers that come today and leave tomorrow. And, as Fraser (2001, p. 24) puts it, when some actors are regarded as ‘inferior, excluded, wholly other or simply invisible, hence as less than full partners in social interaction, then we should speak of misrecognition and status subordination’.

Among the people interviewed, there is clearly a norm of ownership inherent in the discussion about rented dwellings. People long for the owned dwelling; they believe that ownership of a dwelling will change their status, give them recognition within society and make them feel at home. Ownership is believed to lead to the reterritorialization and the recognition they dream of. An owned property does not necessary solve all problems, but for the people interviewed dwelling is associated with being still, and with the possibility of keeping a place of their own, investing in that dwelling, being surrounded by things that provide comfort and nurturing relationships with neighbours. The mobile IDPs in rented dwellings longed for stillness, for the control over their lives that may mean voluntary immobility rather than forced mobility. For them, it is stillness and a permanent dwelling that may provide recognition.

When stillness becomes the aim

People in protracted displacement are generally thought of as relatively immobile – stuck in one location while waiting for a solution. In this article, however, I have shown that many

IDPs remain on the move. Their situation is the result of an initial movement in search of a better life – a movement away from where they first registered and hence a movement that challenges how the internally displaced are governed. In the strategies of those dwelling in rented accommodation, however, mobility comes to represent a precarious status. The relationship between mobility and stillness for this group is fraught with tension. IDPs in rented dwellings are involuntarily mobile and long for stillness because ‘staying in one place makes you into someone’, as one interviewee commented. I have shed light on the relationship between mobility and immobility through notions of ‘dwelling’ and ‘recognition’. Three main conclusions may be drawn from the analysis.

First, new discussions on Heidegger’s notion of ‘dwelling’ have made it possible to better understand dwelling-in-mobility and the extent to which mobility can be understood through the process of dwelling. Dwelling and mobility are not mutually exclusive, but the dwelling becomes an important starting point for how IDPs can control their mobility. Second, in discussions of forced migration, policy categories and the humanitarian status form a crucial starting point for understanding how people are being considered. A status makes it possible to understand people’s position in society and is relevant for identities and a more general social standing. The concept of ‘recognition’ enables a more nuanced picture of how social status can be influential in efforts to understand the relationship between mobility and immobility, how certain groups in society – in this case IDPs in rented accommodation – are not accepted because of the nature of their mobility. Engaging with recognition enables an analysis of how power, status and inequality are produced through mobility and shape the experience of staying in a rented dwelling. Third, the rented dwelling comes to symbolize the migrant’s precarious social and legal IDP status, as well as his or her identity as an IDP. Through the temporary dwelling, identities other than the temporary identity of the displaced disappear. People become invisible, faceless – they cannot be recognized.

If we integrate redistribution with recognition in Fraser's (2001) understanding, redressing misrecognition would mean changing social institutions. Looking more generally at how displaced populations are understood and treated in the territorial politics and politics of mobility in Georgia may help to understand how political possibilities for making and accessing home are created, as well as the significance of mobility in that process. The governance of mobility promotes territorialized polities that seek to fix groups of people to particular territories (see Lash and Featherstone 2001). By studying mobility among IDPs in rented accommodation, we gain insight into what Sheller (2011, p. 2) refers to as 'the power of discourses, practices, infrastructures of mobility in creating the effects of both movement and stasis'. Displaced people in Georgia (and elsewhere) resist being fixed to one place, but their reterritorializations become precarious because institutions are established only to control their mobility, not to facilitate mobility and enable stillness in locations and dwellings of their own desire.

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