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Talk about civil society

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Analysing narratives from the NGO-sector in Georgia with
M.C. Nussbaum's capability to affiliate

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Abstract

In Georgia the non-governmental organisations are active and manifold despite the Soviet heritage of a trampled civil society and lengthy violent conflicts, frozen yet not forgotten. NGOs seek to deal with the problematic issues through information, strengthening civil society and building bridges between antagonists. An organisation consists of individuals and the work is done through “their” individuals towards other individuals. Martha Nussbaum's approach on human well-being, which does not count income or ask for a minimum set of utensils for a universal basic standard, is being offered as a more just way of judging national growth than the GDP. Nussbaum's approach of basic human capability cherishes individuality and different cultures, recognising that not every one wishes the same things in order to feel fulfilled. The capability approach allows persons to choose a preferred way of life, yet lists demands of equal opportunities to all for reaching personal development and accessing possibilities. By analysing the narrations of NGO-staff members thematically according to the capability to affiliate, a relevant feel for the possibilities of successful and satisfying interaction in the NGO-sector emerges and some contemporary issues in the local contexts are presented. The interviews were conducted in Georgia during two months in 2010, and the focus was on relationships and experiences connected to work. Exercising the capability in good measure is presented in the narratives as gaining the individual increased emotion and furthering personal development. Areas where living up to the capability is hampered become also visible: affiliating may brush against existing stereotypical norms in the society. Yet the individuals challenge the restrictions and in doing so develop their civil society and themselves.

Key words:

Georgia, the Caucasus, NGO, civil society, narrative analysis, the capabilities approach

Abstract in Georgian

Translation: Giorgi Margiani

საბაკალავრო ნაშრომი, 15 ქულა, მშვიდობისა და კონფლიქტების მეცნიერება
გლობალური პოლიტიკათმცოდნეობის განყოფილება
მალმოს უნივერსიტეტი
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ანა ტაინიო

ხელმძღვანელი: ჰანს აბრაჰამსონი

საუბრები სამოქალაქო საზოგადოების შესახებ
საქართველოს არასამთავრობო ორგანიზაციების თანამშრომელთა ნაამბობის
ანალიზი მ. ნუსბაუმის შეთავსებადობის უნარის მეთოდით
რეზიუმე

მიუხედავად საბჭოთა კავშირისგან მემკვიდრეობით მიღებული, დათრგუნული სამოქალაქო საზოგადოებისა და ასევე ხანგრძლივი, გაყინული, თუმცა არდავინწყებული კონფლიქტებისა, საქართველოში არსებობს მრავალი აქტიურად მომუშავე არასამთავრობო ორგანიზაცია. არასამთავრობო ორგანიზაციები ცდილობენ პრობლემატურ საკითხების მოგვარებას ინფორმაციის გაცვლის, სამოქალაქო საზოგადოების გაძლიერებისა და დაპირისპირებულ მხარეებს შორის ურთიერთგაგების დამყარების გზით. არასამთავრობო ორგანიზაციები კერძო პირებისგან შედგება და მათი საქმიანობაც ასევე უშუალოდ კერძო პირებისადმი მიმართული. წარმოებული ეროვნული პროდუქციის მოცულობაზე უფრო სწორ მაჩვენებელს ეროვნული განვითარების შესაფასებლად იძლევა მართა ნუსბაუმის მიდგომა, რომლის მიხედვითაც აუცილებელი არ არის ადამიანის კეთილდღეობის უნივერსალურ სტანდარტულ საზომად ჩაითვალოს ის, თუ რამდენი დოლარის ან რამდენი ნივთის მფლობელია პიროვნება. ნუსბაუმისეული ძირითადი ადამიანური უნარების თეორია ითვალისწინებს პიროვნების ინდივიდუალურობას, ასევე, კულტურათა შორის განსხვავებებს და აღიარებს, რომ ყველა ადამიანს ერთი და იგივე რამ არ სჭირდება კმაყოფილებისთვის. “უნარების” მიდგომა ადამიანებს საშუალებას აძლევს აირჩიონ სასურველი ცხოვრების გზა, თუმცა ამასთანავე აყალიბებს ყველასთვის თანაბარი შესაძლებლობების მოთხოვნას, რათა თითოეულმა მიაღწიოს პიროვნულ განვითარებას და ჰქონდეს შესაძლებლობების გამოყენების საშუალება. ნაშრომში თემატურადაა გაანალიზებული არასამთავრობო ორგანიზაციებში მომუშავე ადამიანების მონაყოლი ძირითადი ადამიანური უნარებიდან ერთერთი უნარის, კერძოდ, შეთავსებადობის (შემწყნარებლობის) უნარის მიხედვით და წარმოდგენილია წარმატებული და დამაკმაყოფილებელი იტერაქციისათვის საჭირო უნარების აღქმა, ასევე რამდენიმე თანამედროვე საკითხი ლოკალურ კონტექსტში. ინტერვიუები ჩატარებულია საქართველოში 2010 წელს ორი თვის განმავლობაში. ინტერვიუს დროს ყურადღება გამახვილებული იყო სამუშაოსთან დაკავშირებულ ურთიერთობებსა და გამოცდილებაზე. მონათხრობებიდან ჩანს, რომ უნართა გამოყენება კარგი გაგებით შეიძლება დანახულ იქნეს, როგორც გაზრდილი ინდივიდუალური ემოციის მიღების და პიროვნული განვითარების საშუალება. ნაშრომში ასევე დანახულია ის სფეროები, სადაც შეფერხებულია უნარების შესაბამისად ცხოვრება: შეთავსებადობის (შემწყნარებლობის) უნარი შეიძლება ინვესტდეს საზოგადოებაში გაბატონებულ სტერეოტიპებთან დაპირისპირებას, თუმცა, ამავე დროს, ინდივიდები, რომლებიც გამოდიან აკრძალვების წინააღმდეგ, ავითარებენ საკუთარ თავს და იმ სამოქალაქო საზოგადოებას, სადაც ცხოვრობენ.

საკვანძო სიტყვები:

საქართველო, კავკასია, არასამთავრობო ორგანიზაცია, სამოქალაქო საზოგადოება, ნარატივის ანალიზი, უნარების მეთოდი

Map of area



Retrieved from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Georgia_high_detail_map.png, on December 12, 2010.

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1. Introduction

In Georgia, local NGOs have been involved in peace-building efforts of the structural and cultural kinds for well over a decade: creating trust between different ethnic groups and providing social aid and networks to the internally displaced people. Theoretically, these are the last steps of transformation of war to positive peace, i.e., a sound and safe society (Ramsbotham et al 2005:11-13). Yet the latest military aggression is recent, and the signed treaty marking the end of the August 2008 war (the Six Points Agreement) is in dispute and was allegedly soon violated (GMFA website). Some of the cancelled flight routes between Georgia and Russia were being opened while I was in the country in 2010, but crossing borders to South Ossetia or Abkhazia was not recommended neither by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, nor by others on location, and would, in my case, have led to the annulling of my travel insurance. Yet, walking the streets of different towns in Georgia felt as safe as any other place, and the conflict is not obviously tangible to a visitor. Yet the violent conflict is present in the everyday lives of the people in Georgia, and not least for the individuals connected with non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Many have fled their homes, many have lost their loved ones, some were drafted in to the army, many have lost homes, jobs and livelihoods. They have taken on themselves to try and deal with different aspects that may be related to the conflict, as trainers or participants, and often both. Whatever the underlying individual motivations are for doing it, they are acting in order to improve their civil society.

Civil society is seen as holding necessary components of bridging animosities and fears in a society, and Mary Kaldor takes the step further by seeing in a global extension of civil society values a real possibility to avoid the violence of war. Not in the sense of a global state or world police, but a framework of rules to be negotiated and renegotiated between the many different actors. The universality of the human rights-thinking and globalisation connects civil society groups with others outside any one territory (Kaldor 2003:110). And surely enough, civil society activities have managed to change discourse of international relations, as well as increasing the reach of democratic values. In Eastern Europe in the 1980s the dialogue and debate paved the way for a wider political inclusion (Kaldor 2003:63-70). As such, the development and processes connected to civil society supports the strength and ability of a narrative. According to narrative analyst Caroline Riessman, narrative is action prompted by something and creating something (Riessman 2008:7-17), making connections and creating

relationships. Through narrations individuals construct their realities, and through an individual narrative the door is opened to viewing how one perceives and experiences the surroundings as well as personal abilities.

1.2 Problem and Purpose

This essay deals with social relations, the capability to interact and affiliate, as experienced by professionals working in a society with a frozen conflict. The setting is Georgia in the Caucasus. The current manifestation of conflict dates back to the disintegration of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s, and its violent aftermath in Georgia in the early 1990s. The issues have not been solved, neither by politicians nor by NGO:s. Literature and experience show that in other parts of the world significant steps towards resolution and peace have been made by the civil society actors. Looking at the conditions and experiences of the individual actor of the civil society will contribute to the field of research, since focus on the individual is not common: NGO:s are most often researched in terms of money and results.

The purpose of this essay is to explore how an individual experiences her/his surroundings and how possibilities of action emerge in narrations about the immediate social network of family and work. The focus of the narrations is not on conflict and resolution as such, yet the individuals were chosen due to the fact that they are professionally active in organisations working with issues which promote peace and democracy: women's empowerment, building trust between different ethnic groups, human rights, political inclusion for all, gender equality, providing humanitarian aid, monitoring conflict areas, etc. Assessing some of the individual considerations concerning life and work in Georgia may bring some deeper understanding of, and perhaps more angles to deal with, the problematic situation.

1.3 Aim of Study and Research Question

This study looks at individual affiliation in the NGO-context of Georgia. Talk about personal relationships bring forth issues of difficulties, possibilities and perceptions of own capabilities for satisfactory relationships and interaction, and influence in the surroundings. These issues, in extension, are also central in successful conflict resolution and civil society building. A strong, healthy civil society extends in many directions and has different kinds of units: small, big, elite, grass root, semi-professional, and so on, and should even vary in density and levels

of activity. Civil society scholar Edwards points out that “parts need to be present and connected if the system is to operate effectively” (2005:34). The statement holds equally well when considering individual members of different units. Interaction and interconnection exists between an individual's wishes and the organisational activities as well: “associations are arenas for personal ambition and power as well as for sacrifice and service /.../ the [result] depends on what [people] do and why they do it” (Edwards 2005:44). I will also consider why “they do *not* do it”, and look for what restrictions on capabilities appear in the narrations, as I map out areas of positive and negative experiences in the narratives.

Martha C. Nussbaum is developing and refining the human capabilities approach as a system for measuring individual, and in extension, regional levels of well-being. (For example, the theory has been used on survey material to assess well-being in Britain (Anand et al 2005).) There is a specific purpose in mind with the capabilities theory, and that is to strive for the necessary changes on a nation state-level. “In short, we need to ask what politics should be pursuing for each and every citizen” Nussbaum (2008:33) states. As such, Nussbaum connects the approach to legislation, and the discussion has a distinct aim towards legislative changes. For my purposes there is less emphasis on assessing what the Georgian government does and should do, and more on to see how the individual stories of interaction of NGO-staff in Georgia measure in comparison with the theory.

The overarching research question is:

What effects does exercising the capability to affiliate have in the NGO-sector in Georgia?

Operational questions are:

How is the capability present in the narrations?

What are the effects on the individual, and in the setting?

What connections can be made from the individual stories to the larger context of civil society?

Further, Nussbaum has chosen a feminist point in presenting the capabilities theory in her first full-length book on the subject. It is well justified, since men and women share this world, yet equality is still lacking in many aspects, and women are worse off globally (Nussbaum 2008). Nussbaum makes a clear point that “the capabilities approach is fully universal” (p. 6) and one of the reasons for identifying the need for such an approach, is that “each person [is]

worthy of regard, as an end and not just a means [for someone else's ends]" (p.32). Humans as their own ends and not means to someone else's ends is a philosophical idea, derivable from Immanuel Kant's thinking (Kaldor 2003:26).

1.4 Method and Design

This study was made possible by me receiving a grant to conduct field studies in a location I had never visited before, and with a social context that was new to me. I decided to head out with the idea of creating my own theory of the data I could gather. Hence, I started off with wish to use the method of grounded theory for an exploratory research. Data is gathered through intensive interviews (Charmaz 2009:25-35), and I used open-ended questions, allowing the interviewed speak their minds and lead the conversation quite freely. Of course, I limited the discussions from the beginning to specific spheres of life, since the scope of this study did not require, nor had space for, life-stories.

My epistemological direction is empirical constructivism. I allowed maximum time and effort to my interviews and my main source is the narratives. What is presented in this essay is constructed of the experiences of others: knowledge is "derive[d] from the external world, albeit mediated through sensory perception. Valid knowledge is based a posteriori upon the 'facts' derived from systematic observations and reflection upon them" (Sumner 2006:92).

The demands of reality, such as planning and travelling and finding the participants, with whom I had seldom had initial contact with, or in some cases, did not even know of, required a given share of time. Being a first time field worker was not helping with the logistics and organisation. Eventually, the possibility to return to an interviewee for follow-up questions and further elaboration on specific issues was ruled out, yet that is required to ground one's theory solidly (Charmaz 2009:35). With some adjusting of my method, I could keep the exploratory character of my study. A switch from thinking of grounding a theory to conducting a narrative inquiry was not a far leap, as the concepts may even sometimes get confused in qualitative methods literature (Riessman 2007:53). The coding (Charmaz 2009:42-54), which I had initially done revealed usable themes for the narrative analysis. My themes concerned issues of what was difficult in interaction, what was experienced as positive and/or negative, and what was perceived as changes in self caused by professional

relationships. A preparation of the data by identifying themes is a shared feature of the two methods (Riessman 2007:59).

Thematic narrative analysis concerns itself solely with the content of a narrative (Riessman 2007:53). The themes are determined and developed by the academic, in this case me, and are “influenced by prior and emergent theory, the concrete purpose of an investigation, the data themselves” (Riessman 2007:54). Thematic approach is suitable for my analysis since there are many participants in this research. Thematic analysis allows looking for common themes, and does not require accounting for a complete narrative. Thematic narrative analysis comes with cautions for the researcher to be aware of: everybody may not mean the same thing with the same words, and also the researcher should pay attention to the deviant narrations. Leaving out dissident events from the completed study may polish the appearance of a theory, but be untrue to the participants' meaning (Riessman 2006:187). I have not delved deep into differing meanings of words, yet I acknowledge that meanings may differ in my gathered narratives as well. Especially, since the interviewed come from differing backgrounds (local and foreigner, city-dwellers and small-town inhabitants), and have different levels of experience and education. But in this study people's sentiments were the central issue of interest, which could be expressed in different words without changing the outcome of the analysis.

Further, narrative analysis is suitable and acutely relevant in the larger context of the study as well. A narrative has many purposes for its teller, and Riessman (2008:8-10) accounts for seven different directions a narrative can be used as: remembering the past, argumentative, persuasion, sharing the narrator's experience, entertainment, even misleading an audience, and finally, to mobilise for action. The functions may of course overlap. That “[n]arratives do political work” (Riessman 2008:8) is well true of the NGO:s represented in this study, and giving weight to a narrative as a possible changer of reality is proven by the movements that have changed societies by talking about difference: movements for sexual orientation, emancipation efforts of marginalised groups, and the like (Riessman 2008: 9,10, 14-16). Thus, listening to narratives about the Georgian social context offers relevant points for development of civil society.

1.4 Material and bias

Data was gathered through audio recording, and only one respondent refused to be recorded. A transcribed text speaks with a voice beyond paper. I can only agree with grounded theorist Kathy Charmaz (2009:34f) on the surprising closeness one feels with the data, when it carries the tone and wording of the interviewee. The recorded interviews were complemented with field notes, which documented my experiences, impressions and observations, as well as web sites and written materials produced by the organisations. The published sources were used for background information, and the authors most used (Goltz, Gordadze, Kaldor, Mitchell, and Uhlin) are all well-published and recognised academics. The wish to include several organisations in the study of course limited time spent with any one organisation, therefore I consider my own reflections as merely reflections of another, for me new, reality, more than data on which to base analysis on.

The respondents emerged through snowballing. As I was new to all aspects of Georgian society accidental sampling within the specified group of people working with NGOs worked best for my purposes. NGOs are by nature connected to others, since networking maximises the possibilities of succeeding in their particular projects. Initially, this snowballing included a possible bias. As SIDA:s The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation (hereafter KtK) was my entry point, the initial contacts were through KtK and with organisations who receive funding from KtK. Even as I clearly explained that I was not a representative of KtK, the connection was clearly there. The organisations that were connected to KtK held the Foundation in high esteem, and this respect was expressed to me. Eventually, I got in contact with some organisations that did not work with KtK. Yet, I remained a foreigner, a Westerner, and a guest throughout my stay. Despite the friendly and welcoming reception I was met with everywhere, in the interviews most people did talk about negative and difficult issues as well, and not just wishing to show me a through-and-through positive, and thus unreal, image of their situation.

1.5 Delimitations

This study is not an evaluation of the work done by the NGOs in Georgia. Nor is it trying to find a solution, nor scapegoats, for the unresolved conflict issues in Georgia. The NGO-sector is but one of many actors of civil society (as elaborated further on). There is little mention of other important and central civil society actors such as the media and the church, both of

which have great impact in Georgian society and are important actors of civil society and the democratic space.

Interviewing is a well-used method of gathering data, yet it “represents only one source of knowledge about a phenomenon or group” (Riessman 2008:26), and albeit that a narrative may “reveal truths about human existence” (Riessman 2008:10), this study is based on single interviews. I have not triangulated my findings with other sources of information, thus this study emphasises on being a narrative analysis, not attempting to formulate truths about the Georgian society beyond the personal experiences. I have no doubts regarding the sincerity of my interviewees. Yet, the analysis is mine, and within my limits: I do not know the language, my communication was mainly in English, observation time was short, and I could not return to my interviewees with further questions for this study.

1.6 Outline

The first chapter introduces the study and presents the purpose of exploring the capability to affiliate as a new angle to regarding NGO-work in Georgia. This study is done by analysing recorded interviews thematically. Chapter two presents some contemporary and historical background relevant for the study. Chapter three presents the research setting: the organisations, at which the interviewed were active at, the participants and the general manner of the interview. Chapter four sketches a theoretical frame of civil society and the capability approach to human development. Chapter five presents the results of my findings according to the capability to affiliate, followed by chapter six, which discusses the capability in regard of conflict and civil society. The result is concluded in chapter seven, followed by references and the appendices: the full list of capabilities, and a sample of the transcribed interviews.¹

2. Background

Some contemporary images and facts are offered, then a brief historical background: of the emergence of civil society after the USSR-period, some causes of the conflicts, and an account of the structural arrangement of the Soviet Union. These arrangements, despite being

¹ I have chosen the three interviews which are most used in the analysis, and which deal with the subject of this study most clearly. The others are available on request.

recognised as man-made and top-steered, are still used, among other reasons, as giving legitimacy to territorial claims of independence and/or unity.

2.1 General images and traces of conflict

Georgia's turbulent post-Soviet history is visible in the scenery of the amiable country. Most notable are the varying types of semi-temporary housing of the internally displaced people. Along the new highway running from Tbilisi past the town of Gori to Western Georgia, squares next to squares of newly built identical small houses accommodate the latest wave of refugees after the 2008 August war. Of the first wave of internally displaced persons (IDP:s) in the early 90s, many (45%) still live in collective centres, which consist of “former public buildings, such as hostels, hospitals and schools” (Kharashvili et al 2005). One of these in central Kutaisi was an old Soviet style monolithic hotel, which showed all the signs of heavy wear. The stairs were chipped, floors had been make-shift repaired, the plumbing did not work properly. Hundreds of people lived there; some had received other accommodation, yet many families had nowhere else to be. One room, the size of a small hotel room, could house several generations. The welcome was warm but slightly reserved when I was on a visit, and nobody was happy with their living conditions. Besides the material misery, being an IDP could cause social exclusion (Svedberg 2010). The government had used some aid money to provide some IDP:s with own housing, a controversial act since it could not help all the IDP:s. Kakha Bendukidze, State Minister of Reform Coordination 2004-2008, does not regret the move in the least, since it denoted a change of government policy towards the IDP:s. “During the late 90s and early 2000s” Bendukidze says, ”there was a feeling that we should keep refugees as a special tool that would enable us to build up an angry army of returnees to Abkhazia. I think it is impossible to use a part of society as political hostages of crazy ideas” (cited in Brenner 2010).

Lingering groups of people at working age also talk of the high unemployment rates. According to the World Bank figures from 2007, over 13 % of the working age populace are unemployed, and just over 54 % (in 2003) of the total population live below of what the WB sees as the poverty line (WB website). Georgian statistics offer later figures, and in 2009 the unemployment had risen to 16,9 % (GeoStat website). Georgia lost a few positions in the past consecutive years in Transparency International's (TI) ranking (TI website). Despite being the Caucasian post-soviet country most hailed for its democratic progress, the state structures are

still a work in progress. Lincoln A. Mitchell is author of “Uncertain Democracy” where the events of the Rose Revolution, which was the new democratic beginning in 2002, are looked at from close perspective. Mitchell was working at the executive level of the American NGO National Democratic Institute in Tbilisi in 2002-2004. Today he is an assistant professor at the Columbia University's Harriman Institute of Russian, Eurasian, and Eastern European Studies (The Harriman Institute website). Mitchell positions the Georgian political ideology along the Western democratic model, which more or less is the only political option with support in all areas of the Georgian society. Other ideologies lack any significant influence: “[t]here is little nostalgia for the Soviet Union; no fundamentalist religious model has any support in Georgia; and Asian or corporatist development models have no traction at all“ (Mitchell 2009:7).

According to Lansky and Areshidze, who at the time of their publication “Georgia's Year of Turmoil” were engaged in National Endowment of Democracy, NED, a US non-profit organisation devoted to support democracy world-wide (NED website), Georgia had in 2003 media independent of the government, albeit politically coloured depending on the interests of the owners. Yet “real debate was possible. Similarly, there was an influential civil society. Although Western analysts assumed that the NGO-community was the most developed component of Georgia's civil society, it was only one among many well-developed Georgian institutions, including the business community, the media, and a strong church” (Lansky and Areshidze 2008:157). Mitchell agrees with these views, yet emphasises that in 2003 a decade of active assistance to democracy had created a “permanent part of Georgian society as well as economy” (2009:116), since the proliferating NGOs were one of the very limited possibilities of getting a job in the unemployment stricken country. NGOs are still abundant, and the number of registered non-profit organisations climbs steadily. The Georgian National Agency of Public Registry (NAPR) has registered non-profit organisations since 1994, counting 71 registered organisations in the first year, and a year after the number was 239. Towards the turn of the millennium, the numbers approached steadily the first thousand, and in 2001 the count was 1261. The numbers stayed quite steady, with some fluctuation, until a major dip occurred in 2005 (from 1250 to 864 in 2004). The figures reached past the thousand again in 2007 (personal request of data to the NAPR, Query Number 159793).

2.2 Reforming the State from the Soviet

The structure of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) gave its parts different levels of autonomy, at least on paper. Georgia was one of the 15 Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR). Abkhazia had a slightly different position: its position was an Autonomous Soviet Socialist republic (ASSR), under the Georgian SSR, albeit stressing many levels of independence in its constitution (RRC1), and its voluntary self-determination was acknowledged by The Georgian SSR in 1921 (RRC2). South- Ossetia was an Autonomous Oblast, a province under the authority of the Georgian SSR (Spectrum 1979; Goltz 2009:13f). The early constitutional documents were re-adapted as the efforts of nation-building began in earnest in the early 90s. Georgia attempted to remove the clauses of Abkhazian autonomy with a pre-Soviet constitution, and the counter move from Sukhumi, the Abkhazian capital, was to re-adapt an early Soviet constitutive document, placing Abkhazia and Georgia as political equals, meaning “implicitly /.../ full Abkhaz independence” (quote: Goltz 2009:22. *ibid*:12-34; Gordadze 2009:28-30, 34-41; Illarionov 2009:46-84).

The early Post-Soviet period was a time of turmoil and unrest, with political violence in the whole country. The first elected president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, used aggressive nationalistic rhetoric and further alienated regions like Abkhazia, Adjara and South Ossetia (see map on p.4), where the population consisted of other identity groups besides Georgians. North and South Ossetias are separated geographically by the massive Great Caucasus mountain range (yet connected via the Roki tunnel), and politically by the national border between Russia and Georgia. The people of North and South Ossetia regard each other as ethnically brethren. Ossetians call themselves Alans, and have a “long history /.../ with the Russians, both in Czarist and Soviet times“ (Goltz 2009:18). Of course there has been hundreds of years with interaction with Georgians, as well. South Ossetia wanted independence from Tbilisi in order to stay in the Soviet Union, and thus be joined with North Ossetia (Goltz 2009:17f). In Abkhazia, in the last Soviet census of 1989, Georgians were the largest ethnic group, numbering just under majority, while 17% were “titular Abkhaz” (Goltz 2009:21). The wars in South Ossetia and Abkhazia called the UN to the area, and these wars also initiated the massive population movements of ethnic Georgians from the secessionist areas. The Caucasus area was UNHCR's first mission to the area of the former Soviet Union, the missions starting in Armenia and Azerbadjan in late 1992, and establishing in Georgia some six months later (Redmond 1998). The unrest was widespread besides the secessionist regions: Western

Georgia's Samegrelo- region was under the control of armed thugs, and on the streets of Tbilisi the situation was similar. People were harassed on the streets and the parliament-building was fired at. A diverse group of Gamsakhurdia's opponents returned the Georgian former Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze to Tbilisi. The democratically elected president was replaced with an elite-appointed leader, albeit the former did not provide successful leadership, and the latter had experience of statesmanship and managed to bring some sort of stability to the state (Mitchell 2009:22-31).

The struggles for democracy, with civil war, corruption, and political clashes were common in the new republics emerging from the Soviet Union. Georgia has in the hindsight been regarded as “having most successfully overcome the post-Soviet crisis of authority” (Jones 2000:42). The early Georgian leadership and the international NGO:s acted in concert and managed to “generate /.../ embryonic interest groups and indigenous nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with claims on government policy” (ibid). Mitchell similarly supports the idea that the prominent Georgian civil society was one of “the primary and most immediate causes” of the later Georgian political developments as well. The other leading cause for the Rose Revolution was Shevardnadze's failed leadership, which undermined his popularity and called for more active and progressive leadership (Mitchell 2009:113). Mitchell also notes that during Saakashvili's second term as president, which started in 2008, the democratic space is narrowing. The opposition is badly organised, and has been aggressively criticised by the very popular leading party, occasionally in ways that do not support democracy (Mitchell 2009:79-106). The narrowing of space and opinions is visible in other areas of the civil society as well, Mitchell observes:

Shevardnadze's Georgia was a place where civil organizations and vibrant free media played valuable roles in the country's political life. This too has changed somewhat under Saakashvili, as NGOs no longer play a leading role as government watchdogs and critics. Ironically, in some respects Georgia had less independent media and fewer opposition voices than it had under Shevardnadze. (Mitchell 2009:92)

People working for human rights in Georgia experience this disturbing development, as threats and persecution by state officials are continually encountered and documented (e.g. Natsvlshvili 2009a; Natsvlshvili 2009b).

3. Presentation of participants

3.1 The organisations

My first host in Georgia was the women's organisation "Cultural-Humanitarian Fund Sukhumi" in Kutaisi, where I also spent the longest time of my stay in Georgia. I also visited other KtK partners such as "Imedi" and "Gainati" in Zugdidi, and "Union of Wives of Invalids and Lost Warriors of Georgia" in Tbilisi. All of these work with women's empowerment and education, and target their projects in varying degrees towards internally displaced persons (IDP:s), mostly women and children, either from Abkhazia or Ossetia. They receive funding from KtK. The organisation "Qartlosi" in Gori does not profile itself as a women's organisation, nor receives funding from KtK. The organisation works with similar issues and in similar manner as the ones above. I felt most welcome everywhere, even when I interrupted a busy work day. I also talked with people who had other angles to their work, such as the "Human Rights Center" (HRIDC), with offices in Tbilisi and in Gori. The organisation "Atinati" is a pioneer among Georgian local associations, and is well known in Georgia. "Atinati" has a wide variety of activities and angles as they work with society empowerment, education and trust-building, but makes no explicit distinction of target group. The Czech-based organisation "People In Need" (PIN) offers social support, through local professional social workers and councillors. PIN has very few expatriate employees in Georgia despite being an international NGO. The organisation is entrenched in their local setting, functioning as a local NGO, employing locals and applying for grants for its projects. PIN's approach to aid is very much educational, and as such, similar in nature to the other above mentioned organisations, yet their way of working is different as they prompt their beneficiaries to help themselves (PIN website). The "International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent" (ICRC) needs no further presentation as an organisation. In Gori their small field office had Head of Office originating from Europe, the rest being local employees. The European Union Monitoring Mission to Georgia (EUMM) has a purely monitoring nature, and they are not really an organisation like the others, and the Mission is very much a governmental structure, albeit a joint European one. Yet they promote peace and in a manner are in place in order to promote civil society to be able to pick up its functions after the 2008 war. EUMM is a civilian mission, and they monitor that the Six Point Agreement of August 12, 2008, is followed (EUMM website); I visited their staff in Gori. Most of their employees originate from the EU countries and are sent to Georgia by their governments, but the EUMM employs locals as well.

3.2 The talkers

21 people were interviewed for this study. One session was a group interview, which was one of the three occasions when talking was done through interpreters. The language of communication was in all cases English, and none of the interviewees were native English speakers. One interview was not recorded, but jotted down. 18 were females, 3 males, and the ages varied from early twenties to people in their 80s. The gender division is unintentional: I was not requiring to keep the gender-count equal, but took the opportunities for interviews when such appeared. Some explanation comes also naturally from the fact that majority of the organisations were women's organisations, which employ women. Since I have not attempted to find a sample to represent the Georgian society, I believe the imbalance will not affect the personal experiences which are the area of interest for this study. Little importance was placed on interviewees needing to be refugees (internally displaced persons, IDP:s) from the secessionist areas of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. As it turns out, five people in the final selection are. Five people are non-Georgians, or also called expatriates, the term here meaning people not originating from Georgia. They provide different perspectives of experiences: show possible contrasts, and identify common features regardless of origin of the speaker. A non-Georgian might work for a local NGO, and all international actors named above employ locals as well as expatriates.

However, it needs to be stressed, that this study is not about comparing different NGO workers' narratives, nor is it about scrutinizing the differences between organisations and workers. The mix of people serves to communicate a variety of perceptions to different circumstances as well as to add a further measure of anonymity to the interviewed. Many of the people I interviewed made a point of not requiring anonymity, but I decided to treat everyone equally, i.e to analyse the narratives without connecting them to specific personal information, including names, towns of residence, or organisations.

3.3 Directing the talk

The areas which I wished to talk about with the interviewees can be roughly divided into three: the "Professional", the "Personal", and the "Then what?". (In the individual narratives the areas naturally blended and mixed, and sometimes the threads of talk took very different directions, which is common in open interview situations (Riessman 2008:24).) The professional part revolved around work; how the professional relationships are described,

what is perceived as difficult, what is seen as important and what is expressed as rewarding. The personal area concerned the familial expectations, as well as how one feels that work affects oneself on a personal level. The third area of what comes next in one's life was intended to explore to what extent the NGO shapes its worker, and to what extent do the NGO staff express their dedication to their specific type of work. With my questions of the professional and personal spheres, I was looking at what kind of image was presented of other people with whom one interacted, as well as how one thinks or speaks of others seeing oneself. I initially intended to gain a view of how the interviewee thought that other people in general regarded him/her, but as the interviews progressed, I realised that the questions I had prepared did not bring out answers as I had thought of them. Thus, there is very little such mention, and the few times I tried to push the issue my respondents were slightly at a loss at what I wanted, and the answers came out somewhat forced. Often, the answer did still not deal with self-image through another person, so I eventually dropped the issue.

There was also a fourth topic of talk, namely what possibilities were perceived for the resolution of the territorial conflict in Georgia. At the time of designing the interview guide this topic did not support the exploration of the fabric of personal, social relationships in close proximity of the one individual. But considering the larger context of Georgian contemporary affairs, it seemed relevant as an issue to bring up. Especially as I had a personal interest to hear what ordinary, albeit socially and politically aware, persons thought of the situation. Thus, the topic was included purely for indulgence, something I did not consider of using. Nevertheless, it turned out to provide another level of expressing personal capabilities as a professional and an individual.

4. Theoretical Framing

My exploration builds on the ideas of civil society and human capability. Civil society as a concept has been researched and theorised abundantly, and as an idea it is very much based on human action and relationships. In Georgia, the Soviet legacy has played a part in shaping the civil society as well as in the formation of the current conflicts, which bring specific aspects to the theories. My theoretical frame has main two parts: firstly, the context of an individual is sketched: of civil society in general, and of a society in conflict in particular. Secondly, the

individual human capability of affiliation according to the theory of Martha Nussbaum is presented.

4.1 Soviet Heritage - State of Conflict - Civil Society

Soviet civil society seems to preferentially be written with a question mark (Evans 2006; Uhlin 2006:42). Yet the budding potential existing already in Imperial Russia for a civil society has also been researched and acknowledged (Conroy 2006). A flurry of civil society action also existed briefly before the communist government applied its restrictions (Evans 2006:30). The Soviet Union had no fertile ground for individual action and separate social initiatives, as the power structure did not allow formal organisation outside of the communist party (ibid:28). It caused a “radical 'flattening' of society /.../ in which diversity of opinions and expressions of interest were circumscribed more severely than in many other authoritarian regimes” (McIntosh Sundstrom 2006:3-4). Generally in the Post-Soviet world however, civil society actors proliferate, and “NGOization” has taken place and is not uncommon, albeit the membership numbers are relatively small (Uhlin 2006:153).

The state of the conflict in Georgia is as complex and diverse as most conflicts. The consequences of the recent violent events of 2008 are still unresolved, and twenty per cent of the Georgian border is under dispute. The ethnic cleansing of South Ossetia has been documented by human rights organisations (GYLA *et al* 2009). Russia supports the breakaway regions materially and politically, with little respect of treaties or international laws (Gordadze 2009; Illarionov 2009; Felgenhauer 2009). EU and United States are claimed to hold the same stance: well spoken, yet little constructive action (Di Puppò 2010; Blank 2009).

What is taking place in Georgia has similar characteristics as a protracted social conflict. The concept of protracted social conflict was developed and refined by Edward Azar, while he was developing and refining a conflict database at the University of Maryland from the 1970s (Ramsbotham 2005:113). According to Azar, a protracted social conflict has “blurred demarcation between internal and external sources and actors. Moreover, there are multiple causal factors and dynamics /.../. Finally, these conflicts do not show clear starting and terminating points” (cited in Ramsbotham 2005:114), and the emphasis was on the spread of the conflict “within and across rather than exclusively between states” (ibid). Azar also

connects issues and fears of identity groups to result in conflict with the state. Albeit Azar himself passed away in 1991, on the eve of a restructuring of the world order, he had recognised the problem of “artificially imposed /.../ ideas of territorial statehood” (ibid:115). Azar observed the de-colonisation processes, and the theory holds equally true in application to post-communist states (ibid:122, 124). As Ramsbotham points out, the political changes in the world have nowhere near rendered the theory of protracted social conflict pointless. Indeed, conflict infests many levels of society and is meshed in social interaction.

Yet in Georgia there is no overarching hostility lurking on the streets. Mary Kaldor identifies the Caucasus area and Georgia as carrying characteristics of a “new war” (Kaldor 2001:86,93,108). New wars kill more civilians than military personnel, have elements of ethnic and nationalistic rhetoric. Violence is wielded by many separate groups, instead of a state-bound military. There are elements of internationality and transnational contacts in new wars as well: fighters may come from outside, as well as weapons and other resources. Further, a new war creates its own economy, which makes them even harder to eradicate, as some actors in a new war gain from the misery the war creates (Kaldor 2001). New war and protracted social conflict work in a manner on the same levels as a well functioning civil society, but with completely opposing results: where conflict destroys, civil society builds and preserves.

Conflicting opinions and values are an important and necessary component of a healthy civil society, and conflict “is an intrinsic and inevitable aspect of social change” (Ramsbotham *et al* 2005:13), yet the trick is in dealing with conflicts sensibly and peacefully. Civil society is equally intrinsically part of conflict, and does not, cannot function separately from a conflict (Orjuela 2008:6). Kaldor finds examples from history of civil society making a difference in conflicts, by opening up closed authoritarian societies through interconnections between civil society groups (Kaldor 2003:5). Yet civil society (in the example of people's movements against the impending war in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s) did not manage to avoid war. What was lacking according to Kaldor was “a framework of security”, outright laws to be applicable even in local situations to avoid atrocities. During and after the war, many steps have been taken in a good direction, with the creation of humanitarian corridors, no-fly zones, The Hague Tribunals and the like. Albeit there was no consensus on the actions during conflict, and some international action has failed gruesomely (Kaldor 2003: 131-133). Kaldor

stresses that civil society and the state apparatus are mutually dependant on each other's functions to work properly. Civil society constructs the society, which is solidified and upheld with the functions of the state, and the state functions assure the continued existence of civil society (Kaldor 2003:109). Similar development of interdependency exists on a global level, causing a benevolent continuum: multilateral ties to other states, interconnectedness in business and people support the actions of a global civil society, which in return contribute to the interconnectedness and ties (Kaldor 2003:138).

Kaldor defines civil society as a political idea, which stems from ancient history and has evolved and developed through centuries of human debate. The idea of civil society is wide, fragmented, diverse, occasionally contradicting, and quite global, yet it varies culturally between societies (Edwards 2005:29-32). According to one definition, civil society is a reduction of politics, since it “expand[s] free markets and individual liberty” (Cato, cited in Edwards 2005:2). Others claim that civil society improves the state and the markets, or that it keeps a society intact as globalisation spreads people and networks wider, or that it is a Western conspiracy for domination (Edwards 2005:2-3). Further, civil society is given an ever increasing role in politics, “as significant as the role of the nation state in the twentieth [century]” (Salamon cited in Edwards, 2005:3). As contradicting as the different concepts are, Michael Edwards stresses that consensus is not the important factor for a fruitful discussion, but clarity (Edwards 2005:5). For Kaldor, the multiple and varying definitions and traditions support the idea that the civil society discourse may actually function as a global factor for peace: “Indeed, its ambiguity is one of its attractions. The fact that neoliberals, Islamicists, or post-Marxists use the same language provides a common platform through which ideas, projects and policy can be worked out” (Kaldor 2003:2).

The idea of civil society still retains a core of common meaning despite today's diversity of variations on definition. The core is the process of negotiated contracts between the individual and the authorities. The process aims at managing a society and its political governing and relies on consent. Civil society is no longer bound to one territory, but connects today to other similar actors in other national territories and demands rights that are declared as universal and basic for each human. Kaldor also positions an active human, i.e. the individual action, centrally in the understanding of what happens in civil society globalisation, which is not just some “disembodied deterministic process” (Kaldor 2003:142). But civil society advancement

does not happen automatically; it requires intent and deliberate action. “There is no inevitability about the process”, Kaldor writes;

it depends on the actions of individuals, acting both together and separately. 'Real' civil society or 'actually existing' civil society is a realm bombarded by images and influences, perpetually 'colonized' both by political salesmanship and consumerist pressures. The end of the Cold War may have freed actually existing civil societies from the superstitions of Cold War ideologies but nevertheless the space for deliberation and discussion is constantly subject to invasion (Kaldor 2003:46).

The processional character of civil society is also what makes it necessary for peace-building. The negotiations of social, national and international contracts, complemented with internal debate on several societal levels, gives civil society further pacifying capacity. And despite civil society being an idea, there is a cluster of real phenomena closely connected to it, “even if the boundaries /.../ vary according to different definitions, and even if the shape and direction of the phenomenon are constantly changing” (Kaldor 2003:3). Civil society is both normative and descriptive: working towards a different, improved future, while at the same acting in a contemporary reality (Kaldor 2003:11). Yet civil society is not a coherent whole. Further, “[c]ivil society is a process, not an end-point. Moreover, it is a contested process” (Kaldor 2003:14). The strands and directions as well as its priorities are contested even between the different civil society actors. Civil society is open for dissonant voices and opinions as well, and as it voices the citizens’ opinions, civil society carries weight beyond mere politics in a democracy. Kaldor means that NGOs should not have any formal decision-making status in themselves, but through existing and acting within the wider reach of civil society NGOs and other actors bring debate and issues to the attention of those in power, and those ought to pay close attention (Kaldor 2003:107-108). Orjuela also calls for caution, regarding unrealistic expectations of what civil society may actually achieve in regard of peace (Orjuela 2008:15).

The main criticism of civil society tends to be buttressed with the global spread of activities which create dependency and unequal influence of the NGO-sector. Funds flow from the Western nations to specific organisations, and NGOs may become coloured by the donors' values and agendas, as well as a dependency on the donors is developed (Kaldor 2003:92-93; Hudock 2001; Orjuela 2008). The actors may actually prolong the conflict, willingly or

unwillingly, as they are trying to resolve it. Further, the faulty view that channelling Western support through local NGO:s is important in order for the others to “catch-up” with regard of the local development of civil society disregards the existing forms of civil society, and strengthens the misconception that civil society is some kind of Europeanisation-effort (Kaldor 2003:38). NGO:s are but one actor on the civil society stage. NGO:s come in almost as many variations as human interests, but have some general characteristics. They have some institutional structures and are formally registered. NGOs are voluntary and generally value driven, although states and corporations may have similar interests as well, be it generating wealth or providing services. Non-governmental organisations have existed for over hundreds of years, although the name “NGO” is quite recent. Some international organisations date back to late 19th century, e.g. the Anti-Slavery Society was founded in 1839 and the International Red Cross in 1864 (Kaldor 2003:86-87). The interest and focus on the non-governmental sector leaves out other actors, equally important, of the civil society. In the long run the concept itself might become diluted. Further, the concentration on NGO-activities and minor organisations instead of the wider field of civil society, which allows and promotes basic human rights and freedom from fear regardless of single or even multiple organisations, is a crude simplification. Author and professor of political science at the Delhi University Neera Chandhoke offers the following perspective: “Witness the tragedy that has visited proponents of the concept: people struggling against authoritarian regimes demanded civil society, what they got were NGOs...” (quoted in Kaldor 2003:107).

4.2 The capability to affiliate

The full list of capabilities is as Nussbaum points out, “emphatically, a list of *separate components*“ (2008:81, emphasis in original), meaning that lacking one capability cannot be made up by excessing access to another. It consists of ten capabilities, and is presented in full in Appendix 1. Capability number seven of the list of basic human capabilities is central for human interaction, and demands a foundation for social well-being and influence on own surroundings. It is also the sole focus of this thesis. This relevant capability deals with the requirements of free and fair social interaction:

7. Affiliation. A. Being able to live with and towards others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another and to have compassion for that situation; to have the

capability for both justice and friendship. /.../ **B.** Having the social bases for self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. /.../ In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers (Nussbaum 2008:79-80).

The capability to affiliate is a complex, multifaceted capability. I have not attempted to grade the issues, that is to judge how well or badly one is able to affiliate, feel compassion, etc, but merely point out instances when and how affiliation occurs in and around the work-setting in the narratives of NGO-workers in Georgia. Equally, narrations which mention repressed capability, or mention a lack of some aspect of the capability are of interest. I apply the seventh capability as a tool of a narrative analysis, thus some aspects will be less utilised. I have not explored the justice system in Georgia, nor have researched how the society legally and actually protects its citizens against discrimination, yet elements concerning actual institutional requirements of the capability will be mentioned when they occur in narrations. Neither is the notion of practical reason considered here, as practical reason is a full capability in its own right, and a matter of debate and of values all of its own (see Full list of capabilities in Appendix 1 for details).

I have chosen the capability of affiliation as it promotes a type of society that coincides with the general efforts of many NGOs and civil society more generally. For example, the pursuit of such basic capabilities as to affiliate was a driving force of the Polish dissident groups in 1968: “We wanted /.../ to read books, talk to each other freely, to collect money for people needing help: the simplest human actions“, said democratic activist Jacek Kuron (quoted in Kaldor 2003:53). Thus the Polish political movement grew, among other things, from the need and wish to exercise one's basic capability to interact and affiliate. Further, my initial interview questions in Georgia touched upon issues relevant for the capability to affiliate, such as having fruitful relationships and how one experiences relationships affected by, and affecting, work. Affiliation is especially relevant in peace strengthening and community building efforts due to its emotional requirements: it asks of individuals to be considerate in their dealings with others, and to treat others with respect and dignity. The capability of affiliation stands for compassionate, reciprocal and fair social interactions, and in extension promotes a society that allows and supports such interaction.

5. Capability to affiliate in the narrations

To break down the findings-section, I have used Nussbaum's wording in the capability to affiliate as a guideline to dividing the findings into six different sub-sections. 5.1: To live with and towards others, to engage; 5.2: To recognise and show concern, compassion; 5.3: Justice and friendship; 5.4: Social bases; 5.5: Equality and dignity; 5.6: Meaningful relationship, mutual recognition. As the issues and emotions are not easily categorised nor isolated from each other, the narrations have elements fitting in on all parts. The final section in this chapter, 5.7, presents and discusses the effects of generally exercising one's capability to affiliate.

5.1: To live with and towards others, to engage

The first indicator of exercising one's capability to affiliate for the interviewed is their work itself: being able to be in the field, connecting to people around them. Yet community education and engaging people is not without problems. "When we started in 2004, we faced so many difficulties" E13 tells me:

Again and again a patriarchal outlook, and the specific of the region, nobody wanted to come to the project, and women refused: "We are so happy, we never suffer any domestic violence, we have any chance..." But they were lying! I know that they were lying. They really, in their heart, they wanted it, but they had some scare, because of there was... you, know, was no trust between society, and beneficiaries, everybody was scared to somebody... You know what, it was terrible situation. And then, ah... we started to go door to door, house to house, and had special meetings, separate from their mother-in-laws and husbands...! In some other places, and persuading them and explaining the benefits of the project for them. Yes. And... In 2004, in initially we had some difficulties, and now we have a big long list of the women who want to participate and really been successful and we are so thankful. (E13)²

G10 has also experiences of the bumps of distrust and unmet expectation when opening up new social projects:

I can say, that if there are some negative things, it's always in the beginning of the work. /.../
New collective centres, new village, in the first meeting, there is always this kind of image

2 All the quotes strive to stay true to the transcribed interviews and the participants use of language, and have been corrected only very little. Our language of communication was always English, even when I used interpreters.

that here are coming a lot of people, just talking, and then leaving, or just... And especially, when we are saying that we do not have the grants... (G10)

G10's narration hints at people expecting material aid, a very real situation in many cases, since the lack of necessities is common. Elements of insincerity and lack of trust from the beneficiaries are also present in some narrations. In E13's experience, initial engagement in projects is tough and the first reactions are "always negative". E13 says:

Because when you say about domestic violence, or about the violence, nobody admits it, that there exists any forms of violence. Or, for example, /.../ when we go to the villages: we don't want education, our education is husband and children and cooking and washing and that's enough, for us. /.../ initial phase, initial step is always connected with some difficulties. Especially in the villages. (E13)

Community support could also manifest itself quite concretely, as in R14's narration of the fire destroying their organisation's quarters:

you see in the first floor, there is shops, and a lot of things were lost from these shops during this fire. Nothing, absolutely nothing, not one pen /.../ were not lost from [us]. (Anna: Oh, you mean stolen? Like, people took, or..?) People took from this first floor. But /.../ computers and the... some kind of musical instruments, technical equipment and things from radio and so on, and so on, people keep it and people save it and they gave us everything without any, any loss. And the same day, a lot of people came to us. And told, you know, I have a two-storey big house. You can use my first floor, or you can use my second floor, or you can come and use my free space. And after three days, we continued our work. (R14)

Engagement was sincere and positive, and for many others the local community support was expressed in similar stories. But for A3, the everyday life and work in human rights area has very different sentiments:

I don't know, maybe it's a misperception, but this is what I have seen when I was living in Europe – people in my age are spending a lot of time just to have fun. In normal countries, you know? And I think that is better. Than, for example, at 25 you have to deal with, you know, very dangerous and appalling situations, and have to hear stories of human tragedies,

which are like beyond... beyond everything, you know? And... So through this job, I got very deep into things. (A3)

Her possibilities to engage and to live with others are hampered by how she feels, and the atrocities of war and the insecurity of the lack of human rights protection causes quite naturally very emotional reactions.

5.2: To recognise and show concern, compassion

To be able to engage and live with others, the emotions of concern and compassion are central. The ability to feel emotions and develop emotional ties is number 5 on Nussbaum's full list of capabilities (see Appendix 1). The qualities are a driving force behind civil society work as well.

M15 had a rough start and suffered from burn-out in the beginning of her current line of work, which makes emotional affiliation hard: "it means you cannot support with compassion", she explains. She recognised the scope of the problems and doubted her own abilities to do anything about it. But she found pride and work-satisfaction in developing and using her skills, professional and personal alike:

In the beginning, it was incredible for me, how to work with these destitute people, people who /.../ live in extremely poverty. How to /.../ gain their trust, [to explain to them] that you are doing some documentation and legal consultation, /.../ most of them are looking for the material assistance. /.../ So trust building was very difficult process. At the beginning... /.../ but we, we manage[d]... as for me, I put my forth ah, my.. not [just] this professional knowledge /.../ [but] of course, the competence and of course the skills, social worker has to have. Has to have. Yeah.. this very human, human... attitude and approach to these people. That you have to alleviate their suffering. And the psychological assistance, /.../ you have to foresee that people are not only physically, but psychologically affected. So, it worked. I think it worked well, and the jobs that I imagined in the beginning that how can I, how can I cope with this huge and global problem, with this social work, but now I think that we are doing very good job in this direction. /.../ So, field social work is different in practice than the theoretical knowledge. (M15)

The main emotions connected to work are happiness and pride, but for some also worries; for one's personal health and about mismanaging own time. Worry and stress may be caused, quite naturally, by realities of the field of work:

For example, when you go and see that they have a problem, and you could not do nothing, of course sometimes it is stress for you. Very bad for you. Feeling, as upset, because you could not do something for them. Sometimes /.../ it is not stress. You are ready, help, and /.../ for example, when you go from project, and of course it is nice to know, you can do this, this and this, and that's why it's not stress. (T12)

Here T12 was able to get relief of her negative feelings through her own capability to act. G10's narration shows him developing more tolerance from having faced tough experiences previously. He seems to be dealing with stress by removing the expectation of work-satisfaction. Yet, he enjoys his job tremendously:

in the beginning, /.../ to see this kind of situation (laughs shortly) I was really stressed, and /.../ I was not in the mood to even, had a like lunch or dinner. /.../ [But] after this experience, I am more, /.../ like nothing to get stressed about this, this cannot change nothing with beneficiary or with me, so... /.../. Even, even, [if] it's long time that I am taking the holidays, /.../ I am not taking normal rest, I am going somewhere for the trainings [instead of going on holidays]. But, I am not still feeling this kind of... hmm... how should I say... professional... /.../ Like when you are getting tired and stressed about the job, and... (Anna: burn out..?) G: Yeah, yeah, burn out! I am still not feeling this, I don't know. Maybe, because, really I am somehow relaxing in the field. (G10)

L6 uses a different turn of phrase for a similar phenomenon, as he says "I have more distance to a lot of things that would touch people." He has seen so much that he has grown a bit numb, which he believes has an effect on him outside of work as well:

People complain about things that for me, are really... worthless. Or even somebody being sick, or something. Okay, I have seen so much suffering, /.../ I don't know if it's good or not, yet, I think I have a big distance toward, those kind of light suffering, /.../ you know, little problems of people. Now I think it can turn to be bad, because it means that at some point people can think that come on, you have seen everything, you have experienced everything, now you are not touched by little things? It's possible. I don't know. So, but... This is what I

feel, I try to, to, you know, but some distance /.../. Anna: You have, somehow, grown less emotional? L: Yeah, yeah. (L6)

M9 has similarly with L6 a European background, finds inspiration and has, in contrast, a very positive approach from her interactions in Georgia:

I generally feel very, very good in Georgia, that's why I decided to come here. I think I found, somehow, values that I was looking for in European Union, and I could not find it there. /.../ I met so many IDPs... like if you make anybody from, I don't know, EU, watch their life, they will think "oh, God, it's really bad, I could not stand it any more" and people I work with, have such huge... somehow, power, or motivation to life, or to live.. /.../ Bad situation make them really much, much stronger and makes them look for thousands of solutions, that none of my friends [in Europe] would have any idea about. So... what I can take from them is exactly this, this very, very positive attitude towards life, and towards problems. Second of all, what I've learned here... /.../ because it's so difficult here to /.../ for example [contact] the government structures, is patience! /.../ I would say that maybe one third of the problems the IDPs have are covered by different organisations, so... If you really want to help people, or if you want to help yourself, then you have to really to be creative. So, this kind of very creative search for solutions was very, very helpful for me, when I came back from Georgia to [a country in Europe]. I studied there, and I faced many problems, then I think: okay, okay, it's really a piece of cake right now, yeah? /laughs/ It's mostly about the governmental structures, they don't function well, so... (M9)

For her, the stay and work in Georgia has increased her ability to feel compassion. She also hints at the slow machinery of the governmental offices, which are the natural partner of civil society actors, and with whom cooperation is essential for effective work.

5.3: Justice and friendship

G10 tells that repeated contacts and calls to the public offices and judicial courts are necessary for even hoping to get a reaction:

our beneficiaries are writing some statements, and /.../ this public office, government office will start doing this the next two weeks, but [as a] rule, they are not getting the answer. So, in this case, we are going there, we are making some control about this answer, and, yeah, and as a rule, we have to write a... I don't know in English, some kind of statement. We can

write, to the court, but /.../ in the court, there is the same, like bureaucraties.. So, then we are waiting, and we are asking them again, you know, let's answer this in the time, or a bit late, or in the other way we will go to the court... We have to visit them a few times, just to get an answer, with one statement, of some kind of usual information, you know... and it's difficult, they are not care that much about the statements. And... if you will not, like visit them like every day, twice, twenty times, they will not answer you. They do not care about this kind of statements. (G10)

So justice is slow at work when it comes to the experiences of many of the interviewees. For most it is a matter of ignorance, but for the ones working with human rights, the lack of justice is even more tangible and sinister. Nevertheless, A3 sees the increased worry for one's own safety as a marker of impact:

in a way I think; yes, a little bit we are... (silence) pressuring the government, at least at little bit, you know? Because if we were not pressuring them, there would not be harassment against defenders. That's a very sad indicator, but that's an indicator that you are effective. If they target you, and they target people in Georgia, they target human rights activists in Georgia, that means that they are making a change, and I think I am just a tiny part of that system. (A3)

The working conditions may be harsh within the governmental structures, especially when contrasted with the more open attitudes of the NGO-sector. G10's sister works at the Ministry of Justice:

She is thinking that my job in this NGO sector, here is like more.. ah, free. /.../ I do not have to have a tie here, and dressed in this white t-shirt, and black trousers, and /.../ need not shave everyday.. /laughs/ (A: That's right! You actually have a beard! I haven't seen that many Georgian men with beard!) /.../ In the government office it is almost impossible. /.../ yesterday, my sister was saying that they have some kind of general inspection, /.../ coming from Tbilisi to the regions. She was saying that /.../ they gave warnings /.../ because some of them had jeans, and... some of them got into job like two minutes later.. /.../ It's like serious warning. If you will be, again, second time, then you will leave the job, you know. /.../ and then they were like putting up this kind of things, these warnings, to the website. And she said that she read that one of her colleagues, from Batumi, was writing that she had only one, this black dress, and one, this jeans, and this dress was broken, so she had to wear these trousers, she had no other one, but no one cared about this... /laughs a little/ So, we are

working at NGO, and what I like here, is that we have our job description, we have our job, and we're doing our job. As we can. So... Our management is looking.. that, what we are doing. So, it is not that important here to dress, or to have this kind of.. I don't know, black... (makes a gesture around his neck, for tie). (G10)

The governmental working environment is here expressed as not supportive, nor fair and just, since minor offences or bad luck may cause one to lose the job. R14 shares G10's sentiments concerning work-satisfaction, and she emphasises on being in charge of herself:

I have my organisation, and I can do what I love, and what I think is important, and in Georgia, how to say, proverbs, that I am head of myself, I am director of myself. So. Yeah, it's very good. And everybody if you will ask /.../ they are very happy because they are working in NGOs. Because, you have more space, and more... more opportunity to be more open, and to be more free. (R14)

The complex situation of unemployment and post-conflict hardship take a large toll on keeping friends. M9's experience of having a job at a managerial position has cost her socially: "People really start to hate each other, why he was chosen and me not ", she says,

So, when my friends, and I already had a lot of them, realise that I am here, having kind of a manager position, I am not deciding here on human resources, but... /.../ only from my friends I got like 30 or 40 applications for one position... /little laugh/ /.../ maybe because it's this, this manager position, I really realise that it's so easy to have enemies.. Like people really don't like you because they do not like your decisions. This is a very big problem.. in Georgia, but I also face that people really cannot divide this personal and business issues, that they somehow mix it up.. if you haven't chosen my brother for the position, then you and I are not friends any more. So I lost a lot of friends, here, and.. /.../ Then, then.. because, we work here a lot, and have direct contact, people recognise me especially, because of the fact that I'm foreigner, so it's very difficult to have a private life here. Because our beneficiaries, I meet them every time on the street, or they call me in the middle of the night, because something happened, because there is no electricity in the village.. /little laughter/ and they already trust us, so they call us in the middle of the night... /laugh/ and I cannot, of course, call the governor, because he sleeps and will ignore me, as he always does! /more laughter/ So, no private life, lot of enemies /laughs/.. (M9)

Despite the joking tone at the end of this passage, M9 had made very close friends in Georgia as well. The mixing of professional and private areas of life was a reoccurring theme in many of the narrations, yet G10 for example did not think much of it: “I am okay about this. I am talking with [the beneficiary, and] when there is some kind of necessary situation, I can go with them, like I don't know, with my private car, with my friends car, or by bus, even if it not be working time”.

5.4: Social bases

The first three subsections of the capability to affiliate focus on a basic ability of a person to interact unhindered by oneself and the emotions connected to interacting, the last three subsections deal with the aspects of interaction concerning the surroundings. For instance the fourth subsection of “social base” deals with similar issues as the first sub-section of “to live with and towards others”, but calls for the interactions to be with respect and without humiliation from the surroundings, where the first subsection dealt with the individuals capability to connect with others.

For R14, whose organisation was jokingly called the third child within the family, as both herself and her husband are involved, the requirement of a supportive social base is fulfilled: “I'm very happy” she says, ”because I am doing things which I need, and which I love very much, and which I feel that it's very important for me and for my family and for my society, and for this I have some kind of income. This is my life” (R14). M5 perceives her situation in similar terms.

In a society with high unemployment, having a job with a pay is a source of pride. “[I]t's not easy to get a job.. Not [just in my town], but generally, in Georgia” M15 says. Her feelings of self-realisation increase, as she is now working in a social field, which in a way has been her dream, but she was pushed towards the medical path by the realities of university application process. Her family are proud of her achievements as well:

[My family] approach [my work] very positively. ... It's not only the source of income, but it's my field. I feel that I have the skills, and they also see me in this field. They, as I want to mention here, that my profession was chosen by chance. /.../ my family insisted that you should apply for this English language department. But, I was refused. But now they told me

that you, anyway, you find your way, you work with foreigners. [I]t was my dream of childhood, that I wanted to travel abroad, and, to graduate a university there /.../ But, I am satisfied, and my family, so.. this is very good opportunity, of course. (M15)

M1 provides another aspect of a tolerating social base: she was been able to take chances with other jobs, as well as returning to her current job. Thus she is certain she is in the right field, and her confidence in herself and her career choice has strengthened and her social base is extended:

I started working in the sector of women in politics. It was very, very interesting for me. Because this position gave me opportunity to meet many, many people, to travel to different regions of Georgia, to communicate with people. Not only ordinary people, but local governments and official people. I also had a chance to go to Tbilisi and have meetings at the Parliament. (M1)

She is also the breadwinner in her family, supporting her parents. E13 on the other hand has received negative responses from her local society. She has not pushed for getting married, which is generally expected of people:

We are four sisters, one is married, she lives in Tbilisi, she has three sons, and my eldest sister is a teacher of biology in a very good school, /.../ and my next sister /.../ she is manager here, she works with me /.../. They are not married. Three sisters, we are not married. Can you imagine that society? (pointing out through window) This, this thing? /laughs/ (Anna: You go, girls!) You are giving very bad example to other women..you are so successful, maybe some girls want to follow you.. A: Do you hear this [kind of comment]? E: Yeah, yeah... (E13)

For E13 there are elements of disapproval and disrespect from her local surroundings, as she is not following a norm. Albeit she has been very successful in her chosen career. M1 replied to me with a little laugh when I asked her if she had met negative reactions: “Yes, of course...When you work on this issue [women in politics], you should be ready for negative opinions!”

5.5: Equality and dignity

The segregation of the genders in society and working life in Georgia is obvious. L6, who has experienced many other cultural working environments besides the small town he was located at in Georgia, sees the existing stereotypical and gendered working relations very concretely:

[T]here is a huge difference between man and woman. In term of capacity of work. This is for sure. To give you an example, we were opening a position, and /.../ we had 160 applications for this position, and so after selecting we had a shortlist of 22 persons to pass an English test, and 21 was females and one was a man. Because just of qualifications, without looking at anything else. Then /.../ only four of them passed, and all were women. So, it's not only once, it happened a few times. I'm wondering what young men are interested in, /.../ maybe it's still that you have a big separation of work, you have jobs that are more feminine, and some are more masculine, this is possible. Here in the office, it is very clear that, every, you know, driver, guard, ingenieur is man, and people working with beneficiaries and cleaning ladies and administration are females. It's hundred per cent separate, you do not have even one doing something else. (L6)

The employment of mostly women is visible among those in the worst living conditions as well, i.e the IDP-population living in collective centres. T12 tells me: “only women work, not men. /.../ [M]en don't have job, and they sit at home, waiting”. She offers no further reason, but the people in the collective centres have lost their lands. G10's narrative evens out the picture a little, as he explains to me of the rural way of life, of working the land collectively and heavy jobs require communal effort:

If I would not work here, I am a village guy, you know, so I have the village, I have some kind of agricultural land, I have some friends there, in the village. Like, 99 % of the village people are jobless. /.../ They are working for this agricultural stuff /.../ If.. I don't know, I have like one hectare, or.. agricultural job. I am not able to work there alone, but with my brother, so, we are two guys. We are able to work for this, like fifteen day, alone, but /.../ There is the neighbourhood, of, I don't know, about 40 or 50 family, and neighbourhood is making some kind of plan. /.../ So the neighbourhood, they are, like collecting, like 20 or 30 persons, and, they are working at this without borders. Like, there are working with one guy then [the next].. (G10)

G10 does not separate genders in his account and refers to families as well as hinting at men working the land. T12's continued story tells of her own initiative in the early years of displacement: "she did not want to stay home, because she had education, had energy, had motivation, and she could not sit in one room, that's why go out and meet K and other, L" (T12). For M1, there was challenge in engaging women in a field that was not usually seen as the field of women, namely the political arena:

I should admit, it's really difficult. To involve women... It does not matter what kind of activity it is. You should convince her to come, and be involved in this or that activity. Because, they are so, so, somehow... mm, hopeless. They /.../ are not enough brave, to come and to do some kind of jobs and.. For example, let's take the leaders of our clubs of women voters. It was 2006, when we started these clubs, and it was *so* difficult for us to choose and to find, not just to choose, but to find, the woman who would be leader of this club. Because, when we came and told that we wanted to establish this club, and the mission of this club, and that they should bring 25 women. So it seemed so difficult for them to do, because they know, based on themselves, they know the opinions of other women in their regions, and they knew, that it would be difficult to bring these 25 women at the club. Because it depends on our social and economical life and so on. Even two or three hours a month, it was really difficult. At the beginning, it was really difficult. (M1)

A3 connects her young age and gender to possible stereotypical acting in her working relations, acknowledging the existence of such, yet she herself is not affected by the stereotypical norm:

I think they view me as a (lengthy silence) good professional for my age, of course! And for example, /.../ the project I am coordinating is run in the three countries, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, and I feel that when I write an email, as compared to someone else in the project writing an email, for example from Azerbaijan and Armenia, there is a much more, like you feel a more respected tone. Despite the fact that I am 25, and people involved are like 50 or something, and despite the fact that I am a girl, a woman, which is sometimes a factor in the Caucasus. (A3)

A3 reveals the expectation of stereotypical gendered working division, but in her case it does not hamper her capability to be treated as a good professional. Gender stereotypes may emerge in narrations as the expectations of others: almost as intrinsic in the society, but also

as being supported by the speaker. Stereotypes also emerge as expectations of generational differences. For example, T2 worked with IDP:s in collective centres, and especially enjoyed working with youth. She could not quite find the right words, but made her point clear: “More than woman and man, they're just stick on one things, and they are living in... (searches for word, taps finger to forehead) in old period. And young generation have lot of information, lot of interesting things to say.“

Inequality may be measured in the different perceptions of locals and international staff in dealings. “[W]hen the expatriate says something, it is always more correct, than when a local person says exactly the same” L6 says, yet he makes an effort to make the best of the situation: “So, if you want to pass a message to any authority /.../ [and] if the expatriate goes, it has an added value, always. /.../ So, we have to use this positively in order to help the local person to pass their ideas, just by giving the little hint” (L6). Similar thinking may be found even higher up on the power hierarchy. B4 had worked previously in Tbilisi in the Cabinet of the Speaker of the Secretariat. He did not find that type of work particularly interesting, “they are basically busy with technical stuff, letters coming in, going out” he says, but he also criticises the attitude:

All these efforts were directed towards acting in accordance with political ethic. And ..sort of political dogmas. Not to be late to response to a letter of a European politician, or an American politician or an international one... and.. this sort of orientation, and this sort of thinking ... I think it was diverging the efforts of the cabinet from the real goals of the cabinet. 'Cause the government is there to serve people! So I can't understand, we, we were forgetting about the people. Because we're.. we are so much into this administrative, and ... this public ethic, that some other priority areas were, like, wiped out, because of this. (B4)

Such indifferent behaviour disregards the important interplay between the government and the civil society. M5 agrees: “NGO is the mediator with people and government. And /.../ it must be constructive, cooperation with government. /.../ NGO:s do not have enough power to be contrary to the government [in Georgia], and it is reckless“ (M5).

The humanitarian aid entering Georgia is solely caused by conflict and aid alone has an impact on affiliation, creating unequal power structures and diminishing the social base. People become divided into those who have and those who need; between those inside the

supporting structure and those in the receiving end. The division exists regardless of nationality and origin. (Yet many of the interviewees also stress that they have not experienced envy from others due to having employment.) The NGO-workers come regularly in contact with the negative side of lengthy humanitarian intervention: destitute people have experienced material assistance and might demand it, and have little understanding of other kinds of support. T12 was told off well and good on one visit:

One time, when they go collective centre, with psychology, one woman was very angry, and begun to argue, that why you came with us this, this psychologist, you need this kind of help better than I. And they were upset when they came with this kind of help. This lady told them that we will be better if you give us some sugar, some bread, and something, than this.
(T12)

All kinds of inequality make mutual recognition and meaningful relationships more difficult to achieve.

5.6: meaningful relationships, mutual recognition

Being non-Georgian may have a less positive effect on relationships, partly due to unequal starting points mentioned above. The abundance of resources non-Georgians are thought to have access to is also connected to the history of international intervention. M9 explains:

Generally [there is a] very bad image of foreigners. Ehmm.. this image of foreigners, who can give you simply from their pockets, whenever you want. And.. of course, the reasons for this difficult communication: They are based on fact. Because everything happened. Why they don't trust foreigners, because foreigners disappointed them. Why they think that foreigners should give them money, because foreigners gave them money, without expecting any explanation, or any, like... Yeah, so they don't trust us, they very often don't like us, /little laugh/ ehm.. basically, if an NGO, if an international organisation comes to a city, there is always a big mess. Because all the people try to apply for jobs, because usually the jobs are paid at least three-four times better than the local NGOs pay for their employees. (M9)

L6 experiences social distance to others in his locality, since he cannot find a meaningful pastime for himself:

I think socially is the most difficult mission here, because... /../ even though we have like 50 thousand people [in this town], you do not even have a cinema, do not have anything cultural, or anything to do after working hours, basically. Ehmm.. you have a few restaurants, but nothing incredible, and around here, you could not just.. go to the sea, or to a lake, or something, to rest, or... So it, it's kind of difficult to, to establish a.. network. And also is the local population.. sometimes it's more difficult, sometimes it's more easy. Here, it's, it's rather.. it's seems to be extremely easy, but... /../ If I separate genders, I would feel very uncomfortable to invite a local girl, for example a colleague or somebody, to a restaurant, just you know two people. I know it would be extremely strangely perceived, or even badly perceived... now with men, there is this tradition of having these large meals and these large amount of things that need to drank. I can do this once in a while, but not three times a week, like people here, so... I feel it's difficult to just call somebody and say, let's go out for a walk, because they would not understand the meaning of just walking around. So, maybe.. they do a pik-nik, want go somewhere, sit down, drink and then come back. Everything is related, as I understand, to food and alcohol, so.. This is, this is the trick. Because you could go into it, and pretend to be Georgian and do like them, but the you end up in a difficult situation health wise.. /laughs a little/ so this is why for me it is a bit difficult. (L6)

He acknowledges the cultural differences and is respectful of them, yet he chooses to remain an outsider. In this particular example, the Western background is the most obvious hamper, albeit also his approach to his work. For G10, a local man, a similar situation is relaxing. In his narrative the big feast is connected to heavy agricultural labour:

After this, they are always celebrating this. You know, the village people, they always have some kind of home made vodka, and we are saying, that after this kind of job, after strong job, there is relaxing, going to the mountain place, to the forest... somewhere, and having some kind of.. /../ alcohol with fresh foods, it's something like a saying to god that it was okay to work. (G10)

In G10's case as well perhaps his approach to work and his personality more generally comes through here, he is very laid-back and recounts very little negative things in his narrative. For other Georgian staff work may affect personal relationships. M1 agrees with her mother that she might be working too much, that her well-being may be at risk. She catches instantly on my choice of words, describing the need to be informed and updated as a disease. Indeed, it

saps her time with her nearest and has her mother remarking on her constant use of internet. M1 is occupied by work even at home. She expresses no external coercion, but thinks that she should manage her time differently by herself: "Because, you should somehow divide. Job is a job, and your neighbours and your relatives are people, and they need quite different treatment. Quite different. So, this is negative side". For others, D7 for example, the job in itself is meaningful and connects to her relationships and self:

My family really likes that I am doing this job. First of all, because I am doing a job for the people who live in this region, And the second.. at the same time, the job itself represents my nature. Because I really like working with people, and... talking to people, listening, and trying to figure out what can be done for them. So this organisation really gives me this opportunity and I like it, yeah. (D7)

In T2's case similarly, parental appreciation is connected to supporting own community: "I do not know that exactly, but I know that.. as our organisation works at conflict resolution, and we are from Abkhazia, originally, it's kind of interesting for them that I am working here, and... /.../ I think that they like [me working here]!"

5.7 Exercising one's capability to affiliate

Interacting with the capability to affiliate is to build and procreate civil society. Further, exercising one's capability extends the capability, by reinforcing emotions and generating more interaction. M1's narrative presents a good example: she challenges the norm which does not provide space nor support women in a political context, and she does it consciously, actively and is well prepared:

I was coordinating the action [a pre-election manifestation for women in politics], I had a meeting with this local government representative, and... he was arguing with me about the fact that this action should not be conducted, because it was pre-election period and we should do this in months before and so on. So... he tried to insist me on stopping this action. And, when I explained him, when I showed him the legislations, the he doesn't have right to not to allow me in conducting this action. I was ready. I was ready to give him arguments, and when I was ready to give him arguments, he was silent at once. And we conducted this action, and at the end of the action, /.../ I came to him, because he did not come at our action, even though the action was in front of their building. I came to him, gave him all the

information about the action, the leaflets, and I told him that the action was very nice, that the action was very successful, because there were a lot of women involved in this, and he was surprised: "Really, you did this action? - Yes, we did." /laughs/ I told him with proud..! /laughs more/ So, when you are ready... you should be ready for doing something, you should have desire to do something, fear will disappear. (M1)

The capability to affiliation is here pursued to another level, not just by recognising reciprocity as a marker of successfully acting according to the capability, but demanding a reaction. Such interaction is pursued in order to improve the capability for self and others, developing the structural expectations through exercising one's own capability. Here M1 did not just rise to the challenge, developing herself and generating feeling herself, she further pursued the change to the civil society level: she went back to the government official and fetched a reaction. The process of increased self-confidence leads to developed capability to push towards opening more possibilities to exercise the capability, and further increasing the areas of the capability to affiliate.

Activities generate emotions and more activity, which are not only connected to one actor or location. Community trainings, which many of the organisations are engaged in arranging, unveil structures that instigate action and emotions of engagement in participants, despite initial aversion:

Everywhere there are some difficulties, of course. In people there is nihilism. So after several days, after the beginning of the work, these people change their attitudes, and their minds, and their views. They start with making knowledge with these people about human rights, from UN declaration of human rights. The second step is to inform that the society must be tolerant. Another step is to inform what is peace building. Then they explain what is a conflict, and what is the result of the conflict. Then another step is to inform these people about gender, and women's role in peace process. Then they are speaking about Maslow's pyramid. And they show them how person could realise him or herself. So then we see the result, how these people's mind changed. (M5)

And a result of increasing participation can also be seen in the way these actions promote more action, as M5's continued story tells:

Then we stop, terminate the activities with that group. And after month and a half we return to that group, and then we are speaking about more difficult issues, for example international experience, international instruments. And we see that if at the first meeting, there was just 25 people, for example, on the second meeting their quantity is increased. It shows that these people, who are trained, inform other people around them, so it shows that this kind of activity involves more and more people, besides the trained ones. It may be said that we are going progressively, our number of supporters are increasing. (M5)

E13's narrative presents that exercising one's capability presents a further development of action creating emotions:

Of course I've got some complaints, some judgement from society, you are now more than 40, you should have your family, but because of society, you know, sometimes it picks me up, and I am very angry about it. Why I should? If I feel happy in that way, and I am very happy. I have sisters, I have values, I have so many children! They are, ah, more than a hundred, students, in /.../ language centre. Apart from them, more than 30 members of youth club, and I am in their environment, and I am very happy. If a person is happy, doesn't matter if you have your husband, or.. These children need my help, they need my assistance, we love each other very, very much. (E13)

Here, E13 interacts and affiliates as she pleases, exercising and working towards to realise her personal capability to affiliate. Yet, E13 does not act in a way that would conform to structural expectations, and her action creates negative feelings in her social surroundings. These negative feelings, when reaching her, create more negative feelings. Yet, she acts in accordance with her full capability to affiliate, and positive feelings are called forth by talking about her other social surroundings, her chosen interactions. M1 feels similar increased emotion by having developed her skills, up to such a level she feels comfortable at being an inspiration to others. "I can say, I see the results", M1 says with a proud smile:

Now these women have initiatives to carry out some kind of activities themselves. They, somehow, encourage other women to be involved in our activities. So if you show examples to others, if, they will be encouraged to do the same work themselves, the same job. Personally, for me, I also started from there. /laughs a little/ From this point, of being afraid of doing something. /laughs/ I was afraid of being the project assistant, sector women in

politics, because it was a big responsibility to me to go to political parties and, and.. But you get accustomed to doing these, and when you get accustomed to doing some job, you will love this job, you will.. be, then, encouraged to do this. And when you see results, it is great and you will overcome this fear, or something. (M1)

Also G10 and B4 are able to spot personal development and answer the question how, and if, their line of work has changed them on a personal level. "I think I have become much more constructive and willing to conduct many more compromises than I used to do before. I think these are the main changes which I have spotted in myself", B4 says. His capability to affiliate has increased with more flexibility. In G10's case, the development comes forth as an extended capacity for compassion: "By my regulation, if my beneficiary was calling me in the weekend, I can just switch the phone [off], you know. But I am not feeling to switch the phone, so, somehow it changed me".

6. The capability to affiliate, conflict and civil society

Conflict has a central cause in the development of the Georgian civil society. The post-soviet wars and internal turmoil removed many of the structures from before, and left a void of functions and an air of terror and despair. For example, R14, E13, K11, T12 and M5 all express an overwhelming need to act.

[I]n 90s the whole situation in Georgia changed, and it was war and it was nothing, absolutely, no electricity, no cars in the street, nothing. Okay, I had a war job at university, but it was nothing, absolutely, no salary, no motivation of students to learn something, especially chemistry. And it was absolutely nothing, but, inside me was very big energy, and motivation and I started to think of to do something, something, something very useful for local society, especially for children, and I decided to open English language courses. /.../ So why I started working in NGO, because I had some kind of energy inside of me, I wanted to do something good, for society, and especially for children, because I had small children that time.. (R14)

In this existence there was still space to exercise the capability to affiliate and individuals with the necessary drive for productive and positive efforts, i.e. pick up the construction of civil

society. M5, who started an NGO after her husband was mortally injured in the Abkhazian war, echoes strong belief that the civil society values are the only path to resolution: "the peaceful way, dialogue and face to face encounters. Because, by war and military activities, nothing can be resolved, /.../ every part of this society, it does not matter, every social group must be involved in conflict resolution" (M5). As for the view of personal impact on the conflict resolution, the answers ranged from handing over all of the resolution work to the government and other political authorities, to the very concrete projects of own organisation, for which one took pride in.

True as the inclusiveness of all is in conflict resolution, Orjuela's case study from Sri Lanka has relevance in Georgia as well. She reminds that NGO:s may unintentionally enhance divisions in society through their targeting of activities or members (Orjuela 2003). The Georgian women organisations are very good at educating women and girls of their rights and possibilities, but men are equally in need of the same information and education. I observed some exceptions to the rule of only women participating in the women organisation's activities, as there were a few men partaking in the action supporting women in politics. E13 acknowledged the problematic situation in a different area, as her organisation was conducting a campaign against domestic violence. The law was adopted as recently as in 2006, and E13 remarked that it has no effect, as the police officers do not know how to handle the victims or the charges. "The police should need trainings, first of all. They should be trained", she states.

Although conflict is a destroying force of many levels of civil society, conflict may also open space for certain civil society actions. Further, it brings the expatriate element, the foreign workers, into the civil society in Georgia and into the everyday associations of local people. Thus people's possibilities to affiliate is extended with the transnational layer, by improving the opportunities of making friends and working with people who come from a different cultural background (D7, M9, M15). Many of the local workers speak fondly of their relationships to non-Georgians, foreigner and Abkhaz/Osset alike. For R14, the influx of foreigners offered further options on which to build her organisation:

It was necessary, it was some kind of demand, of English, of good English speakers, /.../ because it was time where international organisations started to come to Georgia. To [my

town], especially, because it was border region. So, they needed this, ah, people with good English, so it was very, how to say, (Anna: Appropriate?) Yeah, yeah. (R14)

This extended possibility to affiliate transnationally naturally works in both ways. Yet the expatriate stories do emphasis the difficulties of making Georgian friends due to different expectations (L6, M9), or by explaining the situation as where one needs to emphasise on good working relationships within own expatriate group to such an extent, that it leaves less room for socialising with locals (K8). L6 is aware of the different position of the expatriate worker in Georgia:

I don't think I will be doing this kind of job for more than five or six years, because it's not so healthy in a long term, I think... You get... you know... bad reflex. /.../ I was talking about this distance you take socially wise, you tend to live in this, kind of expatriate world, in a local sphere... which is, kind of, you know, not healthy, because you have a lot of means that people do not have, so you live in a kind of luxury way compared to other persons, and then you come back to your country, and go back to a normal level of.... So, I think it's good not to get used to this so much. (L6)

7. Concluding thoughts

The overarching research question was:

What effects does exercising the capability to affiliate have in the NGO-sector in Georgia?

Interacting with the capability to affiliate is to build and to strengthen civil society. For the individual it may be seen as an extension of the possibilities to interact and having a developing effect on oneself.

Conflict attacks the capability to affiliate on all levels. Conflict hampers the abilities to live with and towards others as it destroys social bases and limits possibilities of free interaction with peers and neighbours. The possibilities to exercise compassion and show concern are partly increased as the need and suffering of others is increased, but the scope can also cause numbing and frustration, as well as individuals feeling inadequate to their tasks. Through

being able to exercise the capability to affiliate, individuals create positive feelings of themselves and their capabilities and impact on the surrounding extends.

Emotions are intrinsic in interaction and affiliation. Interaction, whether initiated by self or reacted on others' doings, and whether satisfying or disappointing, generates emotions. Thus, emotions are a marker when assessing exercised capability. Emotions serve also as a marker of changes in self, and increased skills are expressed through emotions. Another marker of exercising the capability to affiliate is reaction to one's activities and reciprocal action.

The interviewees express satisfaction with their affiliations and speak of developed capabilities to an extent which suggests they are able to affiliate in accordance with Nussbaum's basic capability to affiliate. Georgians have a strong family support network, which provides a social base and basic relationships around an individual. The issues of personal security and access to judicial and governmental systems are parts of the area in the narrations where one's possibilities to live up to the demands of the capability are most in question. Also elements of strictly gendered roles and other rigid normative stereotypes existing in the society sometimes put a damper on interaction, as well as one's feelings. Others manage to exercise their capability more on this issue as well: by challenging the norms and expectations, personal satisfaction is experienced. Further, making friends may be hampered also by the work itself, since it may separate people into those who have and those who do not have and mixes the boundaries between work and spare time, yet the work also increases networks due to its nature, and earns the individual acceptance and support.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The full list of capabilities

The current list of human functional capabilities developed by M C Nussbaum (2008:78-80)

- “**1. Life.** Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one's life is so reduced as to be not worth living.
- 2. Bodily Health.** Being able to have good health, including reproductive health, to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.
- 3. Bodily Integrity.** Being able to move freely from place to place; having one's bodily boundaries treated as sovereign, i.e. being able to be secure against assault, child abuse, and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual abuse, and some domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.
- 4. Senses, Imagination and Thought.** Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think and reason – and to do these things in a “truly human” way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training. Being able to use imagination and thought in connection with experiencing and producing self-expressive works and events of one's own choice, religious, literary, musical and so forth. Being able to use one's mind in ways protected by guarantees of freedom of expression with respect to both political and artistic speech, and freedom of religious exercise. Being able to have pleasurable experiences, and to avoid non-necessary pain.
- 5. Emotions.** Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger. Not having one's emotional development blighted by overwhelming fear or anxiety, or by traumatic events of abuse or neglect. (Supporting this capability means supporting forms of human association that can be crucial in their development.)
- 6. Practical reason.** Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life. (This entails protection for their liberty of conscience.)
- 7. Affiliation. A.** Being able to live with and towards others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another and to have compassion for that situation; to have the capability for both justice and friendship. (Protecting this capability means protecting institutions that constitute and nourish such forms of affiliation, and also protecting the freedom of assembly and of political speech.) **B.** Having the social bases for self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails, at a minimum, protections against discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, caste, ethnicity, or national origin. In work, being able to work as a human being, exercising practical reason and entering into meaningful relationships of mutual recognition with other workers.
- 8. Other species.** Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants and the world of nature.
- 9. Play.** Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.
- 10. Control over One's Environment. A. Political.** Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association. **B. Material.** Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), not just formally but in terms of real opportunity; and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure.”