

Gender and Ambivalent Identities: The Case of Georgian IDPs

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What literature tells us and what it doesn't

What we know

- Writings on gender and forced migration
 - Gender roles and expectations
 - Gendered power structures
 - Significance of social networks
 - Identity construction
 - Emotional and psychological impact of being a displaced person (becoming and living)
- Displacement as multidimensional process

What is missing

- (In)Visibility of IDPs
- Agency of IDPs
- Gender perspective

Research Questions

- What kind of shifts in ***gender roles*** have occurred as a result of the displacement?
- How does the sense of loss and attempts to reconstruct/claim their new ***identities*** affect IDPs' ability to fulfill their gender roles?

Gender Roles: Men's Narratives

- “In Abkhazia I used to leave the house at 8 A.M. and work till the evening, I was free on weekends, now I am free 24 hours (literally day and night). What do I do here?” (1MCC)
- “Men felt themselves different way, they feel humiliated. Women view it differently, the life goes on anyway... now they also understand that life goes on, but still, for them it was a harder blow (pause).. defeated, thrown out (laughs) and so on, it is very hard for men.” (19WCC)

Gender Roles: Men's Narratives

- “The lack of working places... Wherever you go or whoever you come to... I have already got used to this... We are sitting at home as robots and waiting until death takes us... I don't know... There is no other way... Day and night thinking of this. All of us, not only me... All of us, most of us, are it young or old, we all speak only about this. We want to work. (91)”
- “You are asking what I am doing now” You know... I don't have planned day, if you want to know the truth I am just going with the stream, be that as it may. When you have something and plan to do something, it means you have some interstate, while this life is not interesting at all - I just live for a day. This is what is happening today and I cannot tell you what will happen tomorrow. What I plan to do? I don't know, I just cannot tell, as I don't know (24) “

Gender Roles: Women's Narratives

- "...my load increased, it had increased a lot and that was a big stress for meand because I have taken upon myself to raise three children and looking after the family and also that I was (feeling) very bad." (26WP)
- "She works more than me.....if anyone does anything in my family, it is the woman." (6MCC)
- "I think woman has more load...I can say this and despite the fact that I do my best (literally, I do maximum), if there was no woman by my side, it would be really very hard for me to adapt to the modern life. No, a woman has a very big responsibility, especially today." (9MP)
- "There is nothing, no opportunities and we are not working....." (21WCC)

Hegemonic and Traumatic Masculinities

- Masculinities defined as
 - “a cluster of norms, values and behavioral patterns expressing explicit and implicit expectations of how men should act and represent themselves to others...” (Miescher and Lindsay 2003)
- Plurality of masculinities (vary by age, class, place, etc.)
- Collective and dynamic process

Traumatic Masculinities: Sites of Production I

Spaces of economy

- Shift in a breadwinner status; *de facto* breadwinners and persistence of traditional gender division of labor; gendered definitions of employment; increased agency of women and their adaptability





Traumatic Masculinities: Sites of Production II

Public Spaces

- Birja as a site of collective memory; social networks of IDP men; collective support





Traumatic Masculinities: Sites of Production III

Institutional Spaces

- NGOs and INGOs role; equating gender with women; the unintended consequences;

Gendered Ambivalent Identities

- Gendered perspective recognizes that displacement affects men and women differently based in societal notions and expectations of masculinity and femininity; displacement leads to new forms of masculinities (traumatic)
- Roles of women and men often shift as a result of displacement, while the power structures that delineates expectations for male and female roles often do not change
- Questionable whether in a long term gender ideology changes as a result of the shift in men's and women's roles brought on by displacement
- Similarity between men and women in the feelings of loss, but a divergence in their experience of regaining their sense of self

“Now I lie in the bed and watch TV”:

- “The unemployment, the uncertainty, now we will return today, now we will return tomorrow. Days go by, years go by, this hopelessness, of course is bad for the nervous system and it causes illness... hopelessness is the most tormenting (thing) for a person....”(7MCC)
- “...maybe the time was different or, men were more different, there was manhood, now the men were shut down, maybe because of the unemployment, because men can't support the family. Man should be manly, you should not wear pants just so (meaning you should earn your right to wear pants and be a man). ... Men felt themselves different way... they feel humiliated.” (19WCC)
- “Became more tense, became more depressed, this was not surprising. Women ... it seemed like [they had] more ability to fight somehow .. men... they were more depressed. ...they became depressed. “ (30WP)