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Cultural Heritage and Identities of Europe's Future

Case Study Reports: Non-formal Cultural Participation and Socialisation in Georgia

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Caucasus Research Resource Centers

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1. Executive summary

The aim of the report is to understand how non-formal education settings contribute and frame the cultural literacy, understanding and knowledge of culture among young people. The research is concentrated on the people aged 14-25 years in two different settings: a studio of Georgian national dances and a Georgian martial arts group. The research was conducted using qualitative methods of participant observation and in-depth interviews with young people and practitioners of the non-formal education settings. The data observation and interviews were focused on how non-formal education settings are organised, what type of dynamics occur among members, how young people and practitioners interpret culture and contrast different cultures with each other.

The qualitative data were analysed using Grounded theory. The key finding of the research is associated with the general idea of preservation and modification of Georgian culture. This process is believed to be carrying out using bricolage techniques for creating new cultural practices. However, for young people, it is important to stay in the context of the core values of Georgian culture and preservation of "Georgianness" and Georgian culture.

The non-formal education settings provide legitimised possibilities for engaging in cultural acquisition and participation as long as they declare they are aligning to the "core Georgian values". Besides legitimation, non-formal education settings are also important for providing space for practicing culture in its natural environment as formal education settings often lack orientation on the practice while engaging with cultural topics.

2. Introduction

The goal of this research is to identify how non-formal education settings are facilitating cultural acquisition among young people. Two different non-formal education settings are observed and contrasted to identify what goals and strategies they employ for their educational activities and enhancing cultural literacy. Besides, the research aims at understanding what type of cultural practices are the most appealing to young people and what their interpretation of culture is. Based on the described goals, the following research questions were formulated:

- How do non-formal education settings affect young people's cultural participation and their acquisition of cultural literacy?
- Which bottom-up cultural practices are relevant to young people?
- How do young people interpret the notion of culture?

3. Methods

Research on non-formal education settings was conducted with qualitative methods using two primary means of data collection: participant observation and in-depth interviews conducted during February-August 2019. The entire work package on how non-formal educational settings create various forms of cultural knowledge and practice uses an interpretative approach of social inquiry. This means perceiving social reality as "an ongoing and negotiated interpretation of objects, events, and situations" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992 cited in Berg, 2001). In this regard, the methodological approach of this study, as described by Ritchie and colleagues (2013), implies understanding social reality as a dynamic process, from a holistic standpoint on analysing contextual data and trying to minimise the influence of the subjective assessment of the researcher. Taking into consideration this argument, it is important to "direct researchers' subjective processes to objectively study" areas chosen to investigate (Ratner, 2002). To overcome such difficulties, research follows standard considerations of qualitative research being "strategically conducted, yet flexible and contextual" and "involve[ing] critical self-scrutiny by the researcher" (Mason, 2002. p.7).

3.1. Selection of non-formal educational sites

The purpose of WP4 was the investigation of non-formal educational sites that create and transmit culture in diverse ways through educational goals and featuring young people aged 14-25 years. In the Georgian case, a typical case sampling approach was chosen. As described by Patton (2002), this method implies the selection of the most widespread and "average" case from all possible options (Ritchie et al, 2013). Two non-formal educational settings that are self-organised and focused on cultural heritage were selected based on the researchers' perceptions of the most wide spread non-formal educational settings in Georgia. The sites include one of the well-known dance companies in Georgia and a group of young people practicing traditional Georgian martial arts. Both groups are based in the capital city, Tbilisi. Though they are oriented to preserve traditional Georgian cultural heritage, each performs its mission differently, thus making it possible to observe different approaches to non-formal cultural education.

The selected dance company is one of the leading cultural organisations with long history of collaboration and support from the state. Such collectives have been described as embodying "invented tradition" – a term coined by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983, cited in Shay, 1999). Since its formation, the dance company has been part of mainstream traditional and popular culture; and despite many innovative experiments with traditional Georgian dance, it is widely perceived as a part of widely accepted culture (Chincharauli, 2014; Kadagidze, 2015).

The Georgian martial arts group is less conventional and more of a grass roots organisation. While the dance company has a long history dating back to the soviet era, organised groups like the selected martial art group only started to emerge in the 1990s. Usually self-organised and without much publicity, they conducted ethnographic expeditions to rural and mountainous areas of Georgia to recover old martial arts traditions and techniques (Ambioni, 2015). In this regard, the selected martial art site is a scion of the larger Georgian martial arts movement that is more subculture rather than an established means of preserving and transmitting Georgian culture.

3.2. Data Collection

Research in non-formal educational settings employed qualitative data collection techniques, including participant observation and semi-structured in-depth interviews. Often Participant observation is described as part of wider ethnographic methods that focus on the "explicit interpretation of meanings and functions of human actions" and is opposed to the positivist approach of scientific inquiry (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1998). In this regard, the purpose of participant observation in this study was to provide a "cultural" or "thick" description of the social reality to interpret actors' goals and motivations and differentiate between thoughtful and meaningless actions (Wolcott, 1973; Berg, 2001; Geertz, 1973). The type and nature of selected non-formal education settings naturally guided the researchers to "active" participant observation as opposed to "passive" observation (Jorgensen, 2015). Both sites are characterised by rapid intra-group dynamics and an active style of conducting non-formal educational activities. To capture the essence of being part of the non-formal educational setting and experience the feelings of association of being part of the group, an active participant observation approach was necessary.

The primary purpose of semi-structured in-depth interviews in these settings was to provide data on another dimension of group members' experiences. Although observing the group setting may provide important insights regarding group dynamics, it lacks opportunities to account for individual perceptions and feelings. The data gathered from in-depth interviews seeks to provide further clarifications and explanation to information witnessed during participant observation or ethnographic research (Malinowski, 1922 and Burgess, 1982 cited in Ritchie et al, 2013). The flexibility, interactivity, and probing techniques make it possible to generate in-depth knowledge about being part of a non-formal educational group (Ritchie et al, 2013).

The research started with informal contact between researchers and representatives of the selected non-formal education groups. "Gatekeepers" are crucial, as they usually occupy important, decision-making positions within the target group's hierarchy (Berg, 2001). Taking

into consideration the best practices of participant observation studies, the research started with a process of identifying such gatekeepers. The researchers explained the project's purposes, procedures, and ethical standards. With the dance studio, the gatekeeper was a trainer of amateur dancers. The martial art group representative was the head of the organisation. Representatives of both sites were collaborative and interested in the wider CHIEF project, as well as the specific activities within Work Package 4 (Qualitative research in non-formal education settings). After first contact and receipt of informed consent for the study, participant observation sessions started within both groups.

During the fieldwork, the research tool did not change substantively. The original research questions remained unchanged. However, several challenges arose during the data collection process, most notably around how the notion of "culture", both traditional and modern, is interpreted. Both practitioners and participants in non-formal educational settings found it challenging to answer questions about culture, cultural heritage, and cultural education. Though highlighting the importance of them, they struggled to describe and explain what they mean to them and how they interpret these concepts.

The participant observation fieldwork for the dance studio started in February 2019 and lasted until May 2019. Overall, ten observations were conducted during a period of seven weeks. The researcher took dance lessons together with one group of young dancers to observe the intergroup relations and the method of teaching. Eleven interviews were conducted at the site, including nine with young people and two with practitioners– instructors who mentor young people. The interviews lasted around 6.5 hours (395 minutes) in total. The transcribed interviews are 172 pages (42,525 words) long.

Observation of the martial art group started in February 2019 and lasted until April 2019. In total two observations were conducted during the three weeks. The observation in the context of the martial art group was attendance of the training process. The method of teaching as well as intergroup relationships were also observed. Twelve interviews were conducted within the group, including nine with young people and three with practitioners – teachers mentoring young people. The interviews lasted around seven hours in total (419 minutes), and the transcribed interviews are 200 pages (62,452 words).

For the in-depth interviews, respondents were chosen to provide the widest range of diversity possible within the selected groups. Participants were selected based on their gender, educational background, social class, occupation and languages spoken (see appendix 1 and 2). With the dance studio, the great number of potential respondents made it possible to select

from a larger sample; while in case of the martial art group, virtually all eligible respondents were contacted and interviewed.

3.3. Data Analysis

The data analysis of the research in non-formal educational settings was carried out using the qualitative data analysis computer software, NVivo 12. The package enabled the researchers to systematically and simultaneously focus on the research questions, the context of the information gathered, and conceptual and theoretical frameworks, all while working in groups on the same research project (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013). The data from the participant observation and in-depth interviews were analysed using the Grounded theory approach summarised and revised by Charmaz (1996). This method allows researchers to focus on information collected from the observations and interviews when creating coding tools and analytical frameworks. Also, in the first stages of the research, it rejects pre-existing analytical models and assumptions that would usually come from the literature review or grand theory paradigms. This approach encourages researchers to think outside the box in the context of existing literature, stay connected to the context of the research and "generate ideas that may later be verified through traditional logico-deductive methods" (Charmaz, 1996. p48.).

Data analysis started with coding the data. In accordance with the chosen data analysis approach suggested by Charmaz (1996), two levels of coding were implemented. The first level corresponds to open or "line-by-line coding". This entailed going through the data and creating/attributing a code to each word, line or phrase that indicated any notion or activity associated with the research topics. Coding in such a manner required creation of specific and "active" codes that try to describe the information presented in the transcripts. After finalising the open coding, the created codes were grouped into categories or subcategories during a process known as focus coding.

After establishing the categories and coding the data accordingly, the data were analysed using a conditional/consequential matrix – one of the most widespread Grounded theory data analysis tools (Bringer et al, 2006). As described by Corbin and Strauss (1996), it implies understanding the relationships between macro and micro preconditions and consequences that lead to a certain interpretation of a phenomenon: in the context of this research, the interpretation of culture. The micro level was attributed to individual and non-formal educational group attributes and dynamics, with national and international level characteristics at the macro level.

In addition to the conditional/consequential matrix approach, the emerging themes were also studied to understand what type of cultural practices are relevant for young people and what factors shape young people's perception of culture in the context of non-formal educational

settings. The emerging themes discovered during the data analysis were then addressed to the specific theoretical frameworks. They are discussed in detail in the findings section of the report. The emerging themes were analysed using descriptive and explanatory accounts as discussed by Ritchie and colleagues (2013). Descriptive accounts refer to the explanations and findings present in the data or articulated by the respondents themselves, while explanatory accounts were used in order to make linkages between the emerging themes and phenomena, also relating the data to specific theoretical frameworks and literature.

3.4 Ethical Issues

Participation in the research was on a voluntary basis and respondents were informed about the study objectives, data privacy and confidentiality issues. Prior to the interview, participants read an information sheet, and by signing a consent/assent form gave permission to be interviewed. The interviews were conducted in a face-to-face setting, eliminating the possibility of the respondent and their answers being influenced by the presence of group members or any other person.

The collected data were anonymised after interview transcription. The participant notes – a form filled out by the researcher after each interview to reflect the interview context and any relevant information not covered or observed during the conversation – were linked to the transcriptions, however each respondent was assigned a specific pseudonym. The list linking the pseudonyms to the individuals has been stored separately and securely in the protected cloud repository, preventing an assigned pseudonym being linked to a specific individual. Only researchers have access to the transcript repository and documents will be destroyed after the finalisation of the project. The list of pseudonyms was chosen at random from a list of predefined names, before meeting the participants.

4. Findings

According to the DVV[1] international Georgia Country Office report (2017), participation levels of the general adult population of Georgia in the non-formal education is low. The first appearance of the non-formal education in the legislation domain goes back to 2011 when it was mentioned in the context of recognition of non-formal education within the framework of the regulation of vocational education (Order of Minister of Georgia, Document number 8/б). The further elaboration of the non-formal education legislation and public policy documents was still concentrated toward the vocational education, lifelong education and validation of

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[1] DVV International is the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV), a German organisation that works on the adult education.

non-formal and informal learning (NECE, 2015). The only legislative issue related to the non-formal education in the context of youth is 2014 Youth National Policy that defines it as "any scheduled, voluntary programme of individual and social education, which is not part of the formal educational programmes and is designed to develop competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitudes)" (The Georgian National Youth Policy Document, 2014).

Probably the most widespread non-formal education settings among youth are school-affiliated clubs and circles that unite school pupils based on their interests and hobbies. The ministry of education is the major actor in the field of non-formal education management, however other state agencies also participate in the promotion and facilitation of non-formal education activities. Namely, starting from 2012 the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Protection supports establishing school-based eco-clubs that aim at raising environmental awareness among school children (NECE, 2015).

The majority of the non-formal education activities facilitated both by the state and non-governmental actors are focused on the development of employability skills and the lesser part of civic education. The challenges described in the situation analysis of the non-formal education settings in Georgia by the NECE (2015) was their concentration to the urban areas (including rural settings with proximity to the urban areas), besides, those activities are more donor and NGO driven, rather than requested by communities and young people.

The non-formal education in the Georgian context lacks the grass-root approach when non-formal education groups are self-organised, interest-driven and are operating outside the major actors of education institutions, both government and non-government funded. In the framework of CHIEF WP4, the selection criteria of the non-formal education settings were trying to investigate platforms that were oriented on the cultural heritage and its transition. In addition, this strategy makes possible to observe more authentic non-formal education settings that are not operated and constrained with formal institutional funding and regulations.

The non-formal educational settings studied in this research have similarities and differences in terms of their understanding of culture, thematic scope, missions, and target groups. The dance company is well-established, with a strong institutional legacy as a non-formal educational setting associated with mainstream Georgian culture. By comparison, the martial arts group is a relatively new and small non-formal educational organisation with less visibility and presence.

4.1. Case 1: Dance group

4.1.1. Description of non-formal education setting

The selected dance company was one of the first professional state dance ensembles in Georgia. Like many of the State Dance Companies established under the Soviet Union, the company sought to create a national ballet founded upon the traditions of folk dances. Its work became widely popular, promoting the traditions of Georgian dance throughout the country and overseas – both influencing and informed by Georgia's cultural heritage. The dance company is well-known not only in Georgia, but outside of the country, predominantly in the in the post-communist space. It also possesses a Children's Dance Studio/Academy that teaches dance to over 1,000 children and youth. The academy has several branches in Tbilisi, where they teach ballet, and traditional and modern Georgian dance. Students also learn traditional dances from other countries.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the dance company was managed independently by family members of the founder. Tutors are former or current dancers of the ensemble, some of whom work on promoting and preserving traditional dances, with others working on new dance moves and developing modern Georgian dances.

The dance company has a reputation for innovation, having created a number of different dances in the second half of the twentieth century. The current artistic director seeks to uphold the ensemble's history of innovation, regularly working on the creation of new dances, which sometimes become subject of intense discussion in Georgia. The dance company organised two well-acclaimed projects that are, as reported by both young people and practitioners, modern visualisations of Georgian folk dances. Their goal was integration of the national musical and choreographic culture into the subculture.

The studio offers a range of classes to students, including Georgian and international folk dance, ballet, ballroom dance, modern dance, gymnastics and Zumba. The dance company draws new recruits from the studio, with new members entering the company at around 20 years of age as interns[2]. Interns join the company's principle performers on stage at corporate events, festivals and regular stage shows, in addition to joining tours abroad. The studio also provides amateur classes, which do not have age limitations. Many former dancers stay and work in the organisation as tutors or in an administrative capacity.

CRRC-Georgia's researchers observed dance groups comprised of young people aged 20-25. Here, there were two types of groups: 1) young interns who want to become part of the dance

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[2] Interns in the context of the dance company are persons, who are working unpaid with the hope of gaining experience and potentially a job in the academy.

company on the permanent basis and are trained intensively for concerts; and 2) groups of amateur dancers who want to learn Georgian dance, but not at a professional level.

The group of interns consisted of young men and women, mostly under the age of 25. For this group, the non-formal education setting is more formal, and led by experienced male and female instructors. The instructors are typically former-members of the ensemble, although at times, classes may be led by current performers. Observations showed that trainers are strict and actively involved throughout an entire practice session. Training is intense and continues for about three hours 3-4 times a week.

Interns typically practise three times a week, however this may increase to daily sessions of three to five hours during the periods preceding a concert. Both young men and young women in the intern group mostly wear black, tight-fitting outfits. Some dancers need to control their weight permanently. While exercising, female members typically wear a black scarf as a skirt around skinny leggings, in order to feel more covered. However, this practice is not mandatory.

The amateur dancer group is comprised entirely of young women. The dance academy administrators and tutors reported the opinion that "men dance only for special occasions if they are not professionals", and as such the studio offers their service to women only. Training lasts for 1.5 hours three times a week. The amateur trainer is a graduate of the dance academy and currently an intern. She has two groups of amateurs: beginners and experienced dancers, both of which are mixed with respect to age up to 55. Despite limited opportunity in this regard, most of the young amateurs hope they will be noticed by academy heads and will join the ensemble. Older members of the group are typically former-professionals from other ensembles or amateur enthusiasts.

Respondents from the amateur group were 20 to 22 years old. For the most part, they have other professions, but would be willing to become full-time performers if offered the chance to do so. CRRC-Georgia conducted 3 interviews with practitioners. Two of them have groups of amateurs and kids[3] from 5 years, while the third one have modern Georgian dance classes with kids and professional dancers.

4.1.2. Emerging themes/Results of analysis
Motivations for practicing culture in the dance group
National dance is a major part of Georgian cultural heritage and enjoys widespread popularity. Most respondents reported studying folk dance in their childhood, although not necessarily at this dance company. Respondents also frequently noted that whilst they loved to dance, taking

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[3] Kids groups in dance company context means first or second year groups of children from 5 years.

dancing lessons was often their parents' decision. Amateur group members less frequently danced in their childhood, but report wanting to keep themselves close to the activity that makes them happy. All wanted to improve their dance skills, with the modernisation of folk dances a popular reason for engagement. Many cited the skill of performers and prestige of the company as a motivating factor: *"[Dance company name] has the best practitioners"* (Lika, female, young people).

For interns, dance has become a lifestyle, joining this dance company because *"[it] is one of the lead folk ensembles which promotes Georgian dance"* (Toma, male, young people). Young people from both groups mentioned that being part of this dance company was their childhood dream.

Like young people, practitioners also said that dancing in the ensemble was their dream. Many also expressed great pleasure in teaching others, sharing their knowledge and receiving positive feedback from students and peers.

Respondents were overwhelmingly positive about their experiences, reporting that they love the experience they receive there, and many of respondents think that this community is perfect without any need of change. Young people in the study also reported that they appreciated both the company's contemporary approaches to performance of Georgian dances and its stewardship of traditional dance. The young people interviewed were also overwhelmingly enthusiastic about dance itself, reporting it as being pleasurable and interesting, despite the inflexible rehearsal schedule. They highlighted the role played by the practitioner in the training process, praising their ability to create a friendly and engaging atmosphere at classes.

> *Choreographers give us freedom to dance with our own manner. This freedom makes me love [dance company] most and catches me not to miss a lesson (Sopo, female, young people).*

Furthermore, the young people interviewed valued the team-spirit in their community, referring to the dance company as "another family". This noted, some friction between members was observed, with some respondents in both intern and amateur groups expressing displeasure at peers who are "lazy", "jealous" or "irresponsible". The older practitioners interviewed also share sentiments that paint a picture of a close, warm, but occasionally fractious, environment, describing the dance company as another family full of family love, arguments, friendship, and discussions.

Amateurs stringing valued their learning experience, with many reporting that better understanding Georgian traditions and the stories behind the dances has allowed them to express themselves better on stage. Young people in the intern group shared similar sentiments, and also highlighted the opportunities for international travel and learning offered by the dance company.

Practitioners understand amateurs' efforts and their positive attitude towards the dance ensemble community, and accordingly seek to improve their experience by offering additional activities:

> *It is bad that amateur groups are not able to attend gymnastics, world dances, ballet, and acting classes. […] Therefore, I choreographed Spanish dance for their performance. (Nino, female, practitioner)*

All young people interviewed reported that they will continue their activities with the dance company, and expressed hope that with sufficient study and practice they might be able to join the full ensemble. Whilst interns may well join the troupe as full members, and indeed do participate in concerts, some practitioners were dismissive of amateurs' scope for joining the ensemble:

> *They do not have a chance […], because they are older, and do not have applicable background. One must be the highest-level professional with nice looks (Tsisana, female, practitioner).*

The dance group as an organisation

Practitioners expressed pride in the dance company's originality of approach, with respondents reporting that they never imitate others, and always work to create something new yet inspired by traditional elements. This blending of innovative approaches and traditional themes provides a complex dilemma for the organisation. On one hand, respondents reported that there is a strong expectation for the ensemble to be innovative, but on the other, they receive lot of criticism about innovations when new approaches are tried. This noted, practitioners felt comfortable that with time, innovated interpretations are usually accepted by the public:

> *After several months or years, those dances always become hits (Nino, female, practitioner).*

Practitioners think that ensemble's activities are more popular among young people now, than it was before – evidenced by the opening of five different branches in the capital during the

last couple of years. Respondents felt that the mixing of traditional and modern approaches might play a key role in the ensemble's continued success.

Young people from both the intern and amateur groups think that the aim of the dance company is to promote Georgian culture to young Georgians and export it to the whole world. Respondents noted that conducting cultural events is one of the main ways to commercialise Georgia's cultural heritage. As with the young people interviewed, practitioners also mentioned that one of the main goals of the dance company is spreading Georgian culture throughout the world.

Relationships inside the dance group
Practitioners are proud of their role in sharing Georgian culture with future generations. Furthermore, they adore working with amateurs as they *"dance just for kicks and text me that they're fulfilling their childhood dreams"* (Nino, female, practitioner).

Practitioners think that young people apply to the ensemble, because of the reputation the organisation has, as well as its programme, and freedom to dance traditional dances in a modern way.

Practitioners view their students as unique individuals with different skills, personalities and motivations. They report that some students are motivated to become professionals, others do it just for fun or *"just want to be able to dance in wedding parties"* (Nino, female, practitioner). One tutor noted the therapeutic value of participation in classes, saying that they have taught students with mental health problems, for whom amateur class was a rehabilitation opportunity.

Many noted that some young people are highly ambitious and want to dance in the front rows and perform solos. There are however only so many opportunities for these leading roles, which may lead to disappointment and distress. Whilst the limited number of leading roles leads to competition, practitioners say this rarely leads to conflict: *"We are low-conflict staff. [...] There are stressful situations, however it is notable for only [some] people"* (Tsisana, female, practitioner).

Practitioners reported that sometimes friends join the dance company activities together, and that classes are an opportunity to make close friends. Students are encouraged to help each other understand and/or improve their dance moves *"that works as a team-building activity and makes [...] friends"* (Tsisana, female, practitioner). It is not unusual for kids to give paintings to their tutors, similarly older students and tutors often socialise together. Students

described practitioners as: friendly, demanding, hard-working, and sometimes strict, but fair. Students frequently noted that their tutor makes them love Georgian dance even more.

Cultural practices and Personal culture

Both young people and practitioners alike linked culture to traditions and national identity. They underlined that Georgian folklore and wine-making traditions are an important part of Georgian culture. Young people also highlighted the importance of cultural events as a tool for sharing traditions with future generations and helping foreigners enjoy Georgian culture.

Furthermore, practitioners see themselves as cultural educators, and as part of a centuries-old identity. Some define 'cultural heritage' as a heritage linked to ancestry. Others believe that Georgian dance is a cultural heritage, because *"as the style is very different from other countries, our cultural heritage [dance] is very individual. That is why the whole world adores our dance"* (Tsisana, female, practitioner, Dance group, Georgia). Practitioners also see their role in maintaining cultural identity in teaching young people the history and context behind each dance.

Young people interviewed under the study see culture as traditional and individual, and based on Georgia's culture. One respondent reported *"the aim of my life and my job [as a dancer] is to promote Georgian culture"* (Toma, male, young people). Outside of the dance company activities, many attend classical, jazz, blues, or rock concerts. Respondents also attend cultural festivals, such as Art Gene festival, visit the cinema and theatre events, and enjoy folk dance concerts and exhibitions. The majority of the young people interviewed have jobs or are studying, with most enjoying professions they have chosen. For most interviewees, their primary source of information about culture is the internet: *"if I missed interesting cultural event, I can find information about it in internet"* (Archili, male, young people). Practitioners frequently noted that the internet has contributed significantly to popularising the dance company among young people, as it provides easy access to videos. Also, youth from both groups mentioned that family, friends and university are also important information sources.

Some interns and amateurs sing Georgian folk songs or play folk instruments. One of them mentioned; *"I used to sing at charity events […] the goal was collecting money to help someone"* (Kristina, female, young people).

Generally, young people described their families' culture as a mix of traditional Georgian values and those of the modern world. Annual festivals are celebrated together, while religion is part of their family culture. They attend *Tbilisoba*[4] and other Georgian folk events together

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[4] The festival of culture and heritage of Tbilisi that is held annually in October.

with their families. Some of these families also take part in Georgian folklore communities. This family-level engagement in cultural activities may contribute to young people's interest in folk dances. While talking about the issues young people discuss with their family members, they mostly named private issues, the dance company, their jobs, and university.

Young people from both observed groups have diverse friendship groups outside of the ensemble community with whom they share common values. For some of their friends, the dance company itself and a love of dance is also a part of its own culture. Young people said that they have good friends, and that a good friend should be faithful and friendly, and should support them in good times and bad.

National and international topical issues, professional, and political issues were frequently reported as key conversation topics amongst friends. Respondents reported that they and their friends hangout together, and attend activities such as cinema, theatre and annual celebrations together.

While talking about friends from within the ensemble community, young people said that they are like another family. They hangout together and have the same goal:

> *We have the same goal, to become a member of the main ensemble of [name of the dance company]. […] After that some of them want to become a practitioner (Shota, male, young people)*

Additionally, they also linked the dance company, Georgian identity and gender norms, saying that the ensemble presents male dancers as masculine, while women are soft, chaste, modest and proud.

> *We like a dancer on the stage, because she performs with those values. They all know how to dance, but only making moves is not enough, they need those values to keep. (Tsisana, female, practitioner)*

Contrasting Georgian and European culture
Young people love Georgian culture, but also disapprove of some traditions. For respondents, Georgian culture means the traditional *supra*[5], dance, music, hospitality and traditional clothes. They like "the beautiful synthesis of many traditions […] you can see the combination of cuisine, wine-making, dance, music at a Georgian *supra*" (Sopo, female, young people, Dance

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[5] "Supra" in the Georgian context means a traditional Georgian feast led by a "Tamada", a person who makes toasts. Festive "supras" usually are accompanied by music, songs and dances.

group, Georgia). On the other hand, young people do not like traditions that are seen as insincere. For example, they think that the traditional funeral wake *"[…] is sometimes focused on wining and dining more than respect to the dead"* (Kristina, female, young people). Respondents regularly attend Georgian dance and music concerts and join in Georgian *supras* with their family and/or friends – they express Georgian culture by the activities they are involved in.

The majority of respondents consider themselves both Georgian and European. As one of the respondents noted: *"I would consider myself fully European if I were free enough" (Leila, female, young people).*

Young people see Europe as being on a constant trajectory of progress. For them Europe is associated with personal freedom, progress and innovation, freedom of expression, and good manners.

> *The most important topic in the European culture is personal freedom and importance of every person in the world. […] [name of the dance company] are exactly representative of European cultural identity, because they do not limit their community members and are always oriented on development (Toma, male, young people).*

While talking about the knowledge young people have gained about Europe, they did not have much to talk about. While asking questions about Europe, European culture or what they have heard of Europe in general, young people could not provide specific answers to those questions and did not had established ideas about what European culture is like. Therefore, it might be assumed that they are not well informed about Europe. They received information about Europe from history classes at school, the internet and TV.

Relationships with other groups and organisations while practicing cultural activities
Respondents feel that Georgian society has a mixed attitude towards their dance ensemble. It was felt that in some parts of society, the ensemble is respected for maintaining Georgian cultural heritage however; its approach to innovation is controversial amongst traditionalists. Respondents defended their role as cultural custodians, noting the diversity of the programme, which includes a dedicated traditional repertoire:

> *The classic part of our programme, which was created by the historical [names of the ensemble founders], is untouchable.* (Tsisana, female, practitioner).

As the dance group is focused on global touring, respondents felt they miss opportunities to build relationships with other groups and organisations inside of Georgia. Respondents noted that cooperation with other organisations, companies, film-makers, and governmental institutions is often one way, with such organisations applying for the dance company to perform at festivals and other events.

> *We cannot say that any other ensemble in Georgia is a competitor of [name of the dance company], because [name of the dance company] created something absolutely different from others. [...] For example, within the collaboration with Coca-Cola, we perform flash-mobs for kids in different locations of Tbilisi. (Tsisana, female, practitioner)*

4.2. Case 2: Martial arts group
4.2.1. Description of non-formal education setting
The martial arts group observed in this study was founded in 2000 and in 2011, it was rebranded with different name. In 2019, they were rebranded again, changing their name as the previous one was associated with several Georgian far-right groups. The movement is a historical society, which seeks to re-establish traditional Georgian fighting techniques through work in three major areas: sports, ethnographic research, and performance.

Compared to the dance company, martial arts community is less known among young people. However, they have their audience and followers. They are especially popular among young people with an interest in Georgian history, ethnography, and culture. The significant share of their members are in the project's target age range (14-25).

The organisational structure of the martial art group is not strictly vertical. There are two groups of members: practitioners (i.e. teachers) and students. The practitioners are former students who have mastered their skills and are sufficiently experienced to train other members of the group. Being a practitioner also entails a readiness to dedicate free time to the organisation's activities. Some students who are experienced and skilled do not want to be promoted to be practitioners due to the time commitment involved. Respected practitioners, former and current, form the organisation's council. It is not involved in the day-to-day activities of the collective, but rather manages the group's strategic development.

The martial arts group was initially a *de facto* all-male organisation and was established by an all-male group, but in recent years, a number of women have joined. Respondents suggested that its initial gender composition stemmed from a lack of interest from young women, underpinned by cultural norms surrounding the role of women in Georgian society. As a

comparatively conservative and traditional culture, women have not traditionally been involved in activities considered masculine, notably those linked with warfare and martial arts. Cultural norms related to socialisation between men and women spending time together, were also felt to have reduced female participation.

Today, the martial arts group brings together men and women from a wide diversity of backgrounds. Whilst practitioners are typically men aged 30 years and above, the majority of students are 14-29 years old. Members, though virtually exclusive ethnic Georgians, come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds and include: school pupils from small towns near Tbilisi, teachers, students, professional athletes, and mechanics. The reason for being an exclusively ethnic Georgian community was not investigated during the fieldwork and participants did not highlight this issue during the conversations. The explanation for this fact could be in the nature of its martial arts that has very ethnic "Georgianness" in its philosophy tightly linked to ethnic Georgian history and traditions.

The martial art group's target audience is predominantly the younger demographic, with an expressed goal of including as many young people as possible in their activities in order to popularise traditional Georgian martial arts. The organisation's board communicates with schools and youth centres in an effort to promote their activities and expand their membership.

The group is a predominately self-funded and volunteer organisation. Whilst it has received external funding in the past, financing has been irregular, and it currently has no material or organisational support from any governmental or non-governmental organisation. The sole source of income comes from performances, which are irregular, and limited in profit, leading to continued struggles with financial difficulties. Respondents report that the organisation's financial constraints have resulted in problems with accessing training facilities and equipment, and shortages of funds for other administrative expenses.

4.2.2. Emerging themes/Results of analysis
Motivations of practicing culture in the martial arts group
Younger people report three major motivations for their engagement with the group: family influence, an interest in Georgian history, and a desire for physical activity and exercise; the same factors were also reported by the practitioners. Family influence was cited predominately by those who have family members that are currently or were previously involved with the martial arts group:

> *I am involved through my family. My brother was, my father was, and I am […]*
> *My father was the [name of the martial arts group] practitioner and he is*

supervising one of the groups in my hometown. My brother is currently not a member, but he was training for four years. (Lazare, male, young people)

A general interest in Georgian history and traditions was a frequently cited motivation for joining for both young people and practitioners. Respondents agreed that the group provides an opportunity to understand a very specific dimension of Georgian culture, which provides an understanding of history and culture that they would not have access to elsewhere. Interviewees were enthusiastic about history, particularly military history and reported that membership provides an opportunity to learn more about their passion.

... because of our past. I think everyone should know the history of [Georgian] combat and if one has the possibility to learn that techniques you should definitely learn that (Keti, female, young people).

The need to be involved in some type of physical activity and test their own physical strength was also an important factor. For some, the group is also a means of learning self-defence:

When I first came to [name of the martial arts group], it was because of self-defence. I was [physically] weak and wanted to be able to defend myself (Lasha, male, young people).

The young people interviewed mostly joined the group during their late teens or early 20s. Many report having found this martial arts group whilst searching for identity and their place in society. Most interviewees felt that this group was a place where they were able to make friends and learn about what friendship means, and that the group has helped them to express themselves and communicate more effectively:

Before I started training at [name of the martial arts group] I was more of a closed person, with limited contact with the outer world [...] I did not enjoy contact with others too much, but I learned [to enjoy other people's company] here. I could say that I have become more open. (Dato, male, young people).

The membership helps young people to master traditional Georgian weapons and combat techniques. Whilst the skills learned provide a historical understanding and an aesthetic and sub-culture which is clearly enjoyed by its members, some respondents see the group as a means for learning self-defence. Some female members of the group report feeling safer and more confident since joining:

Martial arts, including wrestling, boxing or other physical exercises, have helped me a lot. [...] women are generally more vulnerable [...] I was afraid to walk the streets alone at night. However, after I learned [self-defence] I am not afraid anymore. I know I can defend myself in any situation (Eto, female, young people).

For members of the group, martial arts are as important a part of Georgian culture as folk dances, songs, literature and visual arts. Respondents reported their engagement is driven by a desire to expand their understanding of what constitutes Georgian culture:

I want to show people how rich culture we have [...] Martial arts are not widespread and I want it to be popular like Georgian dance (Eto, female, young people).

Respondents are proud to see themselves as bringing attention to a part of Georgian culture that they see as important but neglected:

No one pays attention to the martial arts [...] we are the only ones that trying to popularise it. (Nika, male, young people).

Relationships inside the group

Both field observations and semi-structured interviews indicate that there are few formal boundaries between the younger participants and more senior practitioners. Some respondents did however report a sense of discipline within the organisation.

There is some sense of order, strictness. We need to have serious approach while training to do anything (Gia, male, young people).

The decision-making process for the organisation's development is described as highly inclusive by respondents: *"We make decisions jointly, we think about pros and cons. There is no absolutism, democratic principles are here"* (Nika, male, young people). As a creative organisation, interviewees report that this horizontal governance structure also applies to the details of performance:

We argue, which specific element should be done better [while practising for public event]. We argue on such things, but eventually we all come to the same point of view. (Lasha, male, young people).

All Interviewees stress that there are no divisions in the organisation on the basis of gender, class or age: *"Girls, boys all train together, seniors and juniors and everyone has the opportunity to spend time together"* (Dato, male, young people). Female respondents also reported that they feel the absence of traditional cultural norms that portray them as "weak and vulnerable":

> *When I first came to [name of the martial arts group] I thought that the teacher would be softer on me as I am a girl, and he would not make me to do [particular] exercises, but [during the training] he collapsed me on the training ground. After that I realised there is no distinction between boys and girls here. This is also true [outside of] the training (Keti, female, young people).*

Having different ideological points of view does not lead to the strained attitudes among group members. Both young people and practitioners report respecting each other's values, whilst not always agreeing with them. A diversity of values and ideas is reported as important in a strong team: *"If we want to have the team, the team should be diverse and diversity means that we should accept people that are different from us"* (Lazare, male, young people).

Despite differences of opinion, respondents describe having very close relationships with other members of the group. Interviewees report their common interest in Georgian history as key to building relationships, and for older respondents in particular, who have known each other for a long time, the duration of their friendship was also cited as important. Younger respondents were less likely to describe their relationships with other members in such strong terms, drawing distinctions between themselves and their older peers:

> *Personally, I am still in a state of self-reflection, searching and finding myself […] they [the older generation] are more settled down and they know what they are doing. (Gia, male, young people).*

Understanding of culture

The idea of culture as an intersection of the nation, historical factors, traditions and norms was a recurring theme during conversations with members of the group. Respondents reported the belief that culture connects people to their ancestors, allowing those in the present to access the ideas, values and cultural heritage of previous generations. Respondents also discussed culture as a key element of nation formation:

> *Maybe it [culture] is the mix of history, customs and traditions that shape our identity and makes us different from other nations and other people. That is, what*

we have on our own, what is unique for us and no one else have something like that. (Elene, female, young people).

Culture as a means of understanding other people is mostly related with the ability to interpret and correctly understand norms and traditions that may be unfamiliar for a given person. Young people reflected on diversity when answering questions about culture: *"When thinking about the culture different countries and their clothes come to my mind"* (Dato, male, young people). These respondents also felt that understanding of a culture is crucial for avoiding misinterpretations: *"[without having knowledge of cultures] you may make big mistakes"* (Nika, male, young people). Young people saw the concept of culture as the building blocks of society, and something that unites people:

> *I think that [culture] unites people and connects them with each other. People need this very much to feel that they are part of something big [...] If there was no culture and history it would be hard [to stand together] [...] people would disintegrate. (Eto, female, young people).*

Interviewees also stressed the aesthetic aspects of culture, commenting on art, music, poetry and other creative activities. Many felt that creativity is important in making life more interesting: *"One can say there is no need for culture, but [...] people like diversity, uniformity is dull"* (Dato, male, young people).

The word "culture" has many meanings in the Georgian language, including alignment with perceived established rules of behaviour in society. Respondents linked public behaviour and conformity with norms of culture: *"[culture involves] being friendly, courteous, helping others, being polite and respect other's opinions"* (Elene, female, young people).

Being part of an organisation with a strong and specific cultural mandate, respondents also linked culture with martial arts. Practitioners were more explicit than young people in identifying it with culture: *"What I [think about] culture is all in relation to my organisation. At the end of the day I still base [my definition] on that. Something that is based on traditions and creativity"* (Gogi, male, practitioner).

Though generally agreeing that culture is important for personal development, both young people and practitioners report little involvement in other cultural activities outside of the martial arts group. For some, this lack of broader engagement is due to constraints on free time and for others a perceived scarcity of cultural activities.

Regardless of the rates of participation, for the majority of young people interviewed, cultural activities are important elements of practising culture. They are enthusiastic about the potential for events as a mechanism for transferring cultural knowledge:

> *All sorts of cultural events should be organised. If they are not organised, it [culture] will not be transferred to people. (Lasha, male, young people).*

Identity of young people
Respondents saw family as an important formative influence with regard to youth culture:

> *My culture comes from my family, from my father, mother, my brother. In general, the family influences the formation of a child. (Eto, female, young people).*

The recurring theme while describing their own culture was the attempt of both family and young people to combine traditional and modern values. Interviewees feel that they are respecting Georgian norms and traditions, but simultaneously working to adapt them to modern life:

> *[Family culture] is respecting our past and considers the reality of modernity. We are not observing all traditions and customs. We try to modify them and interpret them in our own way. (Elene, female, young people).*

Though family was cited frequently as an important factor in the formation of personal culture and identity, for the most part young people interviewed are detached from their families with regard to cultural expression. This manifests in how rarely they go out to any cultural event together with their parents or discuss culture with them. Typically, respondents felt that friends have a greater influence on their identity.

Some respondents felt that shared culture and interests are an important precondition for friendship: *"personally I can't be friends with a person that is not interested in Georgian culture or heritage"* (Keti, female, young people). Other young people stressed the importance of sincerity and depth in relationships:

> *My friends, in general, are characterised by having deep interests […] We are not some 'faint', indifferent society. (Lazare, male, young people).*

Besides friends and family, the identity of young people is shaped by the influence of the organisation itself. When young people compare their friendships inside and outside the martial

arts group, there are clear, distinguishing patterns associated with the way young people self-identify. The majority of respondents described their friends and acquaintances from the martial arts group as being more traditional than other people they knew, and that friends from within valued "Georgianness" above all. Friends from other circles were described as more open towards other cultures, with values that do not bind their identity to being Georgian:

> *My friends are very different from each other, because I have contact with many people. I study at the art academy and people there are more open minded and think more or less in a European way, although not entirely. People at [name of the martial arts group] are more oriented towards Georgian traditions. (Nika, male, young people).*

Activities outside the martial arts group also influence the young people's identities. Those involved in civic activities outside of the group often described themselves using terms such as feminist and European, or noted that they value universal virtues and do not identify solely to the Georgian culture. One quoted a prominent Georgian politician, to describe Georgia as a natural part of the Europe: *"I am Georgian, therefore I am European"* (Sandro, male, young people). This noted, respondents with less diverse activities outside of the martial arts group more strongly identified themselves solely with the concepts of "Georgianness".

Contrasting Georgian and European culture

When questioned on what they understand by Georgian culture, respondents frequently discussed history, tradition and Georgian orthodox Christianity. For young people, the concepts that make Georgia unique are the most important features of Georgian culture: with the Georgian language[6], alphabet, wine and folklore cited as examples of Georgia's unique cultural heritage. Interviewees saw Georgian culture as very diverse, and agree that whilst it should take new ideas from other cultures, it should maintain its core values:

> *It is 50/50. We can take other things from all cultures in order to improve [Georgian culture] but making the strong emphasis on [changes] and neglecting Georgian culture is not a good idea. (Nika, male, young people)*

Though Georgian culture is very important to respondents, not every aspect of it is enjoyed. On one hand, young people have unconditional respect for many cultural norms, like hospitality and Georgia's ability to sustain itself in the face of adversity:

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[6] While speaking about the Georgian language respondents mean the literature standard of Georgian language.

I like that throughout so many centuries, despite so many enemies we sustained ourselves and did not lose our national identity (Keti, female, young people).

Despite a strong desire to promote and preserve Georgian culture, young people also expressed frustration with the strong dogmas that constrain cultural development. Some felt that a conservative focus on preservation makes it difficult for the country to be more open, flexible and relevant to current times:

In fact, what we have now [culture], it was not in the same form as we have it at the moment. That was also changing over times. Consequently, we must try to adapt to the modern reality and we should shape our traditions and habits accordingly [...] it should not be all about past. (Elene, female, young people).

Young people found it difficult to speak about European culture, interpreted predominantly as a geographic and political space:

When I hear European culture for the most part modern European countries come to my mind. (Dato, male, young people).

When compared to their knowledge of Georgian culture, respondents understanding of European culture was comparatively limited, and mostly associated with European values. Young people frequently associated European values with respect for the opinion of others, freedom of thought, the rule of law, and order. Europe also received praise because of its ability to achieve reconciliation:

I recall the old time, when they [Europeans] were in constant disagreements, but I like that they make it possible to reconcile and to establish relationships with each other. That was possible because of their culture. (Gia, male, young people).

European culture is also believed to be more rational and purposeful than that of Georgia: *"The European culture is some sort of consequentiality that is present in every individual's everyday routine"* (Lazare, male, young people). Others associated Europe with progress, development and welfare:

I have positive associations, I associate it [Europe] developed and well-organised countries. (Dato, male, young people).

Conceptions of Europe and Georgia were understood at different levels. Respondents saw Georgian culture in terms of traditions, history, art and material heritage; while Europe was associated with values such as freedom of thought and self-expression. In this regard, being European is seen in the abstract:

> *[Being European] does not depend on the location or specific country. Probably being European is based on the ideology or etiquette, how to behave"* (Nika, male, young people).

Expressing culture through group activities

For young people, martial arts group's activities extend beyond conservation to creativity. Every single activity, though constrained by a general framework of core Georgian cultural norms, is seen by its members as a process of re-thinking and re-creating Georgian culture in modern terms. The organisation undertakes ethnographic trips to mountainous parts of Georgia to rediscover martial art techniques and works to document the history of Georgian martial arts: *"The information [about traditional martial arts] was researched during research expeditions. [We also discovered a lot from] archive data and museum exhibits"* (Tengo, male, practitioner). This information then is the passed onto newcomers in the group and to the public through history lectures:

> *Our lectures can be on many topics. It can be on history, folklore, it could be about the songs, martial arts, or battle tactics, that is also more or less part of culture of every country. (Dato, male, young people).*

By wearing traditional Georgian clothes, crafting replicas of ancient weapons and performing martial arts, the group members believe they are expressing themselves as Georgians. They also note, however, that their goals extend beyond re-enactment. Respondents noted that the organisation also seeks to modernise traditional martial arts and provide their own interpretation of Georgian culture: *"[our activities] are dedicated to the renewal of culture. Without it, culture will not survive"* (Lazare, male, young people). Two areas in which the martial arts group seeks to modernise traditional martial arts is through the adaptation of martial art techniques, and through the creation of new elements in traditional Georgian clothing and accessories.

When it comes to the adaptation of martial art moves, the group members not only re-create old techniques, but also incorporate new approaches from other cultures:

Sometimes there are moves from films, like stunts they are doing in movies. The manoeuvres and tricks can be also can be also [be] adapted to Georgian culture as well, though [nothing] too unrealistic. (Sandro, male, young people).

Some members have worked in the film industry, performing stunt and traditional combat techniques. The practitioners are currently working on expanding the opportunity presented by Georgia's growing film and television industry: *"We have talks [with movie directors] and we hope, that we will [do more] martial art scenes in the movies, not only Georgia, but on a higher level too"* (Gogi, male, practitioner).

Relationships with other groups and organisations while practicing cultural activities
Societal perceptions play an important role in the dynamics of relationships between the martial arts group and broader Georgian society. Both young people and practitioners see attitudes towards the group as mixed. While some parts of the society value the group's efforts to preserve and popularise Georgian culture, others do not understand what the group stands for: *"People thought we were 'dark'⁷"* (Makhare, male, practitioner). The martial arts group is also often mistaken for an ultra-traditionalist or far right group, with some viewing the mas a narrow-minded and conservative organisation.

The rebranding and name change was primarily motivated to address some of these perceptions about the organisation. The change in the organisation was not only about branding, name and logo, the group has also changed its approach, and become more active in the development of Georgian martial arts, and not only their preservation. The group members also note that they are trying to incorporate elements from other aspects of Georgian culture, including through a collaboration with a folk music ensemble.

The martial arts group works through schools to promote its activities and share learning with younger people. Partnership with educational institutions is perceived by respondents as an important part of its mission to encourage young people's cultural participation and literacy:

[the] involvement of the educational system is very important [...] It would be nice if teaching institutions would provide some time for teaching or giving information about what we do. (Tengo, male, practitioner).

For the group, its relationship with the government is therefore strategic. The organisation seeks the opportunity to both engage with young people and to get material or non-material

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⁷ბნელები - Dark in Georgian is colloquial word for a people who are retrograde, very conservative and narrow minded.

support. Governmental institutions are important gatekeepers for reaching young people. Without governmental approval, it is virtually impossible to reach such institutions. Respondents also feel that cooperation with state agencies is important to legitimise its organisational existence. The organisation has back-and-forth communication with many governmental bodies in order gain recognition as a cultural institution, however often bureaucratic challenges arise:

> *For example, we had contacts with the Ministry of Sport[8]. There is enormous bureaucracy there. You are just a numeric expression for a state which has no understanding of you. I have [had] personal relationships with selected people, but for the state you are just an organisation or legal entity, one out of many other similar groups. To access finance it requires enormous paperwork. (Makhare, male, practitioner).*

The financial security is very important for the group. When talking about organisational challenges the issues related to finances emerge repeatedly. Both young people and practitioners highlight that in order to survive and continue practicing culture, they need at least some financial support. Respondents emphasise the need for financing not in terms of personal gain, but as a mechanism to support the continuation of the organisation's activities.

> *We need it [support from government] to have necessary equipment, training facility etc., nothing else. (Tengo, male, practitioner).*

> *We do not even have a sports gym, how can you develop in such situation. We are buying uniforms with our money and sometimes we do not even possess weapons to train. For that, we need some help from the state. (Eto, female, young people).*

5. Discussion

Discussed non-formal education settings represented two different cases of cultural acquisition characterised by one common feature: attempts to modernise traditional culture. However, that understanding itself contains the number of contradictions and ambiguities. The culture discussed by the participants of the non-formal education settings has two distinctive features: invented "authentic" culture and culture that exists by itself.

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[8]Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia also covered youth related topics. Currently was merged with Ministry of Education, science and culture.

The first one relates to the construction of culture in terms of "invented tradition" in the Hobsbawmian terms (Hobsbawm and Ranger, 2012). In the case of the dance group, previously described in the site description, the idea of the "Georgian folk dance" is an invention of the 20th century and was linked with the "balletization" and modernisation of folk elements of dancing (Shay, 1999). The main idea behind such a transformation was an attempt to create some kind of unique features of culture in the context of the communist and socialist political system. As for the martial arts group, the development of martial arts in the Georgian context lacks scholarly research, however, parallels with the development of other martial art techniques show similar trends. The example from the decline and rediscovery of Japanese martial arts is mirrored in the case of Georgian martial arts. In both cases due to societal transformation and modernisation the martial arts lost its initial prescription and were re-discovered as a means of character-building, lifestyle and general codex of behaviour (Hamaguchi, 2005). Taking into consideration these circumstances, young people in both educational settings often attribute authenticity and uniqueness to the phenomenon that is often recent inventions.

The second attribute is a very fixed idea of the interpretation of culture as something that is taken for granted, not created or changed dramatically by the agent of socialisation or actors of the social system. Culture is perceived as something pre-existing beyond individuals and under this term, young people's major contribution to it should be its preservation and advancement. In this light, Georgian culture is something inherited from ancestors, existing independently from individualistic influence and "embedded and embodied in collective memories and internalised by members of a collective" (Batiashvili, 2012). Georgian ethnic identity is one of the most important aspects of the construction of Georgian culture. The ethnic "Georgianness" of Georgian culture is manifested not only in the cultural context but even on the linguistic dimension. The study conducted using the experimental psycho-semantic method has shown that "personal self-realisation has necessarily implied the element of being Georgian" (Surmanidze, and Tsuladze, 2008). This explains why virtually every aspect of the Georgian culture described by young people is implicitly connected to the ethnic "Georgianness", Christianity to the Georgian orthodox Christianity etc.

The combination of these two, at one glance contradictory, ideas of fixed culture and desire of interpreting it in a modern way is nothing else than a bricolage approach of re-creating new culture and identities first described by Lévi-Strauss (1966). Bricolage as a tool for understanding was applied traditionally to study how new cultural norms and ideas can be generated in the context of traditional settings (Altglas, 2014). Though usually applied in the context of mythology or religious beliefs, the existing literature on the Georgian youth has already applied bricolage for observing and interpreting the generation of new Georgian

identities among youth (Tsuladze, 2011). Tsuladze (2011) links bricolage tactics of understanding, re-creating and practising new cultural norms by youth with the concept of "glocalization" of the globalisation trends and mixing them with the cultural elements of "traditional culture". The glocalization, described as absorbing global ideas with the local flavour or indigenization, has been applied while studying the dynamics of social transformation in the countries of the global south (Khondker, 2004). In this regard, the attempt of application of this conceptual tool is relevant to Georgia both in terms of descriptive and explanatory accounts from the collected data, as one of the most frequently recurring themes of the interviews was the re-thinking of Georgian culture. Furthermore, as described by Tsuladze (2011), the "fashionable trend of "being native" among the Georgian youth and subcultures mirrors the idea of pursuing "going back to the roots" (Roberts, 2005). At the same time, Georgian culture perceived by young people from the non-formal education setting as unique in terms of a blend of different cultures itself gives a sort of "roadmap" of how to engage with global trends and not lose the link with its traditions and values.

The observed non-formal education settings perfectly fit the described model of cultural participation and their acquisition. On one hand, association with traditional culture provides legitimacy to practise Georgian culture without accusations of misinterpreting and corrupting it. This is important in the context of bricolage too. While adaptation and mixing elements of traditional Georgian culture with globalisation trends, it is important to remain in the universally recognised and sanctioned framework of "unique Georgian culture". In the case of the martial arts group, it also provides a more appealing and/or accepting environment for women interested in martial arts. The idea of engaging in traditional activities is more acceptable for families and society than being involved in the ordinary, sport-oriented martial art groups.

Transforming those factors into the conditional/consequential matrix, they can be groups on two levels. On the micro-level, it is the family and circle of close friends and on the macro-level societal norms and values. The influence of micro-level factors of participation in voluntary organisations is often explained using the Durkheimian "normativist perspective" that places emphasis on the norms learned by the individuals through the socialisation of family, friends and other agents of socialisation (Hechter, 1987, cited in Janoski and Wilson, 1995). As for the macro level, societal legitimation of cultural activities practised by this non-formal education provide a platform for practising culture in a different way. Both the dance and martial arts groups provide the possibility to familiarise and engage in cultural activities usually underrepresented in formal educational settings. The curricula of the Georgian formal education institutions are not oriented on practical engagement in cultural activities, while non-formal education settings are primarily oriented on the practice.

Besides similarities, dance and martial arts non-formal education settings are also diverse. The dance group, having a much bigger history is a more mainstream education setting compared to the martial arts group. Being a larger and more well-established organisation, the dance group is also more hierarchical in terms of decision-making. Young people, especially those who are involved in the amateur dance groups have practically no say in terms of organisational development and creating new forms of dances. When it comes to the martial arts group, being a more grassroots and self-organised educational setting, young people are more actively involved in day-to-day decision making and shaping the organisational vision.

Another differential feature of these two settings is a collaboration with other formal and non-formal education institutions. Whilst the martial arts group tries to engage with governmental agencies and expand its activities with schools, for the dance group this is not a major issue. This relates to the groups' different levels of organisational capacity and strength, as the dance academy, an already well-established and known organisation, does not need additional legitimation and support from state organisations to attract new members to join its ranks. As for the martial arts group, this is crucial for future development and survival.

Compared to the martial arts group, the dance company has a more focused approach regarding cultural practices and acquisition of cultural literacy. They are mostly oriented on dance and related subjects, while the martial arts group members have more diverse interests and experience regarding cultural practices. Besides practising martial arts, they also engage in the fields of history, ethnography, and visual arts. Eventually, this manifested in the different levels of cultural literacy and interests. Young people from the dance group have less diversified cultural interests, they understand culture mostly related to the dance, while martial arts group members, due to their more diverse cultural experience, think about culture not only related to the martial arts, but in general with sets of traditions, values, and art.

The research in those non-formal education settings besides answering the core research questions also raised the number of issues and questions for future inquiry. The first thing relates to the idea of self-reported egalitarianism in the case of the martial art group. The literature focusing on the leadership in the martial art groups suggest transactional and transformational leadership approaches varying from clear outlining of the task and monitoring their fulfilment to the inspiration of followers to outperform and go beyond the stated milestones (Rowold, 2006). While the martial arts setting clearly sets in the transformational leadership approach with more freedom of actions[9], still further investigation needs to be done

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[9]If the same approach is applied to the dance group, the leadership style is more leaning to the transactional leadership, with clear instructions and participants' agreement to "complete the assignments in exchange for commensurate material or psychological compensation (e.g., recognition, awards)" (Rowold, 2006).

in order to understand, whether the leadership style is indeed transformational and members are as egalitarian as it is reported.

The recurring theme across all interviews was the diversity of members of both non-formal education settings. Often this diversity was contracting with the uniformity of other young people outside their friends' and peers circle. This raises two questions regarding future research: how diverse is this self-reported heterogeneity in reality? And what is the reason for contrasting diversity of inner circle to other groups? While reporting diversity in terms of ideological spectrum, values, interests or tastes, in reality, the majority of young people share the same characteristics – moderately conservative values in terms of cultural preservation and stress on the importance of unique Georgian identity for ontological security in terms of its interpretation provided by Giddens – legitimised meaning in life and ethical guide (Giddens, 1991). The previous research regarding youth identities in the Georgian context highlighted that there is a clear pattern of how auto- and hetero-stereotypes are formulated based on the in-group/out-group division (Tsuladze, 2011). Membership in the groups is seen as an important factor for constricting the stereotypes (Petkova and Lehtonen, 2005). As the discussed settings represent very bonded groups of young people this can contribute to perceptions of being different compared to other groups.

Knowledge about the culture, both Georgian and European countries, is another dimension of the findings that needs additional investigation. Both formal and non-formal education settings in Georgia manifest that their goal is transferring knowledge about the culture to young generations of people however, interviews suggest that factual knowledge is somewhat superficial and one-dimensional. While understanding of the Georgian culture was discussed already in this chapter, knowledge about Europe is characterised with the idea that European culture is a set of universally shared values and believes. In most of the cases, a few can distinguish between different cultures and traditions of Europe.

The findings of research of the non-formal education settings has many implications for wider academic fields. Firstly, in the Georgian context it highlights the importance of further investigation of the non-formal education settings and their influence on cultural acquisition of young people. In terms of the culture, there are a few attempts that tried to explore this topic in detail. Another important consideration relates to focusing more on the groups that engage in cultural activities related to traditional culture. The studies in the context of Georgian youth are concentrated mostly on the subcultures and groups that represent countercultures. Given that fact, practise of traditional culture in the Georgian context is under-researched. Considering this circumstance, youth studies in Georgia are mostly oriented on the urban environment and urban settings for cultural participation. Future studies should be oriented on

the investigation of how youth in rural areas familiarise themselves with culture, what challenges and constraints exist in relation to their cultural participation and how does this differ from urban youth culture.

6. Conclusion

The research of the Georgian non-formal education settings provided information about how young people and practitioners are engaged in the production of various forms of cultural knowledge and practises. The major topic related to cultural reproduction and the transfer was simultaneous preservation and modernisation of traditional Georgian culture. This idea is set in the context of bricolage techniques of creating new cultural practices and interpretations of culture by taking bits from local and global cultural elements. The important caveat in this context is that the traditional, overwhelmingly ethnic Georgian elements are the keystone in this process, while elements acquired from another cultural context only serve as an additional ingredient for the new forms of cultural practices.

The idea of culture for young people is fixed, in terms of the framework of universally accepted values, ethical rules, and understanding of history. It can be modified but it cannot be altered in drastic ways. This idea is particularly interesting, as many aspects and traditions of Georgian culture discussed with young people in the context of non-formal education settings are mostly recent innovations or creations. Besides similarities, the settings discussed differ in terms of their interests and complexity for their activities. The dance group had a more narrow focus regarding the specific dimension of Georgian culture, especially when it comes to the amateur dance classes. The martial arts group has a more holistic approach to the production of cultural practices. This manifests in their efforts to engage with other elements of Georgian culture.

Self-reported engagement in cultural practices outside the non-formal education settings is limited for the most part. The lack of both free time and diversity of the offered cultural events was mentioned as reasons for relatively low levels of participation. However, it is important to note that cultural participation by young people is identified predominantly with established, classical or high culture activities, like going to museums, theatres or art exhibitions. This type of interpretation of cultural activities should be considered when clustering cases for cross-case analysis. The dichotomy of culturally diverse and well-educated members of educational settings and close friends versus others, who are not interested in culture and do not engage in any cultural activities is another important pattern for clustering. Non-formal educational settings provide the possibility to practise culture in ways that are not covered or envisaged by formal education. The formal education institutions are oriented on the theoretical and passive

transfer of culture, while discussed non-formal educational settings attracted young people with the possibility to experience and practise the culture. Nevertheless, young people and practitioners, for the most part from martial arts group, claim that state agencies and stakeholders that are responsible for cultural policy usually do not engage or collaborate strategically with non-formal education settings. Future research and policy documents should focus on the inclusion of non-formal education settings when formulating policy documents regarding youth and youth inclusion in cultural activities, facilitating the cultural acquisition of young people.

7. References

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8. Appendices

8.1. Appendix 1: Table sociodemographic data young people

#	Pseudonym	Group	Gender	Age	Experience in this field in years	Experience in this group in years	Location of school respondent went	Occupation	Languages spoken	Languages spoken at home	Religion	Citizenship
1	Sopo	Dance group	Female	21	1	1	Capital	Student of psychology	Georgian, English, German, Russian	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian
2	Nana	Dance group	Female	20	9	1	Semi-urban area	Choreography	Georgian, Russian	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian
3	Archili	Dance group	Male	21	11	5	Capital	Student of International Relations	Georgian, English, German, Russian	Georgian	Christianity	Georgian
4	Shota	Dance group	Male	20	16	6	Capital	Student of Transport management	Georgian, English, German	Georgian	Christianity	Georgian
5	Toma	Dance group	Male	20	14	4	Capital	Computer Scientist	Georgian, English, Russian	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian
6	Lika	Dance group	Female	20	12	1	Capital	Student of Mechanical engineering	Georgian, English, Hebrew	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian-Israeli
7	Leila	Dance group	Female	20	12	2	Capital	Student of psychology	Georgian, English, Russian	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian
8	Gvantsa	Dance group	Female	22	5	1	Capital	Business administration	Georgian, English, Svan	Georgian, Svan	Orthodox	Georgian
9	Kristina	Dance group	Female	22	18	1	Capital	Student of Public Administration	Georgian, English, Russian	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian

#	Pseudonym	Group	Gender	Age	Experience in this field in years	Experience in this group in years	Location of school respondent went	Occupation	Languages spoken	Languages spoken at home	Religion	Citizenship
10	Dato	Martial arts group	Male	23	9	9	Capital	Fitness trainer	Georgian, Russian, English	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian
11	Gia	Martial arts group	Male	19	6	6	Capital	Musician	Georgian, Russian, English	Russian	Orthodox	Georgian
12	Nika	Martial arts group	Male	19	7	7	Capital	Student of psychology	Georgian, Russian, English	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian
13	Eto	Martial arts group	Female	20	3	3	Capital	Student of political sciences	Georgian, Russian, English, Japanese	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian
14	Lazare	Martial arts group	Male	22	9	9	Capital	Student of law	Georgian, Russian, English	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian
15	Elene	Martial arts group	Female	25	6	6	Capital	Teacher	Georgian, Russian, English	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian
16	Keti	Martial arts group	Female	25	3	3	Semi-urban area	Orientalist	Georgian, Turkish, English	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian
17	Lasha	Martial arts group	Male	22	6	6	Semi-urban area	Car repair specialist	Georgian	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian
18	Sandro	Martial arts group	Male	14	3	3	Semi-urban area	School pupil	Georgian, English	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian

8.2. Appendix 2: Table sociodemographic data practitioners

#	Pseudonym	Group	Gender	Age	Experience in this field in years	Experience in this group in years	Location of school respondent went	Occupation	Languages spoken	Languages spoken at home	Religion	Citizenship
1	Nino	Dance group	Female									
2	Soso	Dance group	Male	29	24	5	Capital	Dancer, actor, choreography	Georgian, English, Russian, Megrelian	Georgian, Megrelian	Orthodox	Georgian
3	Tengo	Martial arts group	Male	36	20	20	Capital	Engineer	Georgian	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian
4	Makhare	Martial arts group	Male	31	12	12	Capital	IT specialist	Georgian, Russian, English	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian
5	Gogi	Martial arts group	Male	32	9	9	Semi-urban area	Marketing specialist	Georgian, English,	Georgian	Orthodox	Georgian