Citizenship and Contested Statehood: A Comparative Analysis of Aspirant States in the Former Soviet Space

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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August 2023

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to those who supported me throughout the process of my PhD research. Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr Gëzim Visoka & Prof. Donnacha Ó Beacháin for their guidance, support, and mentorship throughout the last four years. This achievement would not have been possible without your guidance, encouragement, and belief in me. I am deeply grateful for the countless hours you dedicated to mentoring me, pushing me to excel, and helping me navigate the challenges inherent in this academic endeavour. I am also thankful to the School of Law and Government and the Irish Research Council for providing me with the necessary funding, resources, and facilities to conduct my research. The funding has facilitated my access to essential research materials, conferences, and workshops; without it this PhD journey may not have started. I am also grateful to all my research participants who were kind enough to share their experiences with me. I am humbled to have been able to co-produce knowledge together with my research participants from Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria. I would also like to acknowledge the countless individuals within the research community who have shared their insights, engaged in intellectual discussions, and provided valuable feedback during this research. Lastly, I am thankful for the support from my family and friends, as well as colleagues at Leiden University. Your encouragement and belief in my abilities have been a source of strength and motivation. Your support, patience, and understanding during the highs and lows of this challenging journey have been instrumental in my perseverance and ultimate success.

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Key Acronyms/Terms

AO – Autonomous Oblast
ASSR – Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
CQI – Citizenship Quality Index
DPR – Donetsk People's Republic
IIFFMCG – Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia (Tagliavini Report)
LPR – Luhansk People's Republic
MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PMR – Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (Transnistria)
QNI – Quality of Nationality Index
RA – Republic of Abkhazia
ROC – Republic of China (Taiwan)
RSO – Republic of South Ossetia - Alania
SARD – Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara)
SFSR – Socialist Federative Soviet Republic
SSR – Soviet Socialist Republic
TRNC – Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
UNGA – United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USSR – Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Grazdanstvo – Citizenship/Nationality (legal status)

Natsional'nost'– Ethnicity

Propiska – Local domicile registration (in the Soviet Union), but the term continues to be used colloquially.

Zagran passport – Travel document issued for international travel. It should not be confused with the *vnutrenniy* (internal) passport, a mandatory ID document issued for domestic purposes and valid for international travel in limited instances.

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Abstract

Citizenship is a source of (legal) identity that provides access to resources, rights, and recognition. However, the contested nature of aspirant states leads to their citizens being subject to multiple (conflicting) citizenship regimes. This thesis sheds light on the complex relationship between contested statehood, citizenship regimes, and the politics of belonging. Using the lenses of multiplicity and human/state security, the thesis explores and explains how the phenomenon of citizenship has been constructed in three aspirant states in the former Soviet space: Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria. The study employs a comparative case design approach and uses legislation, interviews, and survey data to understand citizenship from the perspective of law, administrative practices, and lived experiences. Furthermore, only by looking at the phenomenon from both the state and individual levels is it possible to explain the legal and socio-political implications of overlapping citizenship regimes.

The thesis finds that the contested nature of aspirant states requires their citizens to navigate between the citizenship regimes of the aspirant, patron, base, and third states. Experiences of citizenship change depending on physical location, determinations by different states as to what legal status(es) an individual holds, and legislative and political changes. While legal status, rights, and identity are often interconnected, multiplicity of legal statuses does not always translate to a multiplicity of rights or identities. Further, citizenship regimes and constellations can become hierarchical due to their diverse levels of functionality. Meanwhile, from the state level, citizenship is used as a state- and nation-building tool to enhance ethnodemographic security by excluding undesired groups and including desired ones. Lastly, the thesis emphasises the normalisation discourse among (citizens of) aspirant states regarding their citizenship and security. This discourse evidences a broader pattern among aspirant states, highlighting that their state- and nation-building projects are not so different from recognised states. The main contribution of this thesis lies in expanding theoretical and emperical knowledge on citizenship in aspirant states and challenging the dominant practice of adopting IR, legal, and political science approaches and studying contested territories from the state level. Only by keeping the individual at the centre of study is it possible to understand and address human rights and human security issues they face.

Note on Spelling, Terminology, and Transliteration

Working on this research has compelled me to use language that is contested and has multiple meanings. The English spelling of proper nouns used in the three regions may differ. For example, the capital city of Abkhazia is spelt *Sukhum* by Abkhazian authorities and *Sukhumi* by Georgian authorities. Alternatively, parties to the conflict may use different terms to refer to the same thing, such as the dominant language in Moldova being called Romanian, while the same language is called Moldovan by Transnistrian authorities. Similarly, the endonyms preferred by the authorities in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria differ from what is used by other actors. In Transnistria, officials prefer to use *Pridnestrovie* when referring to their republic since they associate Transnistria with the toponym used during the Nazi occupation of the region.[1] In the case of South Ossetia, Tskhinvali Region is the term used by Georgian authorities. Thus, in cases where direct quotations are provided, the spelling/term used by the community or party to the conflict the interlocutor or author represents is used. In other cases, the spelling common in anglophone academic research is generally used (e.g. Transnistria instead of *Pridnestrovie*, South Ossetia instead of Tskhinvali Region).

In this thesis, the demonyms Abkhazian, South Ossetian, and Transnistrian will refer to the citizens of the polities under study. Similarly, they will be used as adjectives referring to the three polities (e.g. Abkhazian citizenship law instead of Abkhaz citizenship law). The demonym used to refer to the titular ethnic group in Abkhazia is Abkhaz, and in South Ossetia is Ossetian. Further, in Russian, two different words are used to refer to ethnic Russians (*Russkiy*) and citizens of the Russian Federation (*Rossiyanin*). However, in English, there is no distinction. This will be clarified where necessary.

Where relevant, transliterations from Russian are used to refer to specific concepts that may not be widespread in English (e.g. *propiska*, *zagran* passport). Interviews were conducted in Russian or English. Interview excerpts and cited texts from Russian sources are presented in English. All translations are my own. Author/institution names are transliterated in in-text citations and bibliography.

[1] Krasnoselsky 2021.

Chapter 1
Introduction

This interdisciplinary thesis investigates the legal and socio-political implications of overlapping citizenship regimes in three post-Soviet aspirant states: Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria. It focuses on the complex interplay between statehood, sovereignty, state recognition, citizenship regimes, and the politics of belonging. The contested nature of aspirant states creates a sense of ambiguity surrounding the citizenship status(es) of their residents, and negatively affects their quality of life and security. Meanwhile, aspirant states can respond to security threats by redefining and reproducing their imagined community through citizenship regimes. By examining how citizenship operates across multiple dimensions, namely, legal status, rights and obligations, identity, and politics of belonging, this research highlights the challenges faced by aspirant state citizens who are entangled in multiple citizenship regimes. Consequently, the thesis uses the lenses of multiplicity and human/state security to shed light on the phenomenon of citizenship in these contested territories.

During the 20th Century, decolonisation and the fall of communism led to the emergence of new states, including Cyprus, Georgia, Nigeria, Serbia, and Sri Lanka. However, despite meeting the (Montevideo) criteria for statehood, not all polities that aspired to achieve statehood succeeded in joining the club of sovereign states and becoming UN members. Some secessionist polities like Biafra, Chechnya, and Tamil Elam failed to garner widespread international recognition and eventually were reabsorbed by the base state.[2] Meanwhile, Bangladesh and Eritrea achieved widespread recognition and were admitted to the UN outside the decolonisation process. On the other hand, a handful of secessionist polities (i.e. aspirant states), including Abkhazia, Kosovo, TRNC, and Somaliland, have survived but remained in legal limbo due to their contestation and nonrecognition.[3]

[2] Base state (or parent state) refers to the state from which the aspirant state has declared independence but is continued to be claimed by.

[3] Comai 2018b; Florea 2017.
Reflecting this permanence, research on aspirant states has increased dramatically over the last two decades. The major areas of research focus on the issue of state recognition and its impacts (Caspersen 2012; Ker-Lindsay 2015; Visoka et al. 2020), with nonrecognition resulting in aspirant states having limited opportunities to engage internationally, ranging from economic relations to sports (See Coppieters 2019a; Düerkop & Ganohariti 2021; Ganohariti & Dijxhoorn 2020; Riegl 2014). Research has also gone beyond (non)recognition, and has also studied domestic politics, local legal systems, and the lived experiences of individuals (See Caspersen 2008; Hopman et al. 2018; Knott 2015a; 2015b; Ó Beacháin 2015; Ó Beacháin et al. 2016; Tolstykh et al. 2018; Waters 2006).

In their attempt to display state sovereignty and fill the legal vacuum left following secession, aspirant states engage in lawmaking and the production of legal identity documents.[4] While these secessionist polities may have internal legitimacy and sovereignty, they remain politically contested and lack external legitimacy and sovereignty.[5] This means that the majority, if not all, of their legal regimes, including those on citizenship, have limited international recognition. If these polities are unrecognised, legally speaking, can they confer nationality? If so, how do aspirant states decide who their citizens are? If not, which state are they citizens of, or are they stateless? Furthermore, other extra-legal questions also emerge. Such as what documents they use to travel abroad? What other rights and obligations are affected by nonrecognition? How do these individuals feel about having citizenship of a contested state?

The limited research on citizenship in aspirant states has largely taken a doctrinal and a state-centric approach to identify to which legal regime an aspirant state's citizen belongs.[6] In most cases, analysis has been conducted from the perspective and role of external actors, such as focusing on Russia's passportization policy.[7] Depending on the position of external actors towards the (non)recognition of the aspirant state, the citizens may be regarded as stateless, nationals of the base state or as nationals of the aspirant state. Furthermore, given the limited recognition of the citizenship, individuals take steps to acquire a recognised (UN member state's) citizenship. However, external actors may also contest the second citizenship (as with their Russian citizenship). This illustrates how aspirant state citizens can concurrently have multiple (and competing) legal statuses, resulting in a type of liminal citizenship.[8] However, such arguments are based on the predominantly legal position of external actors and seldom explore the positions of the aspirant states and their citizens.

When looking at the phenomenon of citizenship from the local perspective, different positions emerge. When asked what the consequences of (non)recognition on the citizens of aspirant states are, and whether it meant that under International Law, their citizenship "did not exist", one Abkhazian said that "while it may be such that from the external perspective, we are treated as stateless… if we talk about citizenship, this is the relationship

[4] Klem et al. 2021; Navaro-Yashin 2007; Waters 2006.
[5] Berg & Kuusk 2010; Krasner 1999.
[6] Atcho 2018; Ganohariti 2020a; A. Grossman 2001; Krasniqi 2018.
[7] Artman 2013; Burkhardt et al. 2022; Ganohariti 2021b; Littlefield 2009; Nagashima 2019.
[8] Krasniqi 2019.

of the state with an individual. Here in Abkhazia, one cannot say that there is no citizenship... citizenship is not my relationship with the outside world."[9] Another interlocutor said that "no matter how someone looks at [Pridnestrovie] or evaluates the legitimacy, we live in a legitimate state. We go for elections, we have our president, our government, our money, our legislation."[10]

This thesis places the aspirant states and their citizens at the centre of attention, thus adding to the existing literature on *de facto* states and citizenship studies by examining citizenship from the state (macro) and individual levels, as well as from the perspective of law, administrative practices, and lived experiences. This thesis demonstrates the importance of going beyond doctrinal analysis and studying citizenship from all its dimensions: legal status, rights and obligations, identity, and politics of belonging, to holistically understand how the phenomenon of citizenship in post-Soviet aspirant states is constructed.

This thesis answers the following questions to understand how citizenship and contested statehood interact. What are the legal statuses of individuals living in aspirant states? How does contested citizenship affect the rights and obligations of individuals living in aspirant states? What is the functionality of the aspirant state citizenship? How do these citizens frame and experience their contested citizenship(s)? How do aspirant states define their citizenry and utilise citizenship regimes in the state- and nation-building process?

Core Argument

The contested nature of aspirant states results in the entanglement of multiple legal, political, territorial, and social orders, which affects individual (human) and state security. The contestation also affects citizenship, a multi-dimensional concept consisting of four dimensions; citizenship as a legal status, citizenship as rights and obligations, citizenship as identity, and citizenship as politics of belonging.[11]

To holistically understand the phenomenon of citizenship in territories under contested sovereignty, it must be studied from the perspectives of law, administrative practices, and lived experiences. Ultimately, only by looking at the phenomenon from both the macro/state

[9] RA Exp№12.
[10] PMR Exp№8.
[11] Bloemraad et al. 2008; Howard 2006; Joppke 2007; 2010; Kochenov 2019; Orgad 2017.

level and the individual level is it possible to explain the complexity of citizenship in aspirant states. Thus, the lenses of multiplicity and human/state security are utilised to explain the complexities of citizenship in aspirant states and demonstrate that contested sovereignty and nonrecognition do not affect all dimensions of citizenship equally. This thesis challenges the assumptions that nonrecognition of statehood/sovereignty results in its citizens living in a legal "black hole" and lack citizenship rights or that aspirant states are exceptional spaces. In fact, in certain aspects, aspirant states (and their citizens) behave very much like (citizens of) recognised states.

The contested nature of aspirant states results in their citizens falling under multiple (competing) citizenship regimes, thereby possessing contested legal statuses, and thus facing physical, material, and ontological security challenges. The thesis finds that depending on diachronic changes (such as state recognition and legislative changes), the determination by administrative authorities of different states as to what legal status(es) an individual holds, and the individual's physical location, aspirant state citizens are affected by, and possess, a multiplicity of citizenships, each with different degrees of recognition, functionality, and influence on the lived experiences.

Nonrecognition has significant consequences in determining the legal status of aspirant state citizens, but its impact is not evident in all areas. Nonrecognition of the aspirant state citizenship and associated attributes (e.g. legal identity documents) negatively impact human security. Due to limited recognition of documents issued by aspirant states, citizens are restricted in their mobility rights and other secondary rights, such as accessing foreign education or healthcare. This forces individuals to maintain a compensatory citizenship which can be used to exercise rights abroad. Nonrecognition also impacts the quality of economic, educational, and other social rights within the aspirant state. That said, citizens can freely enter, exit, and abode in the aspirant state, access social services (e.g. pensions, education), and participate in the political system. Thus, at a local level, they can be regarded as full citizens. Therefore the consequences of nonrecognition are felt differently, depending on where the individual is located. If residing within the aspirant states, the effects of nonrecognition are limited as the aspirant state works to ensure the security and well-being of its citizens and constitutionally guarantees their rights. This is despite the nonrecognition of the rights-conferring legal status as a nationality under International Law.

The functionality or quality of the aspirant state citizenship is affected primarily in its

external dimension. Outside the aspirant state, individuals can use their local passports to only travel to states that have granted recognition. Abkhazians and South Ossetians traveling to Russia, Nauru, Nicaragua, Syria, and Venezuela are treated as nationals of a recognised state, but travel to any other recognised state on the local (*zagran*) passport is currently impossible. Meanwhile, Transnistrian passports lack international recognition. As a result, individuals are compelled to acquire a compensatory citizenship from a recognised (UN member) state.[12] However, this compensatory citizenship may also be contested. As in the case of the nonrecognition of Russian passports issued to residents of "occupied territories" by Georgia and its allies, resulting in the *zagran* Russian passport not being a valid travel document to all 193 UN member states. Concurrently, the continued claim over the territory of the aspirant state by the base state can result in the individuals being forcefully ascribed the citizenship of the claimant state, even if this citizenship does not bring forth any rights. The above demonstrates that possessing or being ascribed multiple citizenships does not mean that individuals can enjoy all the rights associated with each citizenship, and (non)recognition of the legal statuses of an individual and the enjoyment of associated rights need not correlate.

It is important to move away from a doctrinal (black letter law) position which maintains that aspirant state nationality does not exist because the aspirant state is not a state. International Law on nationality has limited utility in explaining the lived realities of aspirant state citizens. Given that aspirant state citizenship confers rights and obligations on par with those conferred by recognised states, international recognition of the aspirant state and its attributes (e.g. passport) should not be seen as constitutive for establishing a nationality (which is currently the case under International Law).

Meanwhile, from the macro/state level, aspirant states use citizenship as part of the legal toolbox that states can use to control populations.[13] The aspirant state's wish for physical and ontological security extends beyond external threats (e.g. intervention by the base state). Aspirant states are equally anxious about domestic threats, such as changes to their ethnodemographic balance. [14] Aspirant states, via citizenship regimes, engage in demographic engineering of the body politic through the securitisation and exclusion of undesired groups (e.g. minorities) and the instrumentalisation and inclusion of desired

[12] Identity-related reasons for citizenship acquisition are of secondary importance.
[13] Bloemraad et al. 2008; Ignatieff 1987; Kochenov 2019; Stiks 2015; Vink 2017.
[14] O'Loughlin et al. 2011.

groups (e.g. diaspora). This thesis argues that historical trajectories, the nation-building model, demographics, diaspora politics, the level of dependence on the patron state (and its citizenship),[15] and contestation with the base state affect citizenship regime construction.

Lastly, discourse among aspirant state citizens, and empirical evidence on how aspirant states deal with issues surrounding citizenship provides evidence of how similar these aspirant states are to recognised states. The study finds that the way aspirant state citizens discuss and solve the issue of the limited functionality of their local citizenship and strengthen their human security is akin to that of citizens of recognised states with weak nationalities. When studying (citizenship in) aspirant states, it is important to go beyond nonrecognition as a core defining feature and consider other conditions that influence their development, and they should be compared with and studied alongside recognised states.

Researching Citizenship in Aspirant States

For three decades, extensive analysis has been conducted on aspirant states. However, there has been limited research on citizenship and belonging in aspirant states. Given that this thesis focuses on questions of statehood, sovereignty, and self-determination, it is natural to start by studying citizenship/nationality laws affecting the aspirant state. However, this approach paints only a partial picture, and it is equally important to understand the impact of these (contested) citizenship regimes on the rights, obligations, and identity of their citizens. The state and the citizens do not exist in different spheres; rather, they co-construct the meaning of citizenship and define the politics of belonging. Thus, the thesis also explores how the state and its citizens' experiences and understanding of history, the nation, and the desire for security shape the construction of citizenship regimes. Thus, looking from the top-down and bottom-up to understand the phenomenon of citizenship is of utmost importance.

Given the complexity of this research, it adopts an abductive and constructivist-interpretivist understanding of research and knowledge production. Abductive research allows the researcher to move between theories and data, and between analysis and data gathering. The constant comparison allows for the continuous (re)development and analysis of empirical

[15] Patron state refers to a recognised (UN-member) state that chooses to support an aspirant state based on ethnocultural links and/or geo-political interests through economic, military, and diplomatic assistance (Caspersen 2012: 54–59).

data against existing knowledge on statehood, sovereignty, state recognition, citizenship regimes, and the politics of belonging to generate novel insights that explain the phenomenon of citizenship in aspirant states. The constructivist-interpretivist approach further assists in this process, as it takes into account that reality is continuously co-constructed, negotiated, and interpreted by state actors and individuals, including the researcher, through social interactions with the world around them.[16] This approach acknowledges that there can be multiple perspectives on the same issue. It acknowledges that citizenship is a social construct which aims to produce an imagined community.[17] Legislation reflects a specific social (legal) reality and understanding of belonging. Concurrently, this approach acknowledges that the position of the state and its policies may be interpreted differently by individuals affected by them, and thus, different groups will frame their experiences differently based on their positionality and relationship with the different citizenship regimes that they belong to. Thus, this thesis is designed to ensure that citizenship in aspirant states is studied consistently from multiple perspectives.

Further, this thesis argues for a comparative case study approach (based on a Most Similar Systems Design). This approach gives rise to an extensive dialogue between the researcher's ideas (informed by theory) and empirical data,[18] thus fitting the abductive and constructivist-interpretivist approach. While pragmatically, the comparative case study approach is often the option when there is a small population, more importantly, it allows for an in-depth and multi-dimensional analysis of a complex phenomenon such as citizenship. The region under study currently has four aspirant states that possess a common Soviet heritage, lack UN membership, and are assisted by a patron state. Despite the similarities, the citizenship regimes of the post-Soviet aspirant states are not uniform.[19] By choosing Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria (instead of Artsakh), it is possible to account for the same patron state (Russia), the impact of state (non)recognition (diachronically and between cases), and the effects of having different base states (Georgia for Abkhazia and South Ossetia vs Moldova for Transnistria).

As this thesis aims to understand the relationship between contested statehood and the phenomenon of citizenship from the perspectives of law, administrative practices, and lived experiences, a mixed-methods approach is adopted. The research begins its exploration at

[16] Schwandt 1994; Stake 1995.
[17] B. Anderson 2006.
[18] Ragin 2014.
[19] Ganohariti 2020a; Krasniqi 2018.

the macro/state level and studies citizenship regimes of the aspirant, base, and patron states, as well as international legal doctrine on nationality, to produce a Citizenship Constellation Model and measure the degree of inclusiveness/exclusiveness of each citizenship regime. To gather information on the administrative practices and lived experiences of the citizens of aspirant states (individual level), virtual fieldwork (on account of the COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine) was conducted. As part of this, semi-structured online interviews with experts (government officials, legal experts, academics) and citizens with Abkhazian, South Ossetian, and Transnistrian citizenship were conducted. Concurrently, a semi-structured survey was distributed via social media to elicit aspirant state citizens' experiences of being subject to contested citizenship. By triangulating the results from the three main sources, it was possible to gain a holistic understanding of the phenomenon of citizenship in the three post-Soviet aspirant states.

Structure of the Thesis

Following this introduction, the next three chapters explore this study's conceptual and methodological aspects. Thereafter, Chapters 5-7 draw on empirical evidence to discuss the phenomenon of citizenship in the three aspirant states. The last chapter synthesises the findings.

Given that this research falls at the intersection of citizenship studies and *de facto* states studies, Chapter 2 starts by defining the concepts of citizenship and nationality. The section argues for the use of the former due to its broader applicability. The chapter then introduces the four dimensions of citizenship: legal status, rights and obligations, identity, and politics of belonging, around which the empirical chapters are structured. Next, the chapter introduces the concept of the social contract, which can be used to explore the politics of belonging and the resulting security, rights, and obligations for the state and individual. The second part of the literature review discusses the phenomena of sovereignty and statehood and defines the unit of analysis of this thesis: the aspirant state. The chapter ends by discussing the legal doctrine behind citizenship regime formation in newly independent (aspirant) states.

Chapter 3 presents the conceptual model, which argues for the need to use the lens of multiplicity and human/state security to explain the phenomenon of citizenship in aspirant states. From the individual level, a multiplicity of legal statuses, rights and obligations, and

identities can be observed, with each dimension presenting physical, material, and ontological security challenges upon the individual. From the state level, the conceptual model discusses how citizenship regimes can be used for demographic engineering and thereby strengthen the physical and ontological security of the state. Chapter 4 provides reasons for adopting an abductive and comparative case study design approach, as well as the reasons for choosing the three post-Soviet aspirant states. The last section introduces the mixed methods used in this thesis.

The first empirical chapter takes a legal approach and discusses the evolution of the citizenship regimes in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria, along with their base states' position of nonrecognition of these regimes. Thereafter, drawing from international legal doctrine on nationality, the chapter presents the Citizenship Constellation Model, which offers a framework to examine the multiplicity of legal statuses a citizen of an aspirant state possesses. This framework can be used to determine if, and when, aspirant state citizens are considered stateless, nationals of the aspirant state, citizens of the base state, citizens of another recognised state, or dual nationals.

Chapter 6 adopts a law in context approach to understand the socio-political implications of having multiple legal statuses on rights, obligations, and identity. The chapter adopts a bottom-up approach to explore how citizens respond to the restricted functionality of local citizenship and how they develop their citizenship identity. This chapter argues that while nonrecognition has significant consequences in determining the legal status of aspirant state citizens, its impact on human security is more nuanced. Nonrecognition of citizenship affects the functionality of citizenship since the aspirant state is restricted in its ability to provide and guarantee the rights and security afforded by citizenship.[20] The functionality of citizenship is particularly restricted in its external dimension as the citizens are hindered in exercising their rights outside the aspirant state. The impact of nonrecognition is less critical and more subtle in its effects within the aspirant state. The limited external functionality of aspirant state citizenship pushes individuals to acquire compensatory citizenship. This entanglement of citizenship regimes results in the compounding of rights, and individuals draw from multiple citizenships to improve their quality of life, depending on where they are located and with which authority (state) they are interacting. The chapter concludes by focusing on the identity dimension of citizenship. It argues that the multiplicity of legal

[20] L. Kingston 2014.

statuses seldom results in a multiplicity of citizenship identities (as in Transnistria). Instead, individuals generally maintain a stronger attachment to their local citizenship (as in Abkhazia and South Ossetia).

The last empirical chapter focuses on the politics of belonging and explores the processes and rationales behind citizenship regime formation and how state- and nation-building processes are reflected in citizenship regimes. Several factors affect the citizenship regimes of the post-Soviet aspirant states: historical trajectories; the nation-building model; demographics; diaspora politics; the level of dependence on the patron state (and its citizenship); and the level of contestation with the base state. The chapter pays particular attention to how the desire for ontological and physical security influences aspirant states to securitise/instrumentalise certain groups and adopt citizenship policies, which exclude undesired groups and include desired groups, to ensure ethnodemographic security of the body politic.

Finally, Chapter 8 synthesises the findings and provides four key conclusions. Firstly, to holistically understand the phenomenon of citizenship in aspirant states, it is vital to move away from a doctrinal (black letter law) approach and instead follow a law in context approach by also looking at the functionality, identity, and politics of belonging dimensions of citizenship. Secondly, the chapter emphasises the compensatory and strategic nature of recognised citizenships. How individuals discuss and solve the issue of the limited functionality of citizenship and strengthen their human security is akin to that of citizens of recognised states with weak nationalities. Thirdly, aspirant states are not only anxious about ensuring security from external threats but are also concerned about domestic threats, such as ethnodemographic insecurity. While the securitisation and instrumentalisation of citizenship in aspirant states is influenced by state secession and nonrecognition, the adopted policies mirror those of recognised states. The last finding acknowledges the normalisation discourse among (citizens of) aspirant states and the similarity between aspirant states and recognised states in relation to how they approach citizenship. The chapter concludes by outlining the areas for future empirical and theoretical research.

Chapter 2

Citizenship and Statehood in Aspirant States

This interdisciplinary chapter joins two areas that have been seldomly analysed in tandem, namely citizenship and contested statehood. The chapter begins by defining and discussing the nuances between the definitions of citizenship and nationality. The primary difference lies in whether or not the terms are used in the context of law. Within law, citizenship is a politico-legal concept that refers to the full membership of an organised political community, with citizens who are members of a state being called nationals. On the other hand, in non-legal fields, nationality refers to the relationship between people who form a community based on ethno-linguistic, religious, historical or cultural ties, while the definition of citizenship is closer to the legal one. Following, the chapter discusses the four dimensions of citizenship: legal status, rights and obligations, identity, and politics of belonging. Thereafter, the chapter highlights the importance of the social contract phenomenon and associated political obligations between the state and individuals in creating a citizenry.

One phenomenon that ruptures the social contract and creates new citizenship regimes is state secession, as was observed in relation to the USSR and Yugoslavia. To understand the consequences of Soviet dissolution on citizenship, the next section of the chapter discusses the core criteria for statehood and how new states form. Focus is given to the consequences of unilateral secession and how contested/aspirant states emerge. Literature disagrees on the criteria for a polity being defined as an aspirant state. Most authors would agree that an aspirant state's main attributes are *de facto* independence and control over territory, an organised political leadership seeking to build state structures, the goal of sovereign statehood, and a lack of international recognition.

The last section of this chapter links citizenship and state secession and discusses the legal practices of determining citizens of a new state. Adoption of citizenship regimes was not limited to the 15 Soviet Republics but also occurred in polities which declared independence but remained unrecognised. The discussion will show that as the stateness/statehood of aspirant states is contested (under International Law), then most, if not all, legal acts, including those on citizenship, lack recognition outside these territories. As a result, this leads to citizens of aspirant states being placed in a precarious condition depending on how the individual is associated with the aspirant state, base state, and patron state. The section

presents the existing gaps in knowledge and concludes that more comparative research based on both the legal and experiential dimensions of aspirant state citizenship is paramount.

Citizenship

Defining Citizenship

Citizenship is a multidimensional and multifaceted concept that can change its definition based on one's analytical or disciplinary background. A further point of contention comes from the synonymous use of citizenship and nationality. The origins and nature of the nation, nationalism, citizenship, and the state remain widely debated in academia. This section draws on the existing literature to contextualise how the concepts of nationality and citizenship will be used. As this thesis is a product of the intersection of political science and law, this section will also delineate how these disciplines discuss citizenship and nationality.

In 1983 Benedict Anderson (2006: 6-7) defined a nation as an "imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign". Rogers Brubaker (1994: 56) defined the nation as an ethnocultural community (which can be independent of political territory). The people of this nation have a common culture, recognise each other's right to membership, acknowledge their obligations to one another, and aspire for some level of political autonomy.[21] The culture of this community can fall between two ideal types. At one end is the primordial community founded on a common language, culture, and traditions. At the other end is the civic nation founded on common rules of conduct, constitutional essentials, and social norms.[22] According to this understanding, in the former case, one automatically gains nationality at birth, and in the latter, a person is taught to become a member of the nation. Henrard (2018: 277) links the communities to the state, and according to her, either the pre-existing (ethnic) nation creates the nation-state, or the pre-existing state creates the (civic) nation (e.g. post-colonial multinational states like India).[23]

[21] Gellner 1983: 53–55; Miller 1997: 266.
[22] Orgad 2017: 345–346.
For further discussion, see Brubaker (1992a: chaps. 1–3).
[23] Habermas (1994: 23) argued that in the contemporary context, states derive their identity from "the praxis of citizens who actively exercise their civil rights" rather than from common ethnic and cultural identity. While he comes to this conclusion from comparing tribal nations to modern states, the ethnocultural dimension continues to play a strong part in state identity construction.

According to mainstream (Western) understanding, the origin of the nation-state system is conventionally dated to the Treaties of Westphalia, following which national consciousness (i.e. nationalism) as membership of a territorially bound community and the notion of state sovereignty developed.[24] Anderson (2006: 7) asserted that to become a nation, sovereignty (i.e. freedom from external subjugation and entitlement to exercise authority) is needed, and the pinnacle of freedom is sovereign statehood. This aspiration was to ideally result in each nation (however defined) being territorially bounded within a sovereign state. The community's cultural and political boundaries had to coincide and create the nation-state. This also resulted in the belief that the "ideal" political structure was the nation-state. However, while in Europe, most states were endogenous products, outside of Europe, many modern states were created as a result of colonial projects that arbitrarily divided the world into spheres of control. Colonialism also imposed European ontologies, including those of statehood, the nation-state, nationality, and citizenship. However, in the soon-to-be sovereign states, the arbitrariness of borders and multinational compositions weakened the viability of the nation-state as a political construct. Even in present-day Europe, increasing inter-state migration has blurred the boundaries between the state and nation.

The persistence of the Westphalian belief in the primacy of the nation-state, where each state represented a specific nation, has resulted in the interchangeable use of citizenship and nationality. However, nationality is about nationness, and citizenship is about stateness, which are related but do not need to be aligned. Nationality is a (cultural) concept that binds people together based on a shared identity between them (i.e. *imagined community*), and citizenship is a political concept that refers to the relationship between people and a self-governing political community attached to a specific territory.[25] Thus, citizenship is seen as full and equal membership of an organized political community,[26] but citizenship can take different forms based on how the community is defined. For example, Stewart (1995) differentiates between state-centred citizenship and democratic citizenship. The former results from a formal legal status, and the latter refers to a shared membership of any political community. Over time, many conceptualisations of citizenship have developed,

[24] See Bauder & Mueller's (2023) comparison of Westphalian and indigenous sovereignty.
[25] Bauböck 2010b; McCrone & Kiely 2000; L. Taylor 2013.
In contrast, Tabachnik's (2019: 267) empirical research shows that separating nationality and citizenship into two exclusive spheres is inappropriate, as there is a constant interaction between the two.
[26] Bauböck 1999; Lund 2016; Marshall 1950: 8.

including semi-citizenship,[27] atypical citizenship,[28] intercitizenship,[29] and multi-level citizenship.[30] The varying use of the concept demonstrates that it does not always have to be linked with a state, but can also be associated with a sub-national or supra-national polity.[31]

Bauböck (1999: 5) defined a polity "as an intergenerational community whose members share in the benefits and the burdens which derive from living under a common political authority" which at minimum claims "to be in the common interest of those who are subjected to it". These polities, which include supranational unions, confederations, states, sub-state autonomous territories, and municipalities, would also have the ability to exercise (some) coercive power over the population living under its territorial control.[32] However, as rightly highlighted by Joppke (2010: 2-4), citizenship predominantly refers to state citizenship, which "trumps all other [associations] through providing elementary security and protection".

The multiple meanings of citizenship have also been reflected in political theory, where four core perspectives (which are ideal types) can be identified. They are liberalism, communitarianism, civic republicanism, and cosmopolitanism. Liberalism encompasses theories that place the self-interested individual at the core, and citizenship exists to protect the individual (including from the citizenship-granting state). Citizenship based on liberalism is utilitarian and is founded on the right to engage in the market society freely.[33] The citizen does not lose anything if they choose not to participate in the state system and is not expected to participate, by virtue of being a citizen.[34]

In contrast, communitarianism follows an egalitarian understanding of society, rejects individualism, and stresses the importance of cultural identity, and participating in a community is at the core of citizenship.[35] In turn, individual identity is affected by the multiple loyalties and obligations placed upon the individual by the communities to which they belong to.[36] Civic republicanism takes the middle path and argues for balancing

[27] E. F. Cohen 2009a.
[28] Naujoks 2020.
[29] Kochenov 2018.
[30] Schlenker & Blatter 2013.
[31] Blank 2007; Bosniak 2000.
[32] Bauböck 2019a.
[33] Delanty 2000: 13.
[34] Isin & Wood 1999: 7.
[35] Delanty 2000: 28.
[36] Isin & Wood 1999: 8.

between individual freedom and promotion of the common good and distinguishes citizenship in terms of political and civic rights. Participation in the public domain is vital, and commitment toward public interests over identity/loyalty is emphasised.[37] According to Bauböck (1999: 7), civic republicans understand citizenship as "a common bond that must be strong in order to unite members of a liberal democracy who are thoroughly divided by their private interests". While the three types of citizenship mentioned above focus on the state as the citizenship granting authority, cosmopolitanism envisages seeing citizenship as belonging to a global community where all human beings are members.[38]

Regardless of the theoretical perspective, broadly speaking, citizenship refers to full and equal membership of a polity. However, while an individual can gain membership in different types of polities, the state continues to be the core unit in the international system and thus is at the centre of citizenship studies. Moreover, as this thesis focuses on aspirant states, the state-centred understanding of citizenship will be used over other conceptualisations.

In contrast to the socio-political definition of nationality, Public International Law defines nationality "as a specific relationship between individual and State conferring mutual rights and duties"[39] or as a "legal bond between a person and a State and does not indicate the person's ethnic origin".[40] Nationality is seen as a thin concept referring to only a legal status - used to determine who belongs to what state and includes a few core rights such as the right to diplomatic protection, and the right to enter/exit the state of nationality.[41] Nationality is almost exclusively used when referring to the status that creates a link between an individual and International Law, with a state having the right to grant protection to its nationals from other states.[42] Thus, the above definition does not allow polities that lack statehood to confer nationality.[43]

[37] Delanty 2000: 31.
[38] Linklater 1999.
[39] Weis 1956: 31.
[40] Council of Europe 1997b, Art. 2.
In the past when a nomadic way of life was the norm, bloodlines were the sole criterion for inclusion and allegiance. However, with the development of sedentary populations and the territorial state, nationality transformed from belonging to a tribe (via bloodline) to a legal status "that is subject to the sovereign power of a specific state, with a cultural—and therefore developing—connotation, replacing the former natural connotation" (Hirsch Ballin 2017: 249–250).
[41] O'Leary as cited in Boll 2007: 70; Ebright 2017; Hailbronner 2006: 71–81; Weis 1956: chap. 3.
[42] Kovács 2018: 7; Romay 2018: 181; Weis 1956: 60.
[43] Atcho 2018; A. Grossman 2001.

Weis (1956: 5) argued that the nationality and citizenship terms emphasise the notion of "state membership", with the former stressing the international aspect and the latter the national/municipal aspect. However, in its current usage, citizenship has expanded to refer to full membership of any politico-legal community (state, sub-state, supra-state) and encompasses additional dimensions of membership, such as political rights.[44] In other words, nationality "evokes associations with a national state that decides on this status by virtue of its 'sovereignty' … Citizenship, on the other hand, expresses the fact that it is the legal status of a citizen of [any] polity", and thus "what the person is a citizen of in the legal sense always needs to be specified".[45]

Historically, this distinction was relevant, as not all nationals had full rights in a state, such as women, minorities or colonial subjects. However, the spread of equal rights norms has converged the two concepts in domestic (municipal) law.[46] This has also led institutions, like the UNHCR and the Council of Europe,[47] and legal scholars to increasingly use the terms interchangeably,[48] with social scientists opting to use citizenship.[49] That said, there remain several groups of non-citizen nationals, such as British Overseas Nationals and those born in American Samoa, who have limited citizenship rights. Furthermore, while a person may be recognised as a national of a state, they may be deprived of certain rights, and thus have a *semi-citizenship*.[50] In other words, nationality *ipso facto* does not grant full-citizenship rights (e.g. minors and incarcerated persons).[51] Lastly, according to Ebright (2017: 888-897), using the two terms interchangeably can contravene the restricted meaning of "right to nationality" as articulated in international legal instruments, *opinion juris*, and state practice.

[44] Henrard 2018: 272; Kovács 2018: 7.
[45] Hirsch Ballin 2014: 71–72.
[46] Boll 2007: 70–75; Ebright 2017.
[47] Council of Europe 1997a; Ebright 2017.
For example, the Council of Europe notes that in European states the two terms carry the same meaning; thus, within the application of the Convention on Nationality they are synonymous.
[48] E.g. Hirsch Ballin 2014; 2017; Kovács 2018; Romay 2018.
Hirsch Ballin (2014: 71) asserts that any attempt to distinguish between nationality and citizenship of a state in a legal sense is pointless unless there is a distinction made in national (municipal) law (e.g. British Nationality Act 1981). Even then, the distinction becomes relevant for International Law only when the "provisions of municipal law concerning nationality amount to an infringement of essential elements of the conception of nationality in international law" (Weis 1956: 7).
[49] E.g. Joppke 2010; Kochenov 2019; Spiro 2011; Vink 2017.
[50] E. F. Cohen 2009a.
[51] Ebright (2017), citing the cases of Chile, Malawi, New Zealand, and Uruguay, where third-country permanent residents have full civil and political rights, also illustrates that access to citizenship via the state (nationality) is not foundational to gaining access to rights associated with citizenship.

Table 1: Summary - Definitions of Citizenship and Nationality.

	Citizenship	**Nationality**
Non-legal Approach	Citizenship refers to a political concept describing the relationship between an individual and a self-governing political community attached to a specific territory. This status grants full and equal membership but does not have to be legally enshrined.	Nationality refers to a cultural concept describing the relationship between people who form a nation based on linguistic, religious, or ethnic ties.
Politico-Legal Approach	Citizenship refers to the legal and full membership (including political rights) of a political community, including that of a state.	Nationality refers to the legal bond between an individual and the state, resulting in jurisdiction over the individual vis-à-vis other states.

The discussion thus far has illustrated that the distinction between citizenship and nationality can get blurry. Further, it is important to be aware that nationality and citizenship (however defined) are social constructs and merely represent a certain social reality and understanding. However, since this thesis focuses on aspirant states, the distinction is vital. Thus, it will use the term citizenship when referring to aspirant states because:

1. Citizenship encompasses the politico-legal membership of not just sovereign and recognised states but also other polities such as supra-national unions, autonomous territories, and aspirant states.
2. The rights associated with citizenship are broader than those associated with nationality.

A further complication in using the term nationality is a linguistic one. In Russian, *natsional'nost'* refers to ethnic belonging (ethnicity), while *grazdanstvo* refers to a person's legal status as a citizen of a state.[52] Thus, the terms nationality and citizenship, as used in English when referring to legal membership of a state, translate to *grazdanstvo*. Meanwhile, in a non-legal sense, nationality (as defined above) does not have a direct translation but phonologically translates to *natsional'nost'*. The term nation (as a political community) can be translated to *narod* (the people)/*natsiya* (the nation). The term *narod* does not need to be based on ethno-cultural understanding of the nation but can be civic in nature, i.e. *demos* (e.g. *Sovetskiy Narod*). *Natsiya* has more of an ethnic connotation, i.e. *ethnos* (e.g. *Russkaya natsiya*).

In this thesis, the term citizenship will be used when referring to the legal membership of a polity (whether it be a state or not). That said, when emphasis needs to be made that citizenship refers exclusively to the "legal bond between a person and a state", the term

[52] GLOBALCIT n.d.; Salenko 2012: 1–3.

nationality is used. Also, to eliminate confusion, this work avoids the use of nationality as a cultural concept. Developing from this, the next section broadens the understanding of citizenship by exploring its four dimensions.

Dimensions of Citizenship

Howard (2006) argues that citizenship is purely a formal legal category (i.e. status) directly associated with a (decreasing) set of rights. This, of course, is a very narrow conception of citizenship. Citizenship is not only about who is included and excluded from a political community, but it is equally important to be aware that citizenship can be understood differently in different communities, and thus can affect subjected individuals differently.

According to Joppke (2010), citizenship has three dimensions (membership status, rights, and identity), and for Kochenov (2019), citizenship comprises status, rights, duties, and politics. Bloemraad et al. (2008) and Bosniak (2000; 2008) conceptualise citizenship along four dimensions: legal status, rights, political participation, and belonging. Delanty (2000: 9) has a similar understanding of citizenship, which comprises a "set of relationships between rights, duties, participation and identity". Despite the different terms, analysis shows that the authors have a similar understanding of citizenship, which this thesis organises in the following four dimensions.

1. *Citizenship as a legal status* is the most fundamental aspect of citizenship and is closely dependent on the *politics of belonging* (discussed in the fourth dimension). States (or other polities) determine who is entitled to membership of the political community and thus bestow the legal status of citizenship or nationality on its members. When individuals possess no nationality, they are regarded as stateless.[53] The state's need for control has been reflected in different ways of inclusion and exclusion. In most cases, citizenship is an involuntary association ascribed at birth (*jus soli* or *jus sanguinis*).[54] In other cases, citizenship is acquired later in life, but only less than 2% of the world's population voluntarily change their citizenship via naturalisation, citizenship by investment, or renunciation.[55]

[53] United Nations 1961.
[54] *Jus sanguinis* is a legal principle where the citizenship of the parent(s) is transferred to the child at birth. *Jus soli* relates to citizenship being granted at birth because of being born on the territory of the citizenship-conferring state.
[55] Kochenov 2019: 2.

Historically, citizenship was a singular, exclusive, and territorially bound status. Dual (or multiple) citizenship was not tolerated, and emigration could result in loss of citizenship (e.g. Soviet Jews who migrated to Israel before July 1991). Increasing migration flows in the era of rapid globalisation have forced states to allow dual citizenship to, on the one hand, better integrate new migrants and, on the other hand, maintain ties with emigrants.[56] Some states have also adopted policies that grant extraterritorial citizenship based on ethnocultural, linguistic, or historical links.[57] From 1993 to 2020, the number of states allowing dual citizenship increased from 48% to 76%.[58] These trends and practices necessitate the study of citizenship constellations, which are structures "in which individuals are simultaneously linked to several [territorial] political entities so that their legal rights and duties are determined not only by one political authority but by several".[59]

2. *Citizenship as rights and obligations* are derived from the citizenship status. These rights and obligations have international and domestic legal consequences.[60] Rights include political rights (e.g. voting, standing for national elections), the right to diplomatic protection, and the right to participate on an equal footing as a legally capable subject.[61] T. H. Marshall (1950) argued that citizenship bestows members civil, political, and social rights. In turn, citizens acquire obligations towards their state, such as conscription (e.g. Russia) or mandatory voting (e.g. Australia). Citizenship obligations can also be linked with Bloemraad et al.'s (2008) and Bosniak's (2000; 2008) third dimension, which highlights the importance of political participation (such as voting, campaigning, and office holding) in governing a people within a territory. There is no agreement on precisely what rights and obligations are directly associated with citizenship. However, the relationship between citizenship and associated rights and obligations has been thinning.[62] Many

[56] Howard 2005; Pogonyi 2011; Sejersen 2008; Spiro 2016; Vink 2017.
[57] Agarin & Karolewski 2015.
[58] Vink et al. 2015 [2020]; 2019.
Spiro (2016) also argues that the right to dual citizenship can be seen as a human right. By conceptualising citizenship as an individual right rather than an identity, exclusive/traditional membership criteria no longer aligns with International Law and liberal democratic norms (Spiro 2011: 694). Conversely, dual citizenship has been securitised and used as a geopolitical tool to increase state sovereignty (Ganohariti 2021b; Pogonyi 2011) or as an extraterritorial minority protection tool (Kolstø 1993; Pogonyi 2017b). Additionally, the global "war on terror" has increasingly securitised dual citizenship, resulting in it becoming a liability for particular categories of dual citizens (Stasiulis & Ross, 2006). Also see Joppke (2016), Kapoor (2018: chap. 3), Spiro (2014), and Van Waas & Jaghai (2018).
[59] Bauböck 2010b: 848.
[60] Sloane 2009: 2.
[61] Hirsch Ballin 2014: 76–77.
[62] Joppke 2010; Kochenov 2019.

states have terminated mandatory conscription, and residency rather than citizenship defines taxation rules (notable exceptions being Eritrea and the US). Also, increasingly fewer (civic and social) rights are directly linked to citizenship.[63] Due to the democratisation and diffusion of international legal norms, non-citizens, including minorities and immigrants, have increasingly enjoyed many rights traditionally associated with nationality.[64] Kochenov (2019: 133) argues that the only absolute citizenship/nationality rights are; the right to be admitted and the right to reside in one's country of citizenship without the threat of being deported. This point was echoed by Weis (1956: 133), who, in addition to the duty of admission, saw that the only element of nationality relevant to International Law is the obligation of the state to grant its nationals protection vis-à-vis other states. While this dimension will likely continue to be decoupled from citizenship, it will remain indispensable to ensuring the full protection of human rights.[65]

Dual citizenship also expands the basket of material benefits and allows individuals with composite identities to maintain legal ties with multiple states.[66] Analysing citizenship acquisition in Europe and the Americas, Harpaz (2019b) observes that due to the inherent inequality of citizenship, citizens of less-developed states possessing the opportunity to gain a citizenship (via long-distance acquisition) from a more developed state will actively take steps to acquire a compensatory citizenship to offset limitations of the primary citizenship.[67] Thus, citizenship can become divorced from identity and instead be acquired for instrumental purposes.[68]

[63] Soysal 1994.
[64] E. F. Cohen 2009a; Henrard 2018; Joppke 2007.
[65] Hirsch Ballin 2014: 82.
This point can be linked to Hannah Arendt's (1973) argument that the right to citizenship is fundamental to enjoying all other rights, thus, citizenship is a *right to have rights*. See DeGooye et al. (2018) for further analysis of this statement by Hannah Arendt.
[66] Pogonyi 2011; Spiro 2017b: 635.
[67] Citizenship, despite the claim of producing equality, is inherently unequal and expands the gulf between developed and developing countries (Kochenov 2019). Harpaz argues that when the quality of the primary citizenship is similar (or better) than the available secondary citizenship individual will be less likely to acquire it (e.g. a German applying for French citizenship).
[68] Harpaz 2019b; Harpaz & Mateos 2019: 844.
Like Harpaz, Leuchter (2014) concluded that Israelis acquiring European citizenship consider their new passport a pragmatic and "technical non-obliging document". A synonym for *compensatory citizenship* is *flexible citizenship*, as coined by Ong (1993: 770–771), which referred to the Chinese diaspora's opportunistic search for citizenship abroad to facilitate the evasion of political and economic costs (of minority entrepreneurs) in Western countries.

3. *Citizenship as identity,* which refers to the "shared beliefs or identity that ties individuals to a political community,"[69] is perhaps the most contentious dimension. Joppke (2010) defines citizenship identity as both the views held by people and the official views propagated by the state on what it means to be a citizen. However, the latter is almost synonymous with the last dimension (*citizenship as politics of belonging*), while the former, refers to the bottom-up construction of identity that may not align with the official policy on belonging and nation-building. Thus, within the context of this thesis, *citizenship as identity* will be taken to mean individual and collective identity or sentiment (sense of belonging) towards their citizenship.

   Generally, if one possesses a legal status, then it will likely influence identity. However, researchers argue that the identity dimension is also being disentangled from citizenship, and the latter is seen as something that solely guarantees mobility rights and aids in improving one's quality of life.[70] Kochenov (2019: 28-32) is adamant that identity and citizenship should be disentangled altogether because a "particular identity in itself is not required" to hold the citizenship of a state. For example, while one may be against the values and policies of Canada and thus not feel Canadian, if one possesses this citizenship, they would be labelled as Canadian by their government. Similarly, while one may feel Canadian, if they do not have the citizenship status, they will never be accepted as legally Canadian by the state. While agreeing with this argument, I have two reservations. Firstly, Kochenov seems to consider that citizenship identity as being exclusive and disregards the role of intersectionality in identity formation.[71] Thus, citizenship would not be the only factor influencing a person's identity. Secondly, and more importantly, he does not seem to consider individuals whose identity is heavily influenced by nationalistic discourse because of which they strongly identify with their state. This leads me to conclude that while a particular identity is not required to be a citizen of a specific state, individual identity nonetheless is influenced by the nationalistic rhetoric and *politics of belonging*, and in turn, individuals can construct the understanding of what it means to be a citizen of that state. Furthermore, it is important to be aware

[69] Joppke 2010: 30.
[70] Harpaz 2019a; Joppke 2007; Kochenov 2019; Leuchter 2014.
[71] Crenshaw 1989.

that just like identity in general, citizenship identity is not static but changes over time.[72]

4. *Citizenship as politics of belonging* denotes the "politics of access to the status and rights of citizenship" aimed at preserving the political community.[73] Citizenship regimes assist in nation-building, a process that involves building an "imagined political community" through the construction of a shared identity through state symbols (i.e. banal nationalism), ideology, and propaganda.[74] Citizenship regimes become part of the legal toolbox that states can use to control populations and exclude undesirable groups.[75] As Brubaker (1992a: chap. 1) argues, citizenship becomes both an instrument and an object of social closure. Citizenship is used to preserve the community (i.e. who belongs) and exclude those who do not belong (both from the territory and community). Ultimately, this last dimension influences and binds the previous three dimensions.

The Social Contract – Security, Rights, and Obligations

The *politics of belonging* dimension can be linked to social contract theory, an area of philosophy which explores the political obligations an individual has towards the state and society they live in, and in turn, the state's obligations towards its citizens. Generally speaking, political obligations involve the commitment (to someone) to (not) act a certain way, and in cases where the commitment is not upheld, the individual may be sanctioned.[76] In the case of state-citizen relations, political obligation involves the citizen's "obligation to uphold the political institutions of one's country".[77] In other words, citizens are obligated to maintain their allegiance and commitment to the state, with the most extreme obligation being the duty to defend the state during armed conflict. Political obligations are relational

[72] The identity dimension can also be linked to the expanding research on citizenship education, which envisages educating individuals on what it means to be a "good citizen" of a particular society and how to participate in it (Banks 2008; Goren & Yemini 2017).
[73] Kochenov 2019: 28.
[74] B. Anderson 2006; Berenskoetter 2014; Kolstø & Blakkisrud 2008.
Meanwhile, state-building refers to "the establishment of the administrative, economic, and military groundwork of functional states" (Kolstø & Blakkisrud 2008). In relation to citizenship, creating a functional bureaucracy to administer citizens, including the distribution of identity documents, forms a part of state-building. Note that while this research disagregates nation-building from state-building, in practice they go hand-in-hand, and the "process of constructing, unifying and solidifying the nation-state [can be referred to] as 'nation'state buidling'" (Penrose & Mole 2008). However, for analytical pusposes, this research uses the former two terms.
[75] Bloemraad et al. 2008; Ignatieff 1987; Kochenov 2019: 3; Stiks 2015; Vink 2017: 266.
[76] Dagger 1977: 90.
[77] Gilbert 2006: 14–15.

and reciprocal. Thus, the state also has certain obligations towards its citizens, such as providing security from external and internal threats, providing social welfare, and ensuring respect for human rights.

While citizenship is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition, being recognised as a citizen of a state is generally understood to be a key condition for human security.[78] Human security, unlike state security, makes the individual the referent object and entails the protection of the individual from severe and widespread threats (freedom from fear).[79] Threats can arise from issues related to economic, food, health, environmental, bodily, social, or political insecurity.[80] Human security also emphasises the need to provide opportunities that enable people to develop and enhance their wellbeing safely and freely (freedom from want). In addition, it must also include freedom from indignity, which refers to the "condition were individuals and groups are assured of the protection of their fundamental rights, allowed to make choices, and take advantages of opportunities in their everyday lives",[81] since human security is based on both objective threats and subjective experiences. Seemingly echoing this, Shani (2017) argues that the traditional understanding of human security as the "freedom from want and freedom from fear" fails to take into account ontological security, which has been defined as the "security not of the body but of the self, the subjective sense of who one is".[82] Given that the feeling of human security is based on subjective experiences, Shani argues for the need to include ontological security of the individual as a contributor to human security.

This thesis echoes the positions of Tajbakhsh and Shani, in that a broader understanding of human security is needed. However, given this thesis's focus on citizenship, it is necessary to analyse the physical and material dimensions of human security separately from the ontological dimension, since they are not always mutually dependent. In relation to the former, when an individual finds that their state and associated citizenship is unable to guarantee their physical and material security, they may strive to improve their *securitability*[83] by voluntarily acquiring a second citizenship that offsets the limitations of

[78] Commission on Human Security 2003: 31.
[79] Tadjbakhsh 2014.
[80] UNDP 1994.
[81] Tadjbakhsh 2014: 44.
[82] Mitzen 2006: 344.
[83] Defined as the "ability to avoid insecure situations and retain a sense of security when such situations do occur, as well as the ability to reestablish one's security and sense of security when these have been compromised" (UNDP 2003: 15).

the primary citizenship.[84] Such acquisitions do not have to occur because of ontological insecurity, as individuals may continue to strongly identify with their primary (state of) citizenship. Concurrently, individuals belonging to a diaspora group, or with historical roots in a particular state, may acquire the citizenship of their kin state based on identity motivations,[85] which can in turn, contribute to ontological security.

Ontological insecurity may also occur as a consequence of a state determining the individual's citizenship, rather than the individual "choosing" their citizenship. In the current international system, where the citizenship of the vast majority of people is ascribed/attributed at birth without their consent, the voluntariness of the resulting social contract can be questioned. Macklin (2015: 223) defined the phenomenon "where a state seeks to stick citizenship on an unwilling recipient or where an individual is stuck with a citizenship she wishes to disavow" as *sticky citizenship*. While *jus soli* and *jus sanguine* are both forms of ascriptive citizenship, they have been accepted as legitimate criteria for conferring citizenship.[86] However, as discussed in this thesis, even these two forms are contested by aspirant states since their citizens may be unwillingly ascribed the citizenship of the base state. Thus, it is important to question whether individuals who are unwillingly ascribed a citizenship should be expected to have obligations towards that state, and how the ascription affects their ontological security. Given that physical/material security and ontological security are not always co-dependent, this thesis investigates the relationship between each of these dimensions and citizenship separately.

Citizens' obligations toward the state can also be differentiated.[87] The interaction between the four citizenship dimensions may produce different categories of citizens within the same polity. For example, while all citizens may be legally equal and have the same rights and obligations, in practice, obligations may become differentiated between different communities. This is the case in Israel, where Israeli Arabs (and Haredi Jews) are exempt, while other communities are required to serve in the forces.[88] Lastly, with the acquisition of multiple citizenships, individuals may enter multiple social contracts, sometimes resulting in contradictory and/or differentiated rights and political obligations (e.g. in many countries, dual citizens cannot stand for election). That said, all citizens have some form of political

[84] Bauböck 2019b; Della Puppa & Sredanovic 2017; Harpaz 2019a.
[85] Knott 2019; Pogonyi 2019.
[86] Brubaker 1992a: 32–33; Spiro 2017a: 177.
[87] Wolff 1995.
[88] Israel Defence Forces n.d..

obligation towards their states, and it is from this broader understanding that the term political obligation will be used.

To formalise the social contract between the individual and the state, states adopt constitutions and establish citizenship regimes that define those entitled to membership of the polity. Vink (2017: 222) defines a citizenship regime as:

> institutionalized systems of formal and informal norms that define access to membership, as well as rights and duties associated with membership, within a polity … citizenship regimes are defined 1) both by membership and rights [and obligations]; 2) by the nexus between these; and 3) by formal and informal norms.

Looking at this definition, we can identify the first two citizenship dimensions previously discussed. As one's citizenship status is dependent on state policy, it is thus a natural starting point to investigate what the state policy is, followed by how this (via rights and obligations) affects its members. State policy can be enforced formally through legislative and administrative acts, or informally through established social norms and administrative practices.[89] Naturally, the latter is more challenging to identify and measure. As a result, most studies focus on comparing legislation (primarily in Europe and North America).[90] Thus, when analysing citizenship regimes, especially atypical to those hitherto conducted, local contexts that can influence citizenship regimes must be accounted for.

Ultimately, citizenship legislation is a tool used to include desirable populations and exclude undesirable groups.[91] Over the last century, citizenship (legislation) has become more inclusive by removing gender, racial, and ethnic barriers and introducing reduction of statelessness policies.[92] By studying citizenship legislation, one can gain insights into the national identity (*politics of belonging*) and structure of the state that enforces it.[93] Vink (2017: 226) argues that since citizenship is an instrument of social closure, most comparative research has been on the inclusiveness-exclusiveness dimension of citizenship legislation. Literature has understood inclusive citizenship as being civic, while exclusive citizenship results from ethnic conceptions of nationhood.[94] In practice, ethnicised citizenship is identified by *jus sanguinis* provisions, and *jus soli* provisions identify civic citizenship. However, Tabachnik (2019) argues that there has been a conflation of two

[89] Chopin 2006; Vink 2017: 223.
[90] E.g. Blatter et al. 2009; Dahlin & Hironaka 2008; de Groot & Vonk 2018; Howard 2006; Koopmans et al. 2012; Vink & Bauböck 2013; Vink & de Groot 2010; Wallbott 2014.
[91] Brubaker 1992a: chap. 1; Stiks 2015.
[92] de Groot & Vonk 2018; Henrard 2018; Joppke 2007; Spiro 2011.
[93] E.g. Habermas 1994; Joppke 2007; Vink & Bauböck 2013.
[94] Ariely 2013; Shevel 2017.

different ideas within the notion of civic nationalism. He argues that *jus soli* citizenship is related to a "territorial collective identity" while civic nationalism is related to the acceptance of liberal-democratic values. Tabachnik adds that liberal-democratic values are a modern concept; ethnic/territorial-based membership is pre-modern. Thus, territorial and ethnic conceptions of nationalism can coexist with modern liberal-democratic values. In other words, "territorial nationalism is the quintessential, dichotomous, opposite of ethnic nationalism... Civic nationalism is also non-ethnic, but it is also liberal and modern" (p. 11).[95]

There has also been a conflation between normative prescriptions of what good citizenship is and the empirical measurement of citizenship.[96] Accordingly, in contrast to ethnic nationalism, citizenship based on civic nationalism is seen as liberal and thus inherently "better" since it is inclusive. However, using such a distinction makes it difficult to establish an objective typology that can be used to analyse citizenship regimes. It does not consider states which follow *jus soli* citizenship but are illiberal (e.g. Azerbaijan) and vice versa (e.g. Georgia). Thus, this thesis follows Tabachnik's advise on disentangling civic from territorial citizenship and uses the ethnic-territorial dichotomy when studying *citizenship as politics of belonging*. Tabachnik also seems to echo Joppke's (2010: 6-20) argument that citizenship by definition is civic since membership goes beyond primordial ties such as family, tribe, kinship or common descent, and thus the term civic citizenship is tautological.[97]

Another critique of the ethnic/civic understanding of citizenship is that the inclusiveness of citizenship regimes has been analysed along a single *jus sanguinis – jus soli* dimension.[98] An outcome of employing a single dimension is the assumption that they are negatively correlated and mutually exclusive.

[95] In civic nationalism, the nation is founded on common beliefs of inclusive and liberal-democratic values (D. J. Smith 2002).
[96] Tabachnik 2019: 16.
[97] Joppke (2010: 19) argues that there is nothing intrinsically ethnic about *jus sanguinis* provisions, but rather it originates in the post-feudal society that empowered individuals who no longer needed to be bound to the authority on whose land they lived (*jus soli*). According to him, *jus sanguinis* provisions should not be seen as ethnic, but as a provision for intergenerational continuity. Meanwhile, some authors have opted to use the hyphenated civic-territorial term to refer to the conception of nationhood that is not ethnic (Joppke 2007; Spiro 2011; Vink 2017; Vink & Bauböck 2013).
[98] Ariely 2013; Arrighi 2019; Brubaker 1992a; Howard 2006; Krasniqi 2012; Shevel 2009; 2017; Wallbott 2014.

Table 2: Citizenship Configurations: A typology.

Ethnocultural inclusion	Territorial inclusion: Weak	Territorial inclusion: Strong
Strong	*Ethnoculturally selective* Intergenerational continuity: strong *ius sanguinis* and difficult renunciation Inclusion through special ties Selective singularity Weak genuine link	*Expansive* Intergenerational continuity: strong *ius sanguinis* and strong *ius soli* Inclusion through residence and special ties Weak singularity Weak genuine link
Weak	*Insular* Intergenerational continuity: weak *ius sanguinis* and weak *ius soli* Restrictive naturalisation Strong singularity Strong genuine link	*Territorially selective* Intergenerational continuity: weak *ius sanguinis* and strong *ius soli* Inclusion through residence Weak singularity Strong genuine link

As illustrated in the above table, Vink and Bauböck (2013: 627-628) proposed an alternative way to understand the relationship between *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* provisions. They argue that rather than seeing "citizenship laws as being characterized as liberal and inclusive versus illiberal and restrictive … citizenship laws [should be] configured along different dimensions of inclusiveness". This configurational approach is especially useful since the state as a territorial unit and the state as a membership unit no longer overlap,[99] such as in situations of state secession. The following section turns its attention to state secession and how it can result in contested statehood and overlapping sovereignty.

Statehood and State Secession

According to the Montevideo Convention, for an entity to acquire international legal personality as a sovereign and independent state, it has to have "a) a permanent population; b) a defined territory; c) [an effective] government;[100] and d) the capacity to enter into

[99] Joppke 2003; Spiro 2011.

[100] Effective government can be defined as the existence of political, executive, and legal structures that are effective in projecting authority and regulating the population, and can be satisfied by meeting the basic criteria of statehood (G. Anderson 2015). However, Anderson goes on to argue that this condition does not need to be strictly satisfied due to the compensatory force principle, "which allows a people's right to external self-determination to predominate over the strict satisfaction of the effective government criterion" (p. 30). If a state has been granted independence by the former sovereign, then it is the right to govern that matters (Crawford 2007: 58). In cases where unilateral secession has not been successful, secessionist polities strive to achieve a high level of effectiveness to demonstrate that they meet the criteria of statehood. Thus, aspirant states argue that they have earned their sovereignty by displaying their viability as effective and democratic polities (Caspersen 2008: 118).

relations with other states".[101] Another related criterion is that a state needs to demonstrate independence or sovereignty, meaning that decision-making and other aspects of governance must be exercised without the interference of other states.[102] One position is that, in addition to these conditions, state recognition is also constitutive of statehood.[103] Increasingly, however, scholars argue that recognition is not a *sine qua non* of statehood but rather is seen as a political act of declaring the recognition of a state, with many international treaties, state practice, and judicial decisions following the declaratory theory of state recognition.[104] Even the Montevideo Convention (Art. 3) states that the "political existence of the state is independent of recognition by other states". Nicholson and Grant (2020: 29-31) argue that the purely constitutive approach to recognition has declined, and instead argue that newer approaches take elements from both declaratory and constitutive theories.

Having provided a basic definition of statehood, further legal and philosophical discussions on the constitutive components of statehood are beyond the scope of this thesis and would not be a fruitful use of space.[105] Thus, the remainder of this section discusses the phenomenon of state secession.

A state is not static; rights (including citizenship rights) and (state) authority are co-produced and continuously negotiated.[106] In cases where an individual or a group disagrees with the state-citizen relationship and attached obligations, they can choose to migrate, declare that they do not accept state membership (e.g. via denaturalisation) or declare their

[101] Pan American Union 1933, Art. 1.
While initially, this Convention was limited to the Americas, over time, these conditions have been accepted as Customary International Law (Humphrey 1963: 138; Jennings & Watts 1992: 120–124; Oppenheim 1912: 108–109).
[102] G. Anderson 2013: 359–360; Crawford 2007: 62–89.
Crawford (2007: 32) defines sovereignty as the "totality of international rights and duties recognised by international law as residing in an independent territorial unit—the State". Sovereignty is an attribute of a state; thus, if a polity is not sovereign, it cannot be a state. However, this definition of sovereignty has been framed in legal and absolute terms. As Berg & Kuusk (2010) argued, sovereignty can also be defined as a relative concept and measured based on the degree of internal and external sovereignty. In a similar light, Krasner (1999) distinguishes between domestic sovereignty, interdependence sovereignty, international legal sovereignty, and Westphalian sovereignty. The first two correspond to internal sovereignty, as used in this thesis, and the latter two correspond to external sovereignty. Also see Barkin & Cronin's (1994) and Kyris's (2022) discussion on the non-static nature of sovereignty and changes in its meaning over time.
[103] Oppenheim 1912: 116; Wendt 1992: 412–415.
[104] G. Anderson 2013: 51–60, 360–367; Crawford 2007: 19–27; Humphrey 1963: 139; Lauterpacht 1944; Raič 2002: 48.
Lauterpacht (1944: 385) identified that recognition is "declaratory of an existing fact", but without it, a polity would not be able to enjoy the rights and obligations associated with full statehood. Thus recognition can also be seen as constitutive of rights flowing out from recognition. Also see Grzybowski (2019), and Visoka et al. (2020).
[105] International Law Association 2018.
[106] Hoffmann & Kirk 2013; Lund 2016.

right to secession.[107] The negotiation of the state-citizen social contract can be observed during times of rupture, such as decolonisation and state disintegration, where "new structural scaffolding is erected", and political belonging (i.e. citizenship) is radically reordered.[108] Consequently, new states can emerge and claim that they have sovereign agency and legitimacy to represent the citizenry and/or nation entitled to self-determination. The Vienna Conventions on state succession define state succession as "the replacement of one State by another in the responsibility for the international relations of territory," and identify five types.[109] These are:

(i) transfer of territory between existing states,
(ii) creation of a new state as a result of state unification,
(iii) creation of a new state as a result of a dependent territory (e.g. colony) gaining independence,
(iv) state separation where a part of an existing state becomes a new state while the predecessor continues to maintain legal personality, and
(v) state dissolution where the predecessor state ceases to exist and, in its place, two or more successor states are formed.[110]

The creation of new states during the process of secession (e.g. USSR, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia) can be recognised as legal under International Law.[111] However, secession, defined as the process of "withdrawal of territory and sovereignty from part of an existing state to create a new state", may not always be consensual nor legal.[112] Legal scholars, such as Crawford (2007: 375), use a narrower definition of secession to denote "the creation of a state by the use or threat of force without the consent of the former sovereign". However, conceptually there is no justification to limit the meaning to that of illegal/unilateral secession.[113] In practice, however, researchers (including myself) working on secessionist polities tend to use the term secession as a short-hand for non-colonial unilateral secession.

Unilateral secessionist claims can either be successful due to the base state recognising the secessionist polity (e.g. Bangladesh, Eritrea), or they can be suppressed and eliminated (e.g.

[107] Beran 1977: 266.
[108] Lund 2016: 1203.
[109] United Nations 1978, Art. 2; 1983.
[110] See discussions by Humphrey (1963: 144–161) and Oppenheim (1912: 121–140).
[111] Russia was recognised as the state continuator of the USSR, continuing to carry the legal personality of the USSR. On the other hand, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia were recognised to have fully dissolved, with the successor states acquiring a new legal personality.
[112] G. Anderson 2013: 346, 386–388.
[113] G. Anderson 2013: 350.

Biafra, Chechnya, Tamil Eelam). The third category, and the focus of this thesis, are secessionist polities that have survived in a state of liminality. The reasons for nonrecognition can be political or legal (due to the violation of the *jus cogens* norms). Examples of polities that were formed in violation of *jus cogens* norms include the establishment of Bantustans in South Africa, Rhodesia under a white minority regime (1965-1979), and the TRNC established after the Turkish invasion in 1974. International Law demonstrates that there is a duty not to recognise the statehood of polities established in violation of *jus cogens* (peremptory) norms such as the illegal use of force or in violation of the right of peoples to self-determination.[114] G. Anderson (2015, pp. 68-98) argues that if a peremptory norm is violated during secession, then statehood can never be achieved because non-violation of peremptory norms is conditional to statehood. However, Crawford (2007: 137) notes that the "use of force by a non-State entity in exercise of a right of self-determination is legally neutral", and in cases where a secessionist entity receives foreign military assistance following an endogenous act of self-determination, there is no legal prohibition against recognition of this new state. Accordingly, what matters is whether the intervening state instigates the process of self-determination or secession.

Furthermore, while it is generally recognised that all peoples have a right to self-determination, this does not mean that all peoples have a right to external self-determination (i.e. secession/independence). External self-determination resulting in statehood is accepted only in cases of human rights abuses *in extremis*, where internal self-determination cannot be achieved, and the base state imposes extreme subjugation and violence on the group.[115] This is known as remedial secession. Hence, secession can only occur, and be recognised, when the threshold (the exact degree is up for debate) of violence and subjugation is surpassed.

Defining the Contested/Aspirant State

In literature, secessionist polities have been given various labels, including phantom states,[116] unrecognised quasi-states,[117] states-within-states,[118] unrecognised states,[119] *de facto*

[114] Crawford 2007: 131–148; International Law Commission 2019; Jennings & Watts 1992: 183–193.
[115] See Seymour 2020.
[116] Byman & King 2012.
[117] Kolstø 2006.
[118] P. Kingston & Spears 2004.
[119] Caspersen 2012; King 2001; Ó Beacháin 2019; Riegl 2014.

states,[120] parastates,[121] and contested states.[122] Most commonly, authors have used the terms *de facto* state and unrecognised state to refer to these secessionist polities.[123] Other terms generally have similar attributes but highlight some attributes over others, thus either expanding or narrowing the number of cases. Having analysed several authors,[124] the *de facto* or unrecognised states can be defined as polities that:

- Have achieved *de facto* independence through effective control and self-government over a significant part of the claimed territory for a continuous period;
- Have organised political leadership that seeks to build state structures to demonstrate legitimacy;
- Aspire to gain full-fledged sovereign-state status, demonstrated via a declaration of independence or other acts (e.g. referendums);
- Have limited international recognition and (thus) lack international legal sovereignty.[125]

Despite the above characteristics, literature disagrees on the above attributes' operationalisation and degree of importance. For example, many definitions have the "goal of independent statehood" as an inherent characteristic. However, it is "difficult to establish a priori whether the polities that ended up as *de facto* states aimed at outright independence".[126] Since actor preferences are not directly observable, it is essential to consider empirical factors over mere aspirations when identifying the universe of cases.[127] For example, the Republic of China (ROC), which has not formally declared independence and continues to claim authority over the whole of China despite only controlling the island of Taiwan, would not fit the above definition.[128]

[120] Caspersen 2009; Florea 2017; Ker-Lindsay 2018; Markedonov 2018; O'Loughlin et al. 2014; Pegg 1998.
[121] Rossi 2020; Rossi & Pinos 2020.
[122] Geldenhuys 2009; Kursani 2021; Morozov 2017.
[123] A Google Scholar search (on 30 April 2023) for the terms resulted in the following results: *de facto* state(s) 15,000, contested state(s) 8850, unrecogni*ed state(s) 2260, parastate(s) 2870, aspirant state(s) 1060, unrecogni*ed quasi-state(s) 415.
[124] Caspersen 2012: 11; Florea 2014: 791–792; Pegg 1998: 26–28; Riegl 2014: 19–22.
[125] International legal sovereignty is achieved when "international institutions providing a final, ratifying, and in many ways sanctifying, approval on the authority, legitimacy, and constitutive legality of sovereignty" (Rossi 2020: 28).
[126] Florea 2019.
[127] This can be done by requiring a declaration of independence as a key definitional criterion or by identifying other empirical characteristics that display desires for independence, such as independence referendums or declarations of state sovereignty. Kosienkowski (2017: 307) even argues that "the goal of independence does not seem to be a necessary attribute of de facto states".
[128] Rich & Dahmer 2020.
Taiwan may be regarded as a case of recognition of governments rather than states (Peterson 2020; Talmon 2001).

Another limitation of the definition is that the threshold for achieving international legal sovereignty is not fixed. The difference in opinion arises from the fact that International Law does not put forth a minimum number of recognitions that must be acquired for a polity to acquire international legal personality. For example, Florea (2014: 792) puts the threshold for recognition at a simple majority of the UN Security Council permanent members and a simple majority of UN members. A higher threshold for demonstrating international legal sovereignty is admission to the UN, and this threshold is less arbitrary and easier to identify.[129] Lastly, the thresholds of territorial control (e.g. 2/3 control over claimed territory for Caspersen) or the need to exist for a minimum period (e.g. two years for Caspersen and Florea or three years for Geldenhuys) are problematic as they are arbitrarily defined.

Shpend Kursani (2021) critiques the maximalist approach, which includes attributes beyond formal recognition. State capabilities, goals, and minimum period of existence should not be constitutive features of the "*de facto* state".[130] Following an ontological approach, Kursani uses the term "contested state" to conceptualise secessionist polities which fulfil the criteria of statehood (Montevideo Criteria), lack UN membership, are contested by another state, and have an independence claim.

Other terms that have been used are "aspirant state", "recognition-seeking state", and "emerging state", all definitions which refer to "state-like polities that possess most of the attributes of modern sovereign statehood, but lack full international recognition".[131] Visoka (2022) argues that using terms such as "quasi-state", "contested state", "*de facto* state", and "unrecognised state" to label recognition-seeking states is derogatory and an act of epistemic misrecognition by Western-centric frameworks. In turn, this has "serious ramifications for the socio-economic and political existence of communities living in these discriminated against and overshadowed societies".[132] Public and academic discourse have labelled

[129] For example, Kosovo is considered a borderline case due to a high degree of international recognition (approximately 100 recognitions in March 2023) and is seen as a *sui generis* case that is incomparable to other *de facto* states (Florea 2014: 793; Visoka 2020: 407–408). Similarly, Palestine can be considered a borderline case because it was designated as a non-member observer state at the UN in 2012 and enjoys approximately 140 recognitions (March 2023) despite having limited effective control over its territory (Alashqar 2020; Qafisheh 2019: 112). Conversely, the SADR has limited control over claimed territory and limited international recognition (approximately 45 recognitions in March 2023) and resembles more of a government-in-exile due to day-to-day tasks being carried out from Refugee camps in Algeria (Berg & Kuusk 2010: 48; Caspersen 2012: 8; Fernández-Molina & Porges 2020).

[130] Grzybowski (2019: 250) echoes this position and argues "*de facto* states are not determined by a particular level of effectiveness – but neither are recognized states".

[131] Visoka 2018: 6.

[132] Visoka 2022: 141.

Using the term "unrecognised state" also creates ambiguity when referring to states with limited recognition.

aspirant states as deviants and geopolitical blackholes,[133] characterised by states of exception,[134] liminality,[135] insecurity,[136] and uncertainty.[137] Instead, aspirant states desire to be seen as normal states and wish for the normalisation[138] of their statehood/status in the international system.

Using terms such as *un*recognised state, *phantom* state, and *quasi*-state have a negative connotation since they highlight the recognition-seeking states' (supposedly) half-completed or liminal character. At the same time, Visoka (2022: 135) does not define what constitutes an aspirant/recognition-seeking state, potentially to avoid carrying our epistemic injustice in the process and thus acknowledges the "pluriverse nature of recognition and diplomatic agency of aspirant states". This thesis, which seeks to first and foremost capture the conceptualisation of citizenship from these polities' perspectives and avoid negatively loaded terminology, will use the term aspirant state. This echoes my findings, where officials from aspirant states critiqued the terms such as "*de facto* state", "unrecognised state", and "partially-recognised state" and did not want to be associated with them.[139]

That said, it is still essential to identify which polities are aspirant states since, depending on the inclusion and exclusion criteria of what constitutes a *de facto*/contested/aspirant state, the total number of cases will differ. There is no consensus on the number of aspirant states, nor is there a one-size-fits-all definition. Some of these aspirant states have unique legal and political conditions that must be considered when analysing them.

Since this research agrees that Kursani's "contested state" is ontologically sound compared to the more ambiguous concept of "*de facto* state", this definition is used to identify whether a polity is a contested/aspirant state or not. As of January 2023, there were ten aspirant states in existence, namely: the Republic of Abkhazia (RA), the Republic of Artsakh (Nagorno-

[133] Blakkisrud & Kolstø 2011; O'Loughlin et al. 2014.
[134] Ramasubramanyam 2016.
[135] Bryant 2014; McConnell 2017.
[136] Grzybowski 2022; Pacher 2019.
[137] Czachor 2015; Friedman 2019.
[138] Normalisation is "the process of imposing, creating, restoring, maintaining, or accepting a specific order of normalcy" (Visoka & Lemay-Hébert 2022: 21). The normal is defined by contrasting it with the abnormal (D. Taylor 2014). Echoing Comai (2018) and O'Loughlin et al. (2014), Visoka highlights the importance of going beyond researching the (non)recognition dimension of these polities and include to local perspectives from aspirant states.
[139] For example, an Abkhazian official argued using the metaphor of pregnancy to describe the Abkhazian status (Taniya 2021). They stated that just like a person cannot be partially pregnant, a state cannot be partially recognised. They considered Abkhazia to be a state with limited international recognition (*gosudarstvo bez shirokogo mezhdunarodnogo priznaniya*).

Karabakh), the Republic of Somaliland, the Republic of South Ossetia-Alania (RSO), the Republic of Kosovo, the State of Palestine, the Republic of China (ROC - Taiwan), the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic (PMR - Transnistria), the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), and the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR - Western Sahara). While Kursani calls these polities contested states, I refer to them as aspirant states since all of them consider themselves to be states, behave like states, and aspire to be recognised by other states.

For aspirant states, state-building and nation-building are essential factors contributing to their sustainability and survival,[140] and creating a citizenry and citizenship regimes are vital for this. The existence of, and the ability to, implement legislation shows the state-building capacity, while the development of a common identity and citizenry displays the nation-building power of a state. Since all aspirant states (possibly besides Taiwan) are a product of some form of state secession (including decolonisation), the following section provides an overview of how citizenship regimes develop following state succession.

Citizenship and State Succession

International legal norms follow the understanding that states have complete jurisdiction in determining who their nationals are, and in general, this should be accepted by other states as long as they are not in violation of *jus cogens* norms, and are consistent with Customary International Law and international conventions.[141] Thus, nationality law is "the last bastion in the citadel of sovereignty", and its design is based on state interests and values.[142] Likewise, secession resulting in *de facto* or *de jure* independence will always lead to the creation of a new citizenry.[143]

A state should possess the political power to determine who can be a national and "the capacity to institute membership, or citizenship, in a body politic, and the power to establish and defend rights… is the essence of public authority; the essence of state".[144] Thus, creating

[140] Kolstø 2006: 729–730; Kolstø & Blakkisrud 2008.
[141] Council of Europe 1997b; League of Nations 1930; Peters 2010; Ziemele 2014: 225.
Even before the 1930 League of Nations Convention on Certain Questions Relating to the Conflict of Nationality Laws the Permanent Court of International Justice ruled that disputes over nationality were no longer a matter of state jurisdiction and obligations also stemmed from international treaties (Advisory Opinion n. 4 - Nationality Decrees Issued by Tunis and Morocco 1923).
[142] Kovács 2018; Romay 2018; Spiro 2011: 746; Ziemele 2014.
[143] Bauböck 2019a.
[144] Lund 2016: 1221.

and defining the boundaries of the citizenry (i.e. nationality), an act that can be carried out only after statehood is achieved,[145] is a core function of newly independent states.

In the 1990s, the question of how to deal with nationality and reduce statelessness in cases of state dissolution came to the forefront. However, there were no international rules or norms on this matter, and a case-by-case approach was taken.[146] Thus, the writing of citizenship laws in post-Soviet states was largely uncoordinated.

The USSR's dissolution is a rich case which illustrates how and why (new) states engage in state-building, nation-building, and inclusive/exclusive citizenship regime construction. The disintegration of the Soviet Union resulted in most Soviet citizens becoming citizens of one of the 15 successor republics. Citizenship became a state-building tool to create a citizenry and thus addressed the stateness problem of newly independent republics.[147] In theory, due to its socialist foundations, the USSR had an anti-nationalist rhetoric, but in practice, it was far from it.[148] Nationhood in the Soviet Union was complex, highly institutionalised, and continuously evolving.[149] The institutionalisation could be observed in the creation of ethno-territorial units (e.g. Union Republics, ASSRs, AOs) in the name of the region's titular group (based on language, religion, culture, or clan affiliation).[150] These territories "presupposed the existence of ethnocultural nations; they were defined as the territories of, and for, independently defined ethnocultural nations".[151] This, along with the Tsarist policies, influenced the formation of a multi-layered Soviet Citizenship.[152] Individuals had Federal (Soviet Union) Citizenship and Republican Citizenship, the latter mainly remaining symbolic until the late 1980s.[153] In tandem, however, internal migration changed the demographics (including Russification) in many territorial units leading them to become multi-national. Nationhood was also instilled via the Soviet internal passport policy, which, along with workbooks (*trudovye knizhki*) and local domicile registration

[145] Crawford 2007: 52.
[146] Costamanga 2013; Ziemele 2014: 222.
[147] Lithuania (November 1989, December 1991), Azerbaijan (June 1990), Georgia (June 1991), Moldova (June 1991), Latvia (October 1991), Ukraine (October 1991), Russia (November 1991), Belarus (December 1991) and Kazakhstan (December 1991) adopted citizenship legislation, and Estonia took steps to define its citizenry before the official dissolution of the USSR in December 1991 (Shevel 2017; UNHCR 1993).
[148] Pogonyi 2017a; Tabachnik 2019.
[149] Brubaker 1992b; 1994; Slezkina 1994.
[150] Slezkina 1994: 427–429.
[151] Brubaker 1994: 71.
[152] See Lohr 2012.
The first Soviet Law on Citizenship was adopted in August 1938 (Supreme Soviet USSR 1945: 37–38).
[153] Salenko 2012: 5–8.

(*propiska*), assisted in making the population legible.[154] The passport was used as a surveillance and policing tool to control migration and labour.[155] Individuals were categorised by ethnic origin (*natsional'nost'*) inherited from one's parent(s), and it was listed under "point №5" of the passport.[156]

The Soviet dissolution "internationalized previously internal migration"[157] and raised the question of how the nation was to be constructed within new state borders. State sovereignty was to be established in terms of territory and the citizenry.[158] While a permanent population is a criterion for statehood,[159] it is not a priori that the whole population is automatically entitled to the citizenship of the newly independent state. In practice, most newly independent states tend to grant their (initial) permanent population citizenship. Despite this general norm, there are numerous cases where part of the population has been intentionally excluded from the citizenry and rendered stateless (e.g. Hill country Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Rohingya, the Bedoon in Kuwait and UAE). In the former Soviet space, citizenship regimes of the 15 successor republics can be divided into three models based on national identity: the new state model, the restored state model, and the compromise model.[160] Most followed the new state model and defined their initial body of citizenry in territorial terms.[161] This, also known as the "zero option" model, allowed all residents with a *propiska* at the time of state formation to acquire citizenship. In legal speak, this method of citizenship acquisition is known as *jus domicile*. On the other hand, the citizenship legislation in Estonia and Latvia had a restorative character since they granted citizenship only to (descendants of) citizens of the inter-war period. This occurred because the Baltic states did not want to extend citizenship to ethnic-Russian residents who had settled after the Soviet occupation. Since most inter-war period citizens were ethnic Estonians and Latvians, restorative citizenship is highly ethnicised. Lastly, the compromise model involved elements from both models (i.e. Lithuania).

In the years after dissolution, four international documents were drafted on this issue: the

[154] Baiburin 2021; Scott 1998.
[155] Garcelon 2002; Shearer 2004.
[156] Baiburin 2021: 157–167.
[157] Brubaker 1992b: 272.
[158] Dzenovska 2021; Pogonyi 2011: 687; 2017a: 11.
[159] Montevideo Convention, 1933.
[160] Brubaker 1992b; Shevel 2009; 2012.
[161] States may also adopt a territorial definition of citizenship to mitigate the threat of local secessionist movements and/or to reconnect with the population of the secessionist territories (Shevel 2009; 2017; Tabachnik 2019: chap. 5). For an application of the three models to the post-Yugoslav states see Stiks (2015).

Venice Commission Declaration, the International Law Commission Draft Articles on Consequences of State Succession for Nationality,[162] the European Convention on Nationality, and the Council of Europe Convention on the Avoidance of Statelessness in Relation to State Succession.[163] In general, these documents emphasise the following:

- Habitual residents having an effective (factual) link[164] to territory affected by succession are to lose the nationality of the predecessor state, and acquire the one of the successor state on the date of succession.[165]
- Predecessor states were expected to withdraw the nationality of individuals in new states after they acquired that citizenship.
- Successor and predecessor states should take steps to prevent statelessness.[166]
- As far as possible, the law should allow for individual choice (right of option)[167] in the selection of nationality via an opt-out clause. However, the will of the person is not absolute (e.g. option should not result in statelessness).
- There is no obligation to allow cases of dual nationality.

Despite the existence of the above legal/normative instruments, their ratification is limited, and thus there is no Customary International Law concerning nationality following state succession.[168] Thus, in cases of state succession, it is crucial to focus on how each new state defines its citizenry.

Similar to the 15 post-Soviet republics, post-Soviet aspirant states also adopted legislation and policies to draw the boundaries of their citizenry. However, as will be discussed in the following chapter, the contested nature of aspirant states results in an entanglement of legal

[162] These ILC recommendations were presented at the General Assembly in 2000 (UNGA 2001) and rediscussed in 2011 (UNGA 2012) but were not adopted.
[163] Council of Europe 1997b; 2006; International Law Commission 1999; Venice Commission 1996. Also see Weis (1956: chap. 11).
[164] This principle is utilised to identify the state with the greatest responsibility over an individual affected by state succession and thus should grant them its nationality (Sironi 2013: 61–63).
[165] Peters (2010), Ziemele (2014), and Romay (2018) argue that territorial change does not result in the automatic change of nationality. As such, "the question was not whether the population loses the nationality of the predecessor state… [rather it] was whether people acquire new nationality *ex lege* or in any other way" (Ziemele 2014: 233).
[166] The 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness obliges state parties to avoid and reduce statelessness. See Blackman (1998).
[167] According to the Badinter Arbitration Committee Opinion 2 (created to address issues arising during the break-up of Yugoslavia), International Law provides minorities in a state undergoing dissolution the right to choose their nationality (Pellet 1992: 184). However, this right in not universally recognised nor is a Customary International Law (Hailbronner 2006: 62; IIFFMCG 2009: 153).
[168] Costamanga 2013: 47–48; Kunigėlytė-Žiūkienė 2015: 185.

systems and an unclear status of individuals living there, resulting in the need to explore this phenomenon.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the nuances between citizenship and nationality. Despite their synonymous use, it argued for the use of citizenship as it is a broader concept, encompassing legal membership of not just recognised states but also other polities such as supra-national unions, autonomous territories, and aspirant states. Further, since under International Law, nationality is something that only sovereign states can grant, citizens of polities which are not states cannot be called nationals. The chapter then discussed citizenship's multidimensional nature, comprising legal status, associated rights and obligations, citizenship identity, and politics of belonging. Thus, all four dimensions should be studied in tandem. Furthermore, due to the increasing overlap of multiple citizenship regimes, citizenship needs to be studied constellationally.

Next, the chapter discussed how state secession amidst contested statehood could result in the creation of aspirant states. However, as these aspirant states are not recognised because of competing sovereignty claims, their residents get entangled in multiple legal regimes. This entanglement also affects citizenship. The following chapter puts forward a conceptual framework that can be used to understand the phenomenon of citizenship in aspirant states.

Chapter 3

Conceptualising Citizenship in Aspirant States

The previous chapter discussed the phenomena of citizenship and statehood. However, there is a lacuna in the study of how citizenship can be understood amidst contested statehood. Therefore, through a comparative case study, this thesis envisages understanding the phenomenon of citizenship in aspirant states. This chapter presents the conceptual framework used to explore the relationship between contested statehood and citizenship.

Aspirant states are political entities that consist of overlapping, contested, and conflicting legal, political, territorial, and social orders. This results in security consequences and a multiplicity of legal, political, and social realities which impacts the daily lives of individuals living in these territories. This nature of multiplicity is also reflected in citizenship. Aspirant states, like other states, establish citizenship regimes and a social contract with their citizens. These states commit to certain obligations towards their citizens, such as providing security from external and internal threats, providing social welfare, and ensuring citizens can enjoy rights associated with citizenship. However, given their contested nature, these states may be unable to fulfil their obligations, resulting in insecurity amongst the citizens. To overcome this, citizens voluntarily acquire compensatory citizenship. In tandem, the base state may forcefully ascribe its citizenship to aspirant state citizens. These processes result in the individuals being simultaneously affected by multiple citizenship regimes. Thus, multiplicity becomes a helpful concept to describe the complexities of the citizenship constellations in aspirant states. However, multiplicity does not have to manifest itself equally in the four citizenship dimensions. Concurrently, from the macro/state level, states engage in population control and demographic engineering when they feel threatened, regardless of whether it is real or imagined. To ensure their physical and ontological security, aspirant states adopt policies aimed at strengthening their security, including those related to citizenship.

The following sections present the four-part conceptual framework, which uses the lenses of multiplicity and human/state security to understand the phenomenon of citizenship in aspirant states. The first three dimensions occur at the level of the individual. The entanglement of multiple citizenship regimes results in individuals concurrently possessing multiple legal statuses, a multiplicity of rights and obligations, and a multiplicity of

identities. These relations, rights, and obligations between the aspirant state, base state, patron state, and third states may complement each other, exist in parallel or undermine each other.[169] The second dimension primarily concerns matters relating to the physical and material security of the individual, while the third dimension primarily pertains to concerns about ontological security. The forth dimension of citizenship is observable at the group level – the aspirant state, as it relates to *politics of belonging* (i.e. how aspirant states define the citizenry and engage in state- and nation-building). Given that states generally engage in exclusive nation-building projects, the concept of multiplicity is not applicable. Instead, policies (and citizens' attitudes) towards defining who belongs and who does not can be understood through the lense of (in)security aimed at ensuring the demographic balance in the aspirant state.

Multiplicity of Legal Statuses

Multiplicity has been reflected in legal studies which recognise legal pluralism as a reality.[170] Legal pluralism "describes a situation in which two or more laws (or legal systems) co-exist [and interact] in (or are obeyed by) one social field (or a population or an individual)".[171] This co-existence and interaction results in an entanglement of legal systems. These legal systems "often address, directly or indirectly, the same set of actors and the same kind of behaviour".[172] While it is generally accepted that each state creates its unique citizenship regime that exists independently of other regimes, factors like migration and dual citizenship cause them to overlap, interact, and influence each other. Take the case of Slovakia, which restricted dual citizenship in 2010 in response to Hungary liberalising its laws that allowed ethnic Hungarians abroad to acquire citizenship easily.[173] Thus the interaction of the two citizenship regimes resulted in a change in Slovak citizenship laws.

Due to the overlap of jurisdictions over individuals, Bauböck (2010) asserts the need to study citizenship constellations (as units of analysis) rather than citizenship regimes of individual states. This concept applies to democratic federations, the EU, migration (denizens), and the shifting of state borders. Citizenship constellations take into account that

[169] Klem et al. 2021.
[170] Griffiths 1986; 2015.
[171] Michaels 2017: 92.
[172] Krisch 2021: 1.
The concept of multiplicity has also been applied to International Relations (theory). See Kurki (2020), Reshetnikov (2019: sec. 165), and Rosenberg (2016).
[173] Bauböck et al. 2010; Pogonyi 2017b.

community no longer correlates with the territorial sovereignty of the state[174] and that "communities are no longer fully separate, but they remain nonetheless distinct".[175] The constellational approach acknowledges that while states continue to have (almost complete) sovereignty to determine their nationals, with increasing migration, changing borders, and contested sovereignty, it is no longer possible to just study how a singular citizenship affects its holder. A constellational approach is particularly relevant for aspirant states, where due to the complicated legal and political situation, their citizens have a legal relationship with multiple citizenship regimes.[176]

In their attempt to show that they function just like recognised states, aspirant states engage in lawmaking and the production of legal identity documents.[177] All the identified aspirant states have their own passports, with Abkhazia, Kosovo, Somaliland, South Ossetia, Taiwan, Transnistria, and the TRNC also having adopted citizenship laws. In 1995 and 2012, Palestine attempted to draft a citizenship law, but the initiative was short-lived due to uncertainty about who could be considered a citizen.[178] Consequently, Palestinian citizenship remains unsettled since the dissolution of mandated Palestine in 1948. Prior to their annexation in 2022, the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) also failed to pass citizenship legislation but did define the citizen via other legislation. In the two republics, persons possessing a DPR or LPR passport were considered citizens.[179] Similarly, Artsakh and the SADR lack citizenship legislation, but their citizenry may be determined via other legislation.[180] Thus, while a codified citizenship law establishes a clear link between the aspirant state and the individual, it is not a pre-requisite. Instead, other legislation and administrative practices can also create a social contract.

[174] Spiro 2011: 741.
[175] Bauböck 2010b: 855.
[176] Ganohariti 2020a; Krasniqi 2018; 2019.
[177] Klem et al. 2021; Navaro-Yashin 2007; Waters 2006.
Referring to legal systems more broadly, Waters argues that aspirant states engage in "law shopping" and indigenise patron state laws to fit local contexts. In some cases, the diffusion of state institutions and laws is such that legislation is not just similar but is word-for-word identical (Gerrits & Bader 2016: 305–306). This can result in curious and impractical cases like the verbatim application of Russia's Water Code in land-locked South Ossetia. Furthermore, by borrowing from the laws of the patron state, aspirant states, by extension, challenge and reject the laws of the base state (Rossi & Pinos 2020: 13). Note that diffusion of law across borders is not restricted to aspirant states since recognised states also borrow laws from other states and International Law.
[178] Qafisheh 2019.
[179] Donetsk PR 2019, Art. 1642-2; Kasianenko 2021; Luhansk PR 2018: secs. 5, Art. 21.
[180] Artsakh 1995; Manby 2020: 18; Tolstykh et al. 2018: 44.
For an overview of citizenship regimes in the aspirant states see Banko (2012), Krasniqi (2018), and Ramahi (2015).

Despite being able to identify the citizenry, due to the contested nature of the aspirant state, the legal status of its citizens also becomes contested by other actors. This contestation is reflected in the legal terminology used to refer to citizens of aspirant states. As discussed in the literature review, the concepts of nationality and citizenship have increasingly been used interchangeably. However, the definition of nationality as the legal bond between individuals and the state would restrict contested polities, including aspirant states, from conferring nationality.[181] Only polities recognised as states can confer nationality; therefore, the "status of nationality is by its very nature an international one that depends on recognition by other states".[182] This means that as long as an aspirant state remains unrecognised, its citizenship cannot be regarded as a nationality. Following this argument, citizens of aspirant states cannot be called nationals, even if they possess a nationality from the aspirant state's perspective.

This means that, even though state recognition is not constitutive to statehood, it does play an essential role in inter-state relations. This position extends to legal systems: external recognition is not necessary for a legal system to be valid domestically,[183] but for a state (and its citizens) to exercise rights arising from statehood, it needs to be recognised, without which its legal system would lack effectiveness externally.[184] Furthermore, the International Law Commission (1999: Art. 3) specified that state succession should conform to International Law. Based on the principle of *ex injuria non oritur jus,* legal practices following territorial changes in breach of *jus cogens* norms, including those related to nationality should not be recognised, even if the practices themselves are in accordance with International Law.[185] As a result, instead of recognising the nationality conferred by the aspirant state, aspirant state citizens may be regarded as stateless or be ascribed the base state's citizenship.[186]

Since the recognition of aspirant states generally does not occur via collective recognition,

[181] Atcho 2018; A. Grossman 2001; Manby 2020.
Grossman identifies several polities that are exceptions to the state-nationality paradigm, including governments-in-exile, occupied territories (e.g. East-Timor), non-self-governing territories (e.g. Bantustans), territories under an international mandate (e.g. UNMIK Kosovo), territories with special status (e.g. Hong-Kong), and aspirant states.
[182] Bauböck 2018: 497.
[183] For a legal system to function, it must first be recognised domestically (secondary rules). See Hart (1994) and Michaels (2017) for further discussion on primary & secondary rules.
[184] Griffiths 1986: 17; Lauterpacht 1944: 455; Michaels 2017: 105–106.
[185] G. Anderson 2015: 68–98; Crawford 2007: 131–148; Jennings & Watts 1992: 183–203; Kunigėlytė-Žiūkienė 2015: 182; Romay 2018: 175–176; Ziemele 2014: 236–240.
[186] Bryant 2014; Krasniqi 2019: 302; 2021; Kunigėlytė-Žiūkienė 2015: 189.

the legal status of citizens becomes even more ambiguous as a result of the choice each state makes on whether or not to recognise an aspirant state as sovereign.[187] Generally speaking, the ascription of nationality under internal law "shall be recognised by other States in so far as it is consistent with international conventions, international custom, and the principles of law generally recognised with regard to nationality".[188] However, each state may come up with its own tertiary rules[189] concerning which foreign citizenship laws are opposable[190] because "a state cannot claim that the rules it has thus laid down are entitled to recognition by another state".[191] In cases of limited recognition, a legal relationship is created between the recognising and recognised state and, by extension, with/between individuals linked with these states. When a state opts to recognise the citizenship conferred by another polity, it directly engages with an external legal order and provides a space for foreign law within its domestic context. Furthermore, a state's position can change over time depending on state (de)recognition. For example, following the recognition of Abkhazia in 2008, Russia acknowledged the validity of Abkhazian law and, by extension, the existence of Abkhazian nationality. As long as a state lacks collective recognition, its citizens cannot be automatically considered nationals of a state under general International Law. In such cases, what matters are the bilateral relations created as a consequence of granting recognition rather than collective recognition.[192]

A further entanglement of legal systems occurs as a consequence of aspirant state citizens acquiring a recognised citizenship to improve their quality of life.[193] However, such acquisitions can result in a "conflict-of-laws situation" since multiple regimes "claim

[187] UNHCR 2014: paras. 19–21.
[188] League of Nations 1930, Art. 1.
[189] Michaels 2021.
Tertiary rules are domestic laws/norms that "deal with the recognition and application of foreign institutions and rules that are already valid under foreign law" within the domestic legal system (Michaels 2017; 2021: 436).
[190] Opposability refers to "the capacity of a rule, a legal act, a right, or a legal fact to produce international legal effects vis-à-vis state, including a state or states unconcerned by the obligations that arise directly from it. Rather than depending on whether an act is valid as against all the world, opposability operates in the relations between pairs of states" (Bjorge 2021: 1).
[191] International Court of Justice 1955: 23.
[192] "The extent to which a new state is able to participate in the international community is in practice largely determined by the extent of its bilateral relationships with other states, which in turn depends primarily on its recognition by them… The grant of recognition by a state is a unilateral act affecting essentially bilateral relations, and neither constitutes nor declares the recognised state to be a member of the international community as a whole. Recognition of a new state by only one state will make it an international person to the limited extent of its relations with that state, but such limited personality cannot realistically be regarded as membership of the international community in general." (Jennings & Watts 1992: 129–130). Also see Nicholson & Grant (2020: 31–32) and Weis (1956: chaps. 5–9).
[193] Ganohariti 2020a; Krasniqi 2018.

normative force with regards to the same situation".[194] For example, since 2014, Russia has granted citizenship to residents of Crimea and eastern Ukraine.[195] However, Ukraine does not recognise Russian citizenship granted to these residents and continues to consider them as Ukrainian citizens.[196] Thus, the individual's legal status changes based on whether one follows Russia's or Ukraine's position. The above entanglements result in the legal status of aspirant state citizens being in a state of indeterminacy and ambiguity (from the perspective of external actors and International Law) and thus take a liminal character.[197]

The above discussion demonstrates that the multiplicity of legal statuses takes two forms. First, the citizenship of an aspirant state, which is internally valid and recognised, may be accepted in states recognising the aspirant state (and its legal system), whilst in other cases, it falls short of being recognised as a nationality. Instead, these individuals may be regarded as stateless or ascribed the nationality of the base state. Secondly, when individuals acquire the citizenship of a recognised state, they establish a legal bond, which in some cases may be non-opposable to third states. This adds to the multiplicity of legal statuses of citizens as well as the diverging positions of various actors towards these statuses. Ultimately, the legal status(es) of individuals linked to aspirant states is a result of the convergence of state recognition (status of the polity) and the number of legal statuses the individual possesses (status of the individual). Chapter 5 presents a Citizenship Constellation Model that can be used to understand the multiplicity of legal statuses in aspirant states.

Multiplicity of Rights and Obligations

The previous section identified that aspirant state citizens could acquire or be ascribed multiple legal statuses. However, it is vital to go beyond a purely doctrinal analysis on whether or not a particular citizenship is recognised (as a nationality) and instead explore

[194] Michaels 2021: 433.
[195] See Wrighton 2018.
[196] Ganohariti 2021b.
[197] Coined by Arnold van Gennep and popularised by Victor Turner (1979), liminality refers to the period of transition between states (i.e. relatively stable and fixed conditions) and involves separation, liminality, and re-incorporation. Liminality was originally used in the context of rites of passage in small-scale societies, through which, for example, boys/girls were transformed into men/women. However, the use of liminality has expanded and has been used in other fields, including citizenship. Liminality can relate to three dimensions: "types of subject" (individuals, social groups, societies), spatial dimensions (specific places, zones, entire regions), and intervals of time (moments, periods, epochs) (Thomassen 2009: 16). Additionally, while the liminality is generally seen as a temporary state of transition, it may become "fixed" and take a more permanent character (Turner as cited in Thomassen 2009: 15). The subject who experiences liminality is called a liminar. For literature discussing liminal legality and citizenship in the context of migration, see Menjívar (2006; 2008) and Torres & Wicks-Asbun (2014).

the socio-political consequences of having these legal statuses on the lived experiences. As discussed in the literature review, there is no agreement on precisely which rights and obligations are associated with citizenship (as opposed to, for example, residency). Marshall (1950) argued that citizenship bestows members civil, political, and social rights. However, the relationship between citizenship and associated rights and obligations has been thinning.[198] Due to the democratisation and diffusion of international legal norms, non-citizens enjoy many rights traditionally associated with nationality.[199] Therefore, while citizenship or nationality may not be the only avenue to realise one's rights, it is the most common legal status that can guarantee one's *right to have rights*[200] and, by extension, guarantee the physical and material security of the individual.

Different legal statuses have different levels of functionality or effectiveness. Functionality of citizenship refers to the ability of a state to provide the rights and security afforded by citizenship.[201] Kingston (2014: 131) argues that if the "sovereignty [states] are afforded by the international community does not accurately reflect an ability to provide the rights and protections afforded by citizenship", the citizenship loses its functionality. Thus, the "manner in which sovereignty is held and exercised affects in different ways the rights and obligations of those to whom a particular nationality or equivalent identity is attributed".[202]

Aspirant states have a high degree of internal sovereignty despite lacking external sovereignty. Berg and Kuusk (2010) conceptualised internal sovereignty to include attributes such as the level of governance and degree of territorial control, while external sovereignty includes attributes like the degree of independence from external actors and the degree of international recognition. The different degrees of sovereignty contribute to different levels of internal and external functionality of citizenship.[203]

Internal functionality can be linked to political rights (e.g. voting, standing for elections) and the right to enter/exit, abode, and work without a permit. In addition, citizenship can provide access to civil and social rights on the state's territory. The Quality of Nationality

[198] Joppke 2010; Kochenov 2019.
[199] E. F. Cohen 2009a; Henrard 2018; Joppke 2007.
[200] Arendt 1973.
[201] L. Kingston 2014.
In this thesis, functionality and effectiveness are used synonymously. The latter term is commonly used in the legal domain.
[202] A. Grossman 2001: 866.
[203] Ebright (2017: 873) uses the term "technical nationality" to refer to internal functionality and "functional nationality" to refer to external functionality.

Index (QNI) quantifies internal functionality by aggregating economic strength (via GDP), level of human development (via the HDI), and level of peace and stability (via the Global Peace Index). Harpaz's (2019a: 144) work on compensatory citizenship takes a similar approach in constructing the Citizenship Quality Index (CQI). In the CQI, internal functionality is measured by the level of domestic security (via the State Fragility Index), opportunity (via the HDI), and rights (via the Democracy Index).[204]

The level of internal functionality also depends on the degree of internal sovereignty. For example, Qafisheh (2019: 134) states that Palestinian citizens can largely be regarded as full citizens on a local level (e.g. residency, employment, and elections), but Israel restricts certain rights, such as the freedom to travel. In contrast, Atcho (2018: 232-235) argues that Palestinians cannot exercise their full rights as citizens within the Palestinian territory as the Palestinian Authority lacks full effective control and ability to protect its citizens due to the Israeli presence. On the other hand, Abkhazian citizens can be said to enjoy full citizenship on a local level since they enjoy all rights and opportunities provided by the Abkhazian state and are (largely) unaffected by Russian or Georgian citizenship regimes.[205] In other words, while the citizenship of an aspirant state may lack international recognition, the rights and obligations associated with it are absolute and unambiguous from the aspirant state's perspective.

External functionality refers to the right to diplomatic protection, the right to be represented (by the state) in the international system, and the freedom to travel and settle abroad. The QNI measures external functionality via the level of travel freedom and settlement freedom associated with the citizenship, while the CQI uses the Passport Index (which the QNI also relies on). If we compare Palestinian and Abkhazian citizenship, the former has greater external functionality as more states recognise it. This illustrates that internal and external functionality does not need to correlate. The citizen's status, rights, and obligations are clearly defined and exercisable within the aspirant state, and the liminal character of the citizenship emerges only when the external functionality is considered. The ambiguous legal status can result in aspirant state citizens not having full rights (e.g. international travel, right to hold their state accountable in international organisations) as those afforded to citizens

[204] Other indexes that measure citizenship include the Citizenship Policy Index (Howard 2005; 2006), and the Arton Capital and Henley & Partner passport indexes. Apart from Palestine and Taiwan, these indexes have generally abstained from including aspirant states.
[205] This phenomenon can be linked to Bryant's (2014: 126) argument that aspirant states are "not being locked out but being locked in: they suffer from varying degrees of economic and political isolation that turn them into *de facto* enclaves".

from recognised states.[206]

The disentanglement of citizenship functionality into its internal and external dimensions is also reflected in Atcho's (2018) work which divides aspirant states into two groups. The first consists of Palestine and Western Sahara, which have been internationally recognised with the right to statehood[207] and, by extension, the right to confer nationality. However, in practice, these citizenships have limited functionality since Palestinian and Sahrawi authorities lack internal sovereignty to effectively implement a citizenship regime. The second category includes all other aspirant states where individuals can exercise rights corresponding to citizenship within the contested territory, while internationally, the so-called nationality is not widely recognised.[208] Thus, in the former category, citizenship has a low level of internal functionality, and in the latter category, citizenship has a high level of internal functionality. This echoes the ICJ's Nottebohm judgement which recognised the bifurcation of "nationality into a concept of international law and a concept of domestic law", each with its different associated rights, obligations, and functionality.[209] Thus, while strongly related, the internal and external dimensions of citizenship must be analysed separately.

The limited external sovereignty results in aspirant states being restricted in guaranteeing their citizens' rights and security outside the aspirant state. This limited external functionality can produce feelings of physical and material insecurity, and compels them to acquire compensatory citizenship from a recognised state.[210] Thus, individuals voluntarily become linked to multiple citizenship regimes. For example, the nonrecognition of Abkhazia blocks individuals from participating in the international system (including travel) as Abkhazian citizens, and thus those who possess another citizenship present themselves as citizens of this state internationally. Therefore, the contested nature of aspirant states results in the limited (external) functionality of the aspirant state citizenship and negatively affects the opportunities of the citizens.[211] It is important to note that functionality is not static but can change over time (including as a consequence of state (de)recognition). Russia's 2008 recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia improved the external

[206] Krasniqi 2019.
[207] Geldenhuys (2009) and Kyris (2022) call this "titular recognition", which is different from "recognition" and "nonrecognition".
[208] Atcho (2018) is silent on Taiwan, which may be due to its unique status within the aspirant states.
[209] Ebright 2017: 873; International Court of Justice 1955: chaps. 20–21.
[210] Ganohariti 2020a; A. Grossman 2001: 863.
[211] A. Grossman 2001; Lindeboom 2018.

functionality of these two citizenships.[212]

The QNI has also been applied to aspirant states.[213] As illustrated in the Table below, aspirant state citizenships have a low ranking. Despite the general nonrecognition of the aspirant state citizenship, akin to recognised states, they have differing levels of functionality based on their internal and external attributes (or sovereignty). Some aspirant states have a higher internal functionality than recognised states, but the overall rankings get skewed due to the low external functionality.

Table 3: QNI for aspirant states and their neighbours.

	Overall Rank	2018 Value
Cyprus	21	75.3
Taiwan (ROC)	51	46.1
China (PRC)	56	44.3
Serbia	61	42.1
Russia	62	42.0
Albania	72	38.7
Moldova	73	38.6
Ukraine	75	38.5
Türkiye	76	37.7
Georgia	77	37.5
Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh)	97	31.9
Armenia	98	31.7
Azerbaijan	105	30.1
Morocco	113	28.1
Kosovo	128	25.3
Palestine	139	23.1
Northern Cyprus (TRNC)	146	21.7
South Ossetia	150	19.7
Transnistria (PMR)	152	19.1
Abkhazia	153	19.0
Western Sahara (SADR)	160	15.9
Donetsk PR	161	15.6
Luhansk PR	161	15.6
Somalia[214]	159	13.8
Somaliland	164	11.1

The concept of functionality also extends to citizenship constellations, where cumulative functionality and compounding rights/obligations resulting from multiple citizenships can be explored. This is particularly true in aspirant states that allow dual citizenship, albeit sometimes restrictively.[215] A hierarchy can come about between those possessing a recognised citizenship and those who do not, and between those whose compensatory

[212] Diachronic changes are not unique to aspirant states. For example, the Quality of Nationality Index tracks changes in functionality of over 200 nationalities/passports from 2011 to 2018.
[213] Lindeboom 2018; Lindeboom & Kochenov 2020: 131–133.
The authors have not publicised the breakdown of the internal and external dimensions.
[214] Somalia was the worst-ranked UN member state. Other low-ranking countries include Afghanistan (15.4), South Sudan (15.9), Syria (17.2), and Yemen (17.2). The highest-ranked country was France (83.5).
[215] Ganohariti 2020a; Krasniqi 2018; 2019.

citizenships have different levels of functionality.[216] An example of the former case occurs in Abkhazia, where the pension of Russian-Abkhazian citizens is tenfold compared to those who only have Abkhazian citizenship. An example of the latter case occurs in Transnistria, where those with Russian citizenship have lower travel freedoms than those with Moldovan citizenship, which provides visa-free access to the EU. These examples show that citizens of aspirant states are not affected equally. The level of impediment of rights occurs in varying degrees based on the level of contestation of the aspirant state, the citizenship constellations an individual is a member of, and the ability of the aspirant states to use alternative strategies (e.g. dual citizenship, passport recognition) to overcome sovereignty deficits.[217] Possessing multiple citizenships may also result in multiple and potentially contradictory political obligations towards the different polities. For example, until the 2022 dual citizenship agreement, men who had Russian and Abkhazian citizenship could be conscripted in both places.[218]

Lastly, rights and obligations flowing from citizenship can change based on the individual's physical location and the specific right/obligation that is being realised. Whilst living within the aspirant state, individuals primarily depend on the aspirant state citizenship; but may still receive benefits via the citizenship of the other state (e.g. some Russian-Abkhazian dual citizens living in Abkhazia are entitled to Russian pensions). The relationship reverses when the person leaves the aspirant state. Depending on where they are going, they will use the passport that is recognised in their destination, which is most likely to be the passport of a recognised (UN member) state. Chapter 6 will discuss how the entanglement of the citizenship regimes results in a multiplicity of rights and obligations for Abkhazian, South Ossetian, and Transnistrian citizens.

Multiplicity of Identities

Citizenship as identity refers to the individual and collective views on what it means to be a citizen. It is important to go beyond studying citizenship regimes and explore the "experiences, meetings and practices of citizenship".[219] In sociology, the self and society are understood not to be homogeneous units but rather are defined by multiplicity. The concept of multiplicity of identity has been applied in the context of dual citizenship, migration, and

[216] Krasniqi 2015: 212–213.
[217] Krasniqi 2019.
[218] Abkhazia & Russia 2022; Chukunov 2020.
[219] Knott 2017: 124.

secessionist movements.[220] Individuals and societies are defined by a "fleeting multiplicity of possible identities,"[221] and each identity interacts with others in varying degrees depending on time and place.

Individual (and group) identity is highly intersectional, fluid, and consists of multiple identity dimensions.[222] In addition to citizenship, identity is influenced by other cross-cutting dimensions such as ethnicity, language, gender/sex, and economic status. Concurrently, in addition to the attachment to their state/nation, individuals may have other citizenship identities based on their local, regional, or civilizational attachments.[223] However, since this thesis is politico-legal and focuses on citizenship in (aspirant) states, discussing all identity dimensions is beyond its scope, and thus identity is discussed only in relation to citizenship.

Due to the contested nature of aspirant state citizenship, individuals may acknowledge the liminal character of their citizenship.[224] Liminality may become part of the everyday social experiences of individuals who get stranded in the process of transitioning from nationals of the base/former state (point of separation) to nationals of a newly recognised state (point of aggregation). Liminars may refer to their past and future selves to seek clarity in their identity or may recognise that they are in a state of perpetual liminality, which becomes a defining feature of their identity.[225] Furthermore, as claimed by Thomassen (2009), experiences of liminality are not uniform within the same polity. Rather, individuals may experience it to different degrees, with some not experiencing it, especially if they have a limited desire to leave the aspirant state. This liminality, in turn, could contribute to a sense of ontological insecurity since individuals' feeling of having a consistent sense of 'self', which is recognised by others, is challenged.[226] Alternatively, citizens may refuse to be labelled as liminars (or as stateless persons or citizens of the base state) since they identify and believe themselves to be nationals of a state, albeit one with limited recognition. Since liminality is an exogeneous label, residents of aspirant states, while acknowledging the

[220] Dahlin & Hironaka 2008; Martinovic et al. 2011; Tanasoca 2018; Verkuyten et al. 2019.
[221] Kinnvall 2019: 153.
[222] Bauman 2000; Crenshaw 1989; Verkuyten et al. 2019.
[223] Clogg 2008; Comai & Venturi 2015; Marandici 2020; O'Loughlin et al. 2016; Ostavnaia 2009; Roper 2005.
[224] Krasniqi 2019; Parsons & Lawreniuk 2018: 2.
[225] Bryant 2014: 133–134; Ybema et al. 2011: 24–25.
[226] Giddens 1991: chap. 2; Mitzen 2006; Zarakol 2017.
This thesis acknowledges that the sense of self in ontological security is broader than identity (Krickel-Choi 2022a). However, the thesis uses the term identity to be consistent with the terminology used in citizenship studies.

limitations of their citizenship, may be reluctant to consider their citizenship as liminal or incomplete (and thus have no feeling of ontological insecurity).

Individuals' identification with their citizenship(s) also may not align or reflect their legal status(es). This can be especially true in cases of dual citizenship, where the second citizenship is instrumental in strengthening the physical and material security of the individual. In aspirant states, individuals may "feel" that they are members of the political community of the aspirant state but have no such feeling towards their other citizenship(s). Contestation over sovereignty results in not only nonrecognition but also misrecognition or malrecognition (of the political subjectivity) of the aspirant state and its people.[227] For example, misrecognition occurs when a third state unintentionally labels aspirant state citizens as stateless and malrecognition occurs when aspirant state citizens are forcefully ascribed the base state citizenship. This can produce ontological insecurity amongst the aspirant state citizens generating feelings of anxiety.[228] Alternatively, individuals could be well aware that they are not Georgian citizens and have no feelings of ontological insecurity.

Thus, individuals who possess a multiplicity of legal statuses may either navigate between them, simultaneously identify as citizens of both or feel that they lack identity commitment with their compensatory/ascribed citizenship(s).[229] Further, administrative (e.g. arbitrarily refusing to issue identity documents) or structural/social (e.g. a specific ethnic group having easier access to citizenship) practices affect the lived experiences of citizenship.[230]

Multiplicity of citizenship identities may also come about when individuals identify with, and express, their citizenship(s) differently based on place and context.[231] Some individuals may identify more strongly with the citizenship of the state where they are physically present because of the everyday interactions with state authorities and society. However, when they start to live in the country of their other citizenship, they may switch their identification. Others may continue to have strong links based on ethnic, linguistic or cultural ties to their primary (country of) citizenship and consider themselves its diaspora despite maintaining dual citizenship. Thus, close identification with a particular place (insideness, as used by Edward Relph) can influence the identity dimension of citizenship. Context can also

[227] Bartelson 2021; Fraser & Honneth 2003; Martineau et al. 2012; C. Taylor 1992
[228] For a discussion on the role of anxiety in ontological security, see Krickel-Choi (2022b).
[229] Harpaz 2019a; Knott 2015a; 2017; 2019; Schlenker 2016; Tsuda 2012; Verkuyten et al. 2019.
[230] See Ganohariti 2020a; Hopman et al. 2018.
[231] Harpaz & Nassar 2021; Relph 1976.

influence identification with a particular citizenship for different purposes. Depending on the group, community or authority an individual interacts with, they may identify themselves differently. For example, Harpaz and Nassar's (2021) study illustrated how Palestinians with Israeli citizenship, when travelling, chose to present themselves as Palestinian, Arab or Israeli depending on the country they were visiting.

As with the other two dimensions, when studying the identity dimension of citizenship, it is important to acknowledge its fluidity and multiplicity. Fluidity and multiplicity capture the flexible identification with, and utilisation of, multiple citizenships and acknowledges that individuals need not have a fixed sense of citizenship identity. Chapter 6 will discuss Abkhazians', South Ossetians', and Transnistrians' sense of attachment to their citizenship(s).

Politics of Belonging

Citizenship as politics of belonging denotes the "politics of access to the status and rights of citizenship" aimed at preserving the political community.[232] Citizenship regimes become part of the legal toolbox that states can use to control populations and exclude undesirable groups.[233] Most often, states engage in population control and exclusion when they feel threatened. They frame the associated issue, group or phenomenon as a security threat, regardless of whether it is real or imagined.

Initially, the Copenhagen School narrowly defined securitisation as the phenomenon of an actor performing a speech act and presenting an issue "as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure".[234] This definition has expanded to include political processes, discourses, and practices that frame certain issues as security issues via dialogical audience-actor interactions.[235] Most common cases of securitising citizenship relate to nationality deprivation as a national security measure in response to disloyalty and extremism. Often this securitisation is linked to the securitisation of minority groups and becomes a tool for political exclusion and a part of the "othering" repertoire. Instrumentalisation, a related term, refers to using something as a (coercive) means to pursue certain, and sometimes unrelated,

[232] Kochenov 2019: 28.
[233] Bloemraad et al. 2008; Ignatieff 1987; Kochenov 2019: 3; Stiks 2015; Vink 2017: 266.
[234] Buzan et al. 2014: 23–26.
[235] Rumelili 2015: 61; Stępka 2022.

political goals. The instrumentalisation of citizenship also takes many forms, but most relevant here is its usage for demographic manipulation or ethnic engineering,[236] either within the state by excluding undesired groups or outside of it by granting extraterritorial citizenship to ethnic-kin.[237]

It is helpful to link acts of securitising and instrumentalising certain groups aimed at ensuring ethnodemographic security[238] to ontological and physical security, as it can explain why states engage in such acts. The former relates to the need to have a consistent sense of 'self', which is recognised by others,[239] and the latter entails the identification of threats or dangers to survival and necessitates the development of measures to defend the self against these threats.[240] Sometimes, the two types of (in)security reinforce each other.[241] In other cases, actors may work to meet ontological security since "[they] fear uncertainty as an identity threat and suppress that fear through routines to which they become attached," even if it means this occurs at the expense of physical security.[242]

Sovereignty "reaffirms states' very existence and constructs them as persons" and "provides states with a sense of realness of the world, a sense of belonging, greater predictability with regard to social interactions, mitigation of anxieties about [state] death, and, most importantly, it bestows states with a 'self' and the recognition that they are persons rather than objects", thereby ensuring their (right to) ontological security.[243] However, when a state's sovereign personhood and sense of continuity across time and space becomes contested, ontological and physical insecurity results. When the state's subjectivity is

[236] Hewitt 1995; Štiks 2015.
[237] Agarin & Karolewski 2015; Ganohariti 2021b; Krasniqi & Stjepanović 2014; Prelz Oltramonti 2016; Shevel 2017; D. J. Smith 2020.
[238] Brubaker 1992b.
Demographic security, more broadly, is a term commonly used in Russian (*demograficheskaya bezopasnost'*) and refers to security concerns arising out of demographic processes that cause changes in the size and structure of the population, including age/gender, geographic distribution, and ethno-religious composition (Cincotta 2004; Sidorenko 2019).
[239] While ontological security was initially applied to individuals (e.g. Giddens 1991: chap. 2; Kinnvall 2004), over the last two decades, it has been applied to collective identities, such as those of states (Krickel-Choi 2022c; 2022a; Mitzen 2006; Zarakol 2017), aspirant states (Grzybowski 2022; Pacher 2019), and ethnic communities (Abulof 2009). These actors are granted subjectivity, and in the case of states, they are recognised to have a body politic comprising territory and people. Zarakol (2017: 51) argues that "we have been able to think of modern states as ontological security-seeking agents themselves in IR is precisely because the modern state's claim to be an ontological security provider for its citizens drives it to seek stable relationships within the modern state system". Thus, state personhood is relational and dependent on internal dynamics and interactions with external actors.
[240] Rumelili 2015: 54.
[241] Krickel-Choi 2022c.
[242] Mitzen 2006: 349.
[243] Krickel-Choi 2022a.

threatened, it may securitise the referent object, be it another state, an aspirant state, a minority group, or a phenomenon such as secession or passportization.

The aspirant state–base state relationship and desire for statehood, on the one hand, and the importance of ensuring territorial integrity, on the other hand, creates a security dilemma and an existential crisis of the self for both parties. While secession does not threaten the base state's external recognition, it does undermine its internal coherence (internal sovereignty) and outward appearance of competence and being a unified state. Meanwhile, the aspirant state struggles both for internal sovereignty and external recognition thereof, i.e., its status as a state in the first place. Even in those cases where aspirant states achieve physical security via territorial control and display attributes of statehood, the lack of widespread recognition or engagement continues to threaten their security. Aspirant states cannot rely on the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity since "non-state actors" are not protected by International Law (e.g. from intervention) in the same way legally recognised states are. [244] Their state body could be taken away at any moment. Nonrecognition also threatens their ontological security because there is a mismatch between the subjective personhood of the aspirant state and how it is (not) recognised by other actors.

To ensure their security, aspirant states adopt policies aimed at strengthening it. The existing literature deals with how aspirant states deal with (non)recognition and its consequences on their ontological and physical security.[245] However, it is equally important to explore how domestic factors, including demographics, can threaten ontological and physical security. In some cases, as argued by O'Loughlin et al. (2011: 35), demographic security becomes more important than international recognition. As a result, to gain/maintain a sense of security, aspirant states can engage in demographic engineering by physically or legally excluding undesirable populations from the body politic (securitisation) whilst concurrently including desirable populations (instrumentalisation). Chapter 7 will discuss how the aspirant states construct their citizenship regimes in order to ensure their ontological and physical security.

[244] Grzybowski 2022; Jaksa 2017.
[245] Grzybowski 2019; 2022; Jaksa 2017; 2019; Pacher 2019.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the conceptual framework which will be used to answer the following research questions. What is the legal status of individuals living in aspirant states (under Public International Law)? How does contested citizenship affect the rights and obligations of individuals living in aspirant states? What is the functionality of the aspirant state citizenship? How do these citizens frame and experience their contested citizenship(s)? How do aspirant states define their citizenry and utilise citizenship regimes in the state- and nation-building process?

The conceptual framework illustrated how multiplicity and desire for human security can explain the entanglement of the legal statuses in aspirant states and its consequences on citizens' rights, obligations, and identity. The conceptual framework argued that citizens of aspirant states may come to possess a multiplicity of legal statuses due to different positions on state recognition and the number of legal statuses the individual possesses. The limited external sovereignty results in aspirant states being restricted in guaranteeing citizens' rights and security outside the aspirant state. This can produce feelings of physical and material insecurity and compel citizens to acquire compensatory citizenship from a recognised state. This results in a compounding of rights (drawn from different citizenships) and can create a hierarchy of rights and obligations between individuals who have a recognised citizenship and those who do not, and between groups whose compensatory citizenship has different levels of functionality. Individuals who possess a multiplicity of legal statuses may either navigate between them, simultaneously identify as citizens of both or feel that they lack identity commitment with their compensatory/ascribed citizenship(s). A multiplicity of citizenship identities may also come about when individuals identify with, and express, their citizenship(s) differently based on place and context.

The conceptual framework also argued for using the state security lens to understand how aspirant states use citizenship regimes as part of the politics of belonging repertoire. To ensure their physical and ontological security, aspirant states can engage in demographic engineering by physically or legally excluding undesirable populations from the body politic whilst concurrently including desirable populations. Citizenship regimes thus can become part of the legal toolbox for controlling populations.

Chapter 4
Researching Citizenship in Aspirant States

The previous section illustrated the complexity of citizenship in aspirant states and argued how the lenses of multiplicity and human/state security can be used to understand the four dimensions of citizenship. To be able to explore the relationship between citizenship and contested statehood, this chapter presents the research design and methodology.

This thesis adopts an abductive and constructivist-interpretivist understanding of research and knowledge production. Abductive research allows the researcher to move between theories and data, and between analysis and data collection. This makes it possible to continuously analyse and compare empirical data against existing knowledge on statehood, sovereignty, state recognition, citizenship regimes, and the politics of belonging. The constructivist-interpretivist approach further assists in this process, as it acknowledges that reality is continuously co-constructed, negotiated, and interpreted. Further, this thesis argues for a comparative case study approach as it allows for the in-depth and multi-dimensional analysis of the phenomenon of citizenship. By choosing Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria, it is possible to account for the same patron state, the impact of state (non)recognition, and the effects of having different base states.

As this thesis focuses on questions of statehood, sovereignty, and self-determination, it is logical to start by studying citizenship laws affecting the aspirant state. However, this approach paints only a partial picture, and it is equally important to understand the impact of citizenship regimes on citizens' rights, obligations, and identity. Thus, the thesis also explores how the aspirant states and their citizens' experiences and understanding of history, the nation, and the desire for security shape the construction of citizenship regimes. As a result, citizenship in aspirant states must be studied from the top-down (state level) and the bottom-up (individual level). A mixed-methods approach is adopted as this thesis aims to understand the relationship between contested statehood and the phenomenon of citizenship from the perspective of law, administrative practices, and lived experiences.

The first half of the chapter presents the research design which discusses the need to adopt an abductive approach, and justifies why a comparative study of three post-Soviet aspirant states is at the core of this thesis. Following, the reasons for focusing on Abkhazia, South

Ossetia, and Transnistria are justified. The second half of the chapter introduces the methods used to investigate the four dimensions of citizenship. The methods are: content analysis of legislation, surveying citizens, and interviewing experts and citizens from the three aspirant states.

Research Design

The Research Framework

Classical scientific research generally falls within one of two approaches: inductive or deductive. The former has often been used for theory building, while the latter for theory testing. However, the boundaries between induction and deduction are not perfect. Instead, most research is part of a more extensive process of knowledge creation that draws from existing theories and new empirical evidence to make sense of a certain, hitherto un- or underexplored aspect of the world. This iterative moving back and forth between theories and data, and between analysis and data gathering is called abduction. Initially coined by Charles Peirce, abductive analysis aims at generating novel (theoretical) insights to fill research gaps based on the systematic analysis of new empirical evidence and existing theoretical perspectives.[246]

While there is much research in the areas of citizenship and *de facto* statehood, there has been limited research on the systematic study of citizenship in aspirant states. According to Timmermans and Tavory (2012: 173), it is vital to draw from multiple theoretical perspectives so as "to find out what is missing or anomalous in an area of study and to stimulate insights about innovative or original theoretical contributions". By pushing empirical evidence against theories that explain different dimensions of citizenship, statelessness, statehood, and recognition, this thesis envisages generating novel insights that explain the phenomenon of citizenship in aspirant states.

The abductive process involves the continuous analysis of data from different perspectives. In addition to applying and borrowing from different theoretical perspectives, the phenomenon of citizenship can be studied from the legislative, administrative (i.e. how experts understand it), and lived experiences perspectives. Thus, a law in context[247] approach is followed by comparing the findings based on the analysis of citizenship

[246] Locke 2007: 567, 571; Timmermans & Tavory 2012: 169.
[247] Van Hoecke 2016.

legislations to how these legislations work in practice.

The abductive research process can be linked to Morgan's (2007) pragmatic approach. The pragmatic approach rejects the top-down ontological assumptions of other research paradigms and emphasises the importance of different research fields to develop shared meanings and work together to gain knowledge in the pursuit of certain axiological/desired goals. The pragmatic approach recognises that complete objectivity or subjectivity cannot exist. Instead, researchers should recognise the intersubjective nature of research, be reflexive and recognise their positionality.[248] Thus, it is essential to acknowledge that a researcher's understanding of the topic will evolve throughout the research process.[249] As demonstrated in the methods section, this thesis is designed to ensure that citizenship in aspirant states is analysed from multiple perspectives and at multiple points throughout the research (e.g. existing literature, legislation, local experts, and citizens). Furthermore, this research follows a constructivist-interpretivist approach because reality is continuously constructed, negotiated, and interpreted by state-actors and individuals, including myself, through social interactions with the world around them.[250] Also, as citizenship is a social construct and is aimed at producing an imagined community, the analysed legislation should be understood to reflect a social reality that existed when they were passed, and legislation may be re-interpreted to fit up-to-date social realities.

Comparative Case Studies

Case study research is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" within a specific bounded system.[251] The case study approach treats cases as holistic and complex units, rather than disaggregating them into constituent variables.[252] Furthermore, case-oriented research is sensitive to the complexity and historical specificity and relies on multiple sources of evidence. Case study research gives rise to an extensive dialogue between the investigator's ideas (informed by theory) and empirical data,[253] thus fitting the abductive approach of this research. The case study approach is open to using multiple sources and methods for data collection. Lastly, the comparative method is the only choice for studies with a limited number of cases for statistical analysis.

[248] Ensink 2004.
[249] Altheide & Schneider 2017; Locke 2007: 575.
[250] Schwandt 1994; Stake 1995: 99–102.
[251] Yin 1994: 13.
[252] Porta 2008: 204, 208; Ragin 2014: 3.
[253] Ragin 2014: 49.

Given that there are just ten aspirant states, and because they are complex, the case study approach is the most appropriate for studying citizenship in aspirant states. Additionally, by comparing aspirant states across time,[254] a common practice in comparative studies, it is possible to research how the phenomenon of citizenship has been constructed, understood, and evolved over time. Even though the total number of aspirant states is not large, a systematic comparison of them is beyond the scope of this thesis. Thus, a smaller sample needs to be selected. While it would be possible to select three or four cases at random, a clear justification for case selection is needed. This thesis will focus on the aspirant states in the former Soviet space based on the following reasons:

- Post-Soviet aspirant states are coherent entities that offer an analytically valuable contrast and variation within a relatively similar set of cases. By selecting this region, similarities can be excluded by being identified as causally irrelevant to the outcome of interest.[255] Porta (2008: 214) argues that "cross-national comparisons often address countries belonging to a common geographical area… and sharing historical traditions, cultural traits or economic development. The advantage is that [since] many variables are 'parametrized'… we can consider these characteristics as constant and check for the influence of other factors". As of 2023, the region has four aspirant states which have a common Soviet heritage, lack UN membership, and are subsidised by a patron state. Despite the general similarities, the citizenship regimes of these aspirant states are not uniform.[256] Therefore, a Most Similar Systems Design[257] is followed so factors that have different values across the cases can be used to explain the variation in the cases.
- There is a plethora of comparative research on post-Soviet aspirant states and post-Soviet citizenship. However, there is limited (comparative) research on post-Soviet aspirant state citizenship, and the existing knowledge in the two fields is relied on for this analysis.
- My ability to speak Russian makes it easier to access literature and interact with most locals without an interpreter.

[254] Stjepanović 2018.
[255] Anckar 2008: 393–395; Ragin 2014: 46–47.
[256] Ganohariti 2020a; Krasniqi 2018.
[257] See Anckar 2008; Porta 2008: 214–217.

- This PhD develops from my previous research on citizenship in Abkhazia and Transnistria,[258] thus making it possible to develop on existing knowledge.

One may argue that the research findings are not generalisable to other aspirant states. However, rather than being concerned about the generalisability of findings, this research focuses on the transferability of findings to other settings.[259] As this thesis focuses only on post-Soviet aspirant states, not all findings may be transferable due to the region's specificities. However, certain findings may be transferable. For example, findings influenced by the condition of having a patron state may be transferable to the TRNC.

Case Selection

Having selected the geo-political region, the cases for the comparative analysis must be identified. This thesis challenges the dominant practice amongst *de facto* state scholars who primarily adopt the IR, legal, and political science approaches and study contested territories from the macro/state level. Instead of looking at citizenship from the legislative/administrative and state levels, there is also a need to study the lived experiences of citizens. To be able to make this comparison, the aspirant states should currently be in existence and must have passed citizenship legislation. Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria have citizenship legislation.[260] In Artsakh, the only legislation relating to citizenship is the law On the Basic Principles of Citizenship,[261] which according to Tolstykh et al. (2018: 44), should be seen as a declaration.[262] Of the two recently established aspirant states, only LPR adopted a Declaration on Citizenship (2014), but no law materialised.[263]

Furthermore, unlike Artsakh, DPR (2014-2022) or LPR (2014-2022), Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria are better suited for comparative research as they have existed for almost three decades, are supported by Russia, and have developed strong internal legitimacy and state structures. In addition, variations in the citizenship regimes/constellations result in diverse implications of how contested citizenship is understood and experienced. For example, a critical change to the dynamics within the

[258] Ganohariti 2020a; 2021b.
[259] Bloomberg & Volpe 2008: 78; Morgan 2007: 72; Porta 2008: 206.
[260] Abkhazia 1995a; 2005; South Ossetia 1995; 2006; Transnistria 1992b; 2002b; 2017.
[261] Artsakh 1995.
[262] In 2008 the Artsakh Parliament debated a Law on Citizenship, but no legislation materialised.
[263] The LPR Parliament considered adopting a Law on Citizenship but was later withdrawn (Biyatov 2014; Luhansk PR 2015).

citizenship constellations was Russia's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in 2008, therefore making it possible to analyse the impact of Russia's recognition on citizenship and contrast it with the nonrecognition of Transnistria. Also, by selecting Abkhazia and South Ossetia, it is possible to conduct a within-case analysis (pre and post-2008) on top of the between-case analysis.

Table 4: Overview of Post-Soviet aspirant states. [264]

Post-Soviet aspirant states	**Existing aspirant states with citizenship regimes**	**Russia as the patron state**
Abkhazia (1991~) Ajaria (1991~2004) Artsakh (1991~) Chechnya (1991~1999) Donetsk PR (2014~2022) Gagauzia (1991~1995) Luhansk PR (2014~2022) South Ossetia (1991~) Transnistria (PMR) (1991~)	Abkhazia South Ossetia Transnistria (PMR) Artsakh	Abkhazia Donets PR (~2022) Luhansk PR (~2022) South Ossetia Transnistria (PMR)

Based on the above criteria, the final set of cases that can be used to analyse citizenship from both a legal and lived experiences perspective are Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria. Appendix A provides further insights into the evolution of the political status of these aspirant states.

Mixed Methods Research

Mixed method research "combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches… for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration".[265] As this thesis tackles a complex phenomenon, it follows a mixed methods approach. Firstly, this thesis aims to understand the relationship between contested statehood and the phenomenon of citizenship by studying artefacts (i.e. legislation), administrative practices, and lived experiences of citizenship. Multiple methods must be used for this since the citizenship dimensions need to be researched differently. The need to use multiple methods becomes even more prominent when a phenomenon is investigated from multiple levels of analysis: the individual vs the state.[266] Secondly, utilising a mixed methods approach aids in offsetting bias in a particular data source or method when used in

[264] Florea 2017: 339.
[265] Johnson et al. 2007: 123.
[266] Guest et al. 2012: 194–195.

conjunction with other data sources and methods.[267] This research utilises triangulation[268] to increase the validation process of the explored phenomenon,[269] thereby producing a more holistic picture. This research utilises both sequential and simultaneous application of methods.[270] Third, mixed methods aid in expanding the breadth of inquiry and complements the legal dimension of citizenship with social dimensions.[271] Lastly, Bryman (2006: 110-111) argues that mixed methods research produces data that can be utilised in unanticipated ways. As argued by Timmermans and Tavory (2012: 176), while "theories allow us initially to see the phenomenon in sociologically interesting ways", using mixed methods compels "us to revisit the same observation again and again, defamiliarise the known world, and apply alternative casings to our observations".

Table 5: Overview of Research Design.

Dimensions of Analysis: Multiplicity of	**Pillar**	**Sub-Research Question**	**Key Data Sources**
Legal statuses	Legal	What is the legal status of individuals living in aspirant states (under Public International Law)?	Legal documents Expert interviews
Rights & Obligations	Legal & socio-political	How does contested citizenship affect the rights and obligations of individuals living in aspirant states? What is the functionality of the aspirant state citizenship?	Legal documents Interviews Survey data
Identities	Socio-political	How do aspirant state citizens frame and experience their contested citizenship(s)?	Interviews Survey data
Politics of Belonging	Legal & socio-political	How do aspirant states define their citizenry and utilise citizenship regimes in the state- and nation-building process?	Legal documents Interviews

[267] Denzin 1978: 14.
[268] This includes both data source triangulation (i.e. using several cases to understand contested citizenship) and methodological triangulation (Stake 1995: 112–115).
[269] Bryman 2004; Campbell & Fiske 1959; Stake 1995: chap. 7.
[270] Greene et al. 1989: 259; Guest et al. 2012: 191; Morse 1991: 120; Schoonenboom & Johnson 2017: 113–115.
[271] Greene et al. 1989: 259.
The chosen methods should fit Greene's (2006) four domains to ensure a well-rounded methodology for social inquiry. This thesis follows a constructivist-interpretivist research paradigm and uses abductive reasoning (Domain 1 – philosophical assumptions and stance), and is committed to social justice by bringing light to the issues faced by aspirant state citizens due to their precarious legal identity (Domain 4 – socio-political commitments). Therefore, the most appropriate methodology is to use several case studies to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of citizenship in aspirant states (Domain 2 – Inquiry Logic). To gain a holistic picture and explore within and between the selected cases a qualitative dominant mixed methods approach is used (Domain 3 – How to conduct research).

Content Analysis of Legislation

The first stage of this research entails the systematic analysis of post-Soviet aspirant state citizenship through the content analysis[272] of repealed and functioning legislation (this would be a top-down/macro-level analysis). Content analysis is a research method "for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use".[273] Content analysis makes it possible to systematically read texts and narrow the range of interpretations and inferences concerning the social reality that texts represent. The content analysis aims to understand the legal status of individuals living in aspirant states. To answer this, it would be necessary to code the legislation for various components, including the pathways to citizenship acquisition (*jus soli*, *jus sanguine*, naturalisation), withdrawal/renunciation conditions, and the position on dual citizenship.

Since this thesis focuses on post-Soviet aspirant states, a logical point of departure would be the official dissolution of the Soviet Union on 26 December 1991, after which Soviet citizenship, by and large, ceased to exist (documents issued by Soviet authorities remained valid for much longer). However, the dissolution of the Soviet Union was not a single act. Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost* catalysed its breakup; thus, the foundations for Soviet dissolution were laid before December 1991. The three aspirant states declared their independence (Transnistria on 25 August 1991) or state sovereignty (Abkhazia on 25 August 1990 and South Ossetia on 20 September 1990) before the official dissolution of the USSR. As a result, a better starting point for analysis may be these dates.

Furthermore, I follow Jenkin and Patashkin's (2012) argument that legislation should be seen as living documents that are continuously evolving and are influenced by socio-political realities. Therefore, while most of the analysed documents were written after the Soviet dissolution, where necessary legislation related to citizenship adopted before this date is referenced.[274] As discussed in Chapter 3, since multiple citizenship regimes influence citizenship in the aspirant state, the legislative developments of the aspirant state's neighbours should also be explored. Furthermore, written and unwritten administrative

[272] Hermann 2009; Krippendorff 2004.
The content analysis process is adapted from Krippendorff's framework (2004: 29–40).
[273] Krippendorff 2004: 18
[274] The two most relevant documents that define and discuss citizenship are the USSR's Citizenship Law (1990) and Constitution (1977).

practices for implementing citizenship legislation may supplement the legislation.[275]

Thus, the corpus of analysis in decreasing order of importance is:

(i) citizenship legislation of aspirant states written after they declared independence/state sovereignty,
(ii) relevant sections of the aspirant state constitutions,[276]
(iii) other relevant legislation, policy documents, and administrative guidelines of the aspirant state,
(iv) relevant clauses of the citizenship legislation and constitution of the base, patron, and neighbouring states,
(v) citizenship legislation and constitution of the USSR.

To systematically analyse the citizenship legislation of aspirant states, a coding procedure needs to be adopted. As there is an existing body of work that analyses citizenship legislation of recognised states, this research adopts the coding procedures used by the 2017 CITLAW Index.[277] This index measures the degree of inclusiveness of components of citizenship provisions.[278] By using a coding procedure, it is possible to operationalise the multifaceted and broad concept of citizenship. Using existing coding procedures ensures replicability and allows for comparison with citizenship legislation of other polities.

However, if we look at the legislation from an ethnographic content analysis perspective, new concepts/codes can emerge during the coding process, and the need to include emic conceptions unique to aspirant state citizenship may arise.[279] The use of top-down (based on the existing coding procedures) and bottom-up coding also fits the abductive approach of

[275] Chopin 2006.
Written administrative practices can be policies on preparatory courses and exams for citizenship acquisition, requirements for submitted documents, or regulations on application processing time. Unwritten practices can pertain to discrimination against certain groups. For example, in Cyprus, children of mixed marriages (Republic of Cyprus and Türkiye) born in the TRNC are placed on a "waiting list", even if they are legally entitled to the Republic of Cyprus citizenship (Hopman et al. 2018: 22).
[276] As argued by Rubenstein & Lenagh-Maguire (2011), since the constitution is the foundation of a state's legal order and structure, in addition to analysing citizenship legislation, it is vital to analyse if and how membership is defined within the constitution. Also see Shaw (2020).
[277] Baaren & Vink 2021; Jeffers et al. 2017; Vink et al. 2021a; 2021b; Waldrauch 2006.
Coding is a reflective process that aims to map and categorise data to answer specific research questions (see Elliott 2018).
[278] Note that quantification is not an end in itself, rather, it is a heuristic for easier comparison of citizenship policies within and between cases and across time. Also, note that the CITLAW indicators aim to measure the degree of inclusiveness of provisions on a numerical scale, while the GLOBALCIT datasets are descriptive. Only minor differences exist between the two, but as the thesis aims to identify the degree of inclusiveness of citizenship provisions the CITLAW indicators by Jeffers et al. (2017) is used.
[279] Altheide & Schneider 2017; Krippendorff 2004: 21.

this research. Therefore, by using the abductive approach in content analysis,[280] post-Soviet aspirant state citizenship (based on legislation) can be conceptualised. All documents were coded twice to ensure nothing had been missed and to account for new codes emerging during the first coding cycle. To aid in this process, the legislation was coded with the assistance of the ATLAS.ti software.

Like any other text, citizenship legislation is not neutral nor objective, rather, it is a representation of a particular social reality and an understanding of what it means to be a citizen. Content analysis can be used to extrapolate how the conceptualisation of citizenship has evolved.[281] The literal interpretation of a text may not always match the intended idea behind the legislation or how it is interpreted in practice.[282] Thus, the inferences from the texts are triangulated against the interview responses related to the interpretation and application of the law.[283] It is also important to be reflexive as a researcher[284] and realise that my understanding of the content could change over time, especially after conducting interviews. Therefore, citizenship legislation was re-analysed (and further coded) after analysing the interviews and survey data.

Thematic/Framing Analysis of Interviews

While the starting point of this thesis is legal, it is important to compare what is written in law to the realities on the ground. Interviewing is a qualitative method used to gain an in-depth and focused understanding of a phenomenon. Interviews offer an insider perspective, provide agency to individuals at the core of the research, and can be used to test assumptions constructed from above.[285] Conducting interviews can increase a study's overall credibility by testing the researcher's views against those of the participants.[286] Interviews help uncover, rather than presuppose, individuals' lived experiences, behaviour, motivations, beliefs, and self-perception, as well as how group membership is understood and experienced.[287] Interviews also aid in uncovering "material conditions and structural forces that underwrite the socially patterned behaviours of all human beings, along with the meanings people attach to these conditions and forces".[288] The aim of conducting interviews is to investigate how

[280] Krippendorff 2004: 36–38.
[281] Krippendorff 2004: 47–39.
[282] Chopin 2006.
[283] Where available, comparisons were made with secondary literature, including media reports.
[284] Altheide & Schneider 2017; Bryman 2016: 388.
[285] Knott 2015a: 469.
[286] Bloomberg & Volpe 2008: 77.
[287] Bayard De Volo & Schatz 2004: 268; Knott 2015a: 478; Schwandt 1994: 221.
[288] Hockey & Forsey 2012: 58.

experts and citizens in aspirant states frame, and experience, their contested citizenship. For in-depth, content-rich, and genuine interviews to take place, they should resemble natural conversations. Semi-structured interviews allow for this and give flexibility for interlocutors to focus on issues within the subject of the interview that are important to them. [289]

Firstly, semi-structured online interviews with experts (government officials, legal experts, academics) based in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria were conducted. These interviews assisted in understanding how citizenship legislation is interpreted and applied by experts and how they frame and deal with the lack of recognition of the citizenship. The interviews also provide the opportunity to identify gaps between what is said and what is done.[290] In our case, experts' responses can be compared to what is written in legislation.

Most of the limited empirical research on aspirant state citizenship has restricted itself to the views of experts.[291] The opinions and experiences of citizens, and their vernacular knowledge, are equally important. A bottom-up approach allows us to go beyond official rhetoric, give everyday actors a voice, and look at the issue through their lived experiences.[292] Thus, in-depth semi-structured online interviews were conducted with citizens to understand how citizenship is experienced.[293] Additionally, it is crucial to be aware that experts also possess aspirant state citizenship and may have personal experiences related to the citizenship's contested nature. Therefore, the experts were encouraged to share their personal stories. Furthermore, by interviewing experts and citizens, similarities and differences in their framings can be explored.

The participants were gathered via snowball sampling, "which uses social networks of interviewees in order to expand the researcher's potential contacts".[294] This approach can

[289] Hermanowicz 2002.
Following this approach would move away from the unidirectional and extractive nature that interviews and surveys have been critiqued for. Rather than asking questions that I think are important, I encouraged participants to focus on areas that they think are important for understanding the phenomenon of citizenship in the aspirant states. Thus, it is important to have reciprocity and knowledge co-production and offer something in return for extracting the information. While monetary compensation is generally deemed unethical, other avenues will be considered. This can take the form of providing a white paper summarising the research findings to the research participants.
[290] Hockey & Forsey 2012: 54.
[291] E.g. Friedman 2019; Ganohariti 2020a; Krasniqi 2019; Tabachnik 2019.
Notable examples where both experts and non-experts were interviewed are the reports on citizenship in Abkhazia (Kvarchelia 2014) and the TRNC (Hopman et al. 2018).
[292] Knott 2015a: 469.
[293] I must be aware that expressed views represent only a certain reality and may be shaped by numerous factors, including the very act of interviewing or surveying (Ensink 2004: 159–160). Also see Knott (2017).
[294] Knott 2015a: 469.

increase the number of participants because individuals are likely to be more responsive if their acquaintance (or gatekeeper) vouches for the researcher's trustworthiness.[295] Furthermore, as suggested by Cohen and Arieli (2011), snowballing is an appropriate sampling method for (post)conflict societies that may not be easily accessible. The citizen interviews were drawn to ensure maximum representation of the "types" of citizens based on the different citizenship constellations (this approach is sometimes referred to as *sampling for range*). By interviewing individuals from all different citizenship constellations, it would be possible to explore how identity is constructed by citizens belonging to the different constellations, and also be able to test the confirmability of the Citizenship Constellation Model.

Due to the flexible nature of the interviews, it may be argued that they could lack consistency. However, dependability can be ensured via respondent selection rationale, interview guides, and using a cross-case coding framework to create more comparable data.[296] Small (2009: 24-27) suggests using a case study logic when using interviewing as a method to answer how and why questions. Rather than randomly selecting participants and their responses being independent of one another, they should be conducted sequentially, where the findings of the former interviews inform the knowledge gaps that need to be filled by the latter interviews. Small also argues that information saturation should occur by the time the last interview is conducted, as it will provide comparatively little new information. The point where interviewing should stop, would be when saturation is achieved. Furthermore, the case study interviewing logic fits in with the abductive nature of this research, as following each interview my understanding of citizenship can be re-evaluated and redefined. Because of this approach, the interview guide was also amended as the interviews progressed.[297] In total, 46 interviews were conducted with citizens of aspirant states: 22 from Abkhazia, 5 from South Ossetia, and 19 from Transnistria (see Appendix C3).[298]

Once the interviews were collected, they were transcribed (non-verbatim) and analysed using qualitative data analysis methods, more specifically, thematic analysis and frame

[295] Small 2009: 14.
All interviews are anonymised.
[296] Bloomberg & Volpe 2008: 78; Knott 2015a: 480.
[297] Bryman 2016: 470; Hermanowicz 2002: 494.
[298] Additionally, a former Georgian government official, a former Moldovan government official, and a Human Rights expert in Chișinău were interviewed.

analysis.[299] This thesis is interested in identifying "patterns of shared meaning [or themes] underpinned or united by a core concept" and seeing how interlocutors "develop [frame] a particular conceptualisation of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue".[300] Through discussions with citizens of aspirant states, the thesis aims to understand how they conceptualise, frame, experience, and navigate contested citizenship.

During the analysis of interviews, it is vital to be reflexive in the process of identifying themes and frames. Reflexive Thematic Analysis acknowledges that "meaning is not inherent or self-evident in data, [but] that meaning resides at the intersection of the data and the researcher's contextual and theoretically embedded interpretative practices". [301] Similarly, Ethnographic Content Analysis advocates for constant and reflexive comparison to identify and code emergent patterns, themes, and emphasis.[302] Further, by revisiting the transcripts sometime after the actual interviews it would be possible to re-interpret the interviews using different lenses.[303] Thus, following the abductive approach, the interviews were analysed (over several coding cycles) to identify how interlocutors frame and interpret contested citizenship, contested statehood, and their effects on lived experiences. The findings from the interviews (and surveys) were concurrently compared with the analysed legislation to identify overlaps and differences in the conceptualisation of citizenship.

A critique of interviews relates to validity, representativeness, and generalisability. While interviews may not be high in validity due to their subjective nature, what is important (particularly in citizen interviews) is the meaning rather than facts.[304] It must be kept in mind that an interview is a non-routine, purposive, and bounded conversation.[305] The data and knowledge gathered is coproduced and presents a specific social reality that the interlocutors (consciously) project during the interview.[306] Also, generalisability and representativeness are inherently difficult to achieve. However, this should not be the goal, and as Small (2009: 12-15) argues, such language should not be used to interpret interviews. He rather argues

[299] I acknowledge that there are different approaches to qualitative data analysis each focusing on different aspects. Common qualitative data analysis methods include content, thematic, narrative, and discourse analysis. That said, these methods lack a common approach and may be combined and applied differently by different researchers.
[300] Braun & Clarke 2019: 594; Chong & Druckman 2007: 107.
[301] Braun & Clarke 2021: 210.
[302] Altheide 1987; Altheide & Schneider 2017.
Coding was done with the assistance of the ATLAS.ti software.
[303] Timmermans & Tavory 2012: 177.
[304] Knott 2015a: 479.
[305] Rapport 2012: 43.
[306] Ensink 2004; Skinner 2012.

that saturation, which results in richness, is more important than representation. Ultimately, the advantage of interviews is the richness of collected data; thus, these findings should be triangulated with other methods to gain a more holistic picture.

Survey Data Analysis

The thesis also entails conducting a semi-structured survey[307] to elicit aspirant state citizens' experiences of being subject to contested citizenship. The survey aims to capture aspirant state citizens' feelings and attitudes towards (contested) citizenship, dual citizenship, and how their citizenship(s) impact their rights and obligations. The surveys are intended to supplement the interviews. The online survey gathering started simultaneously with the interviews but continued until the final stage of the research to maximise respondents. There were a total of 400 responses (Abkhazia 154, South Ossetia 80, Transnistria 166).

While random sampling is the most representative, this is tough to achieve due to the difficulty of accessing the local population and the general reluctance of individuals to respond to random surveys. As a result, convenience and snowball sampling were used since people are likely to participate if they are encouraged to do so by someone they are already acquainted with.[308] Thus the survey (in Russian and English) was distributed amongst/via personal contacts and shared on social media (see Appendix C4-5). Due to the non-random sampling technique, the generalisability of the survey results may be limited. However, as surveys are used in tandem with other methods, it is envisaged that the overall results will provide a holistic understanding of citizenship in post-Soviet aspirant states. The survey responses were analysed using SPSS.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the research design and the methods used in this thesis. This research adopts an abductive approach to explore the phenomenon of citizenship in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria from multiple levels through a comparative case study design. The top-down macro-level approach entails exploring aspirant state citizenship legislations and their interaction within constellations. The bottom-up approach investigates citizenship on an individual level by exploring the legal and socio-political realities of how aspirant state citizens experience their citizenship status(es).

[307] Schaefferi & Presser 2003.
[308] Small 2009: 14.

The chapter further argued that to gain a holistic understanding of how the phenomenon of citizenship is constructed in post-Soviet aspirant states, a mixed method approach must be adopted. Through analysis of legislation, surveys, and interviews and the triangulation of three different areas (legislation, expert perspectives, and citizen perspectives), the credibility of its conclusions can be increased. Furthermore, the legal analysis and field research contributes to testing and re-developing existing conceptions of citizenship to fit the realities of the aspirant state.

Chapter 5
Citizenship Regimes in Aspirant States

Aspirant states take various measures to display their level of sovereignty, ranging from having national symbols to gaining full control of claimed territory. Another avenue is the creation of citizenship regimes that specify who gains access to membership and who does not. Concurrently, as observed in the preambles of many constitutions, it is the people who establish the state. Acknowledging this reciprocal and interdependent relationship between the state and people is crucial to understanding how (aspirant) states are (legally) established. Once recognised as citizens, individuals can access rights and must fulfil obligations associated with their citizenship(s). In turn, through citizen participation in politics and internal affairs, aspirant states strengthen their internal legitimacy.

From a macro/state level, citizenship can be conceptualised as a state- and nation-building tool that reflects the character of the state; however, in aspirant states, this state- and nation-building process is contested. Given this contestation, how can we determine the legal status(es) of individuals living in aspirant states? To answer this question, (citizenship) legislation, administrative practices of the aspirant, base, and parent states, and relevant international legal doctrine must be studied. Aspirant states largely continue to lack external legitimacy, and thus in the eyes of International Law, all acts, including those on citizenship, are generally unrecognised.[309] To overcome these limitations and realise otherwise unavailable rights, aspirant state citizens take steps to acquire compensatory citizenship of a recognised state.[310] It is often the case that patron, or kin, states grant extraterritorial citizenship to people living in aspirant states for geopolitical and/or cultural reasons.[311] Once an individual acquires a compensatory citizenship, it should be passed on to their children through the *jus sanguinis* principle. Aspirant states, for pragmatic reasons, have permitted dual citizenship so as to "escape the impact of non-recognition".[312] Concurrently, the base state may continue to claim residents of the aspirant state as its citizens, even if there is no

[309] IIFFMCG 2009: 164; Kunigėlytė-Žiūkienė 2015: 182; Romay 2018: 175–176; Ziemele 2014: 237, 240.
[310] Ganohariti 2020a; A. Grossman 2001: 851.
[311] Agarin 2015; Artman 2013; Littlefield 2009; Nagashima 2019; Peters 2010.
[312] Agarin 2015: 127.
In contrast, Kunigėlytė-Žiūkienė (2015: 189–190) argues that state recognition itself has no influence on the decisions of an aspirant state in regulating its nationality. However, this and the following chapter will illustrate that this statement is not entirely accurate. While aspirant states can choose to regulate citizenship as they wish, their choices are influenced by the lack of recognition.

effective (factual) or genuine link between the two.

The following sections discuss (i) how the aspirant states have defined their citizenry both historically and following Soviet dissolution, and (ii) the base state's position on the aspirant state's citizenship regime. Thereafter, drawing from international legal doctrine on nationality, the chapter presents a Citizenship Constellation Model [313] that offers a framework to examine the multiplicity of legal statuses in aspirant states. This framework can be used to determine if, and when, aspirant state citizens are considered stateless, nationals of the aspirant state, citizens of the base state, citizens of another recognised state, or dual nationals.

Part I - Defining the Citizen

Defining the Abkhazian Citizen[314]

SSR Abkhazia was proclaimed in March 1921. The 1925 Constitution can be considered among the first documents that define the citizens of Abkhazia, as well as their rights and responsibilities (see Arts. 8, 13, 65). Article 5 recognised citizens of Abkhazia to simultaneously be citizens of the Transcaucasian SFSR and the USSR. In the 1927 Constitution, in addition to the above statuses, Abkhazians were now also considered citizens of the Georgian SSR. Thus, residents of Abkhazia came to have a multi-level relationship with these different political authorities. In 1931 Abkhazia was downgraded to an ASSR within the Georgian SSR. This hierarchical relationship remained until the adoption of the 1937 Constitution (Art. 17), after which Abkhazian citizens were no longer citizens of the Transcaucasian SFSR due to its dissolution a year earlier. This new constitution (Chapter 8) also extensively detailed the rights and obligations of Abkhazian citizens, which were absent in the previous constitutions. The 1978 Constitution (Chapters 4 and 5) also extensively detailed the rights and obligations of citizens.[315] More importantly, however, the citizenry, and their rights and obligations were derived from Soviet citizenship legislation and constitutions.

The 1990 declaration of state sovereignty was based on the core idea that the Abkhaz nation (*Abkkhazkaya natsiya*) had a right to self-determination as a multi-ethnic state, where all

[313] Developed from Ganohariti 2020a.
[314] For a discussion of the historical evolution of the political status of Abkhazia see Appendix A1.
[315] Butba 2020: 41; Chirikba 2015: 120–127.

residents were to be considered Abkhazian citizens whilst maintaining Soviet citizenship.[316] As a result, according to Butba (2020), the Abkhazian republic expanded its sovereignty by bringing the question of granting citizenship under its purview. The 1994 Constitution (Art. 2 & Chapter 2) stipulated the rights and obligations of citizens.[317] On 12 October 1999, the 1994 Constitution was re-adopted by the Parliament. This date, as discussed later, would become critical concerning access to citizenship. In March 1993, Abkhazia passed its first resolution related to citizenship (concerning diaspora) and, in December 1993, adopted its first citizenship law.[318] Over three decades, the citizenship legislation became more comprehensive, with the current law being adopted in 2005 along with several critical amendments.[319] However, Abkhazian citizenship remained unrecognised until 2008.

In addition to citizenship legislation, the aspirant state adopted related laws, such as on the local passports system. In January 2006, Abkhazia began issuing internal passports, and since 2010 has issued *zagran* passports.[320] Before 2006, residents used internal (1974 series) or *zagran* (series №40, 41, 42) Soviet passports with a stamp certifying their Abkhazian citizenship or Form №9 (akin to a *propiska*),[321] which listed the individual's address and ethnicity.[322] Those who had not acquired passports before the dissolution of the Soviet Union were issued (internal) Soviet passports with an insert.[323] Over time, Soviet passports lost their utility, and from 2011, they could no longer be used for border crossings with Russia.[324] In 2016 all citizens were mandated to replace their existing internal passports.[325]

The other significant development relates to the phenomenon of passportization (extraterritorial naturalisation/citizenship).[326] The limited functionality of Abkhazian

[316] Abkhaz Supreme Council 1990a, Art. 2.
[317] Chirikba 2015: 152–172.
[318] Until this point, according to Butba (2020: 46–48), all statements about citizenship were largely declarative. In other words, while the term "citizen of Abkhazia" may have been used, it was never defined who exactly had the right to Abkhazian citizenship.
[319] Until December 1993, the 1990 Soviet Law on citizenship remained in force (Butba 2020: 44, 49).
[320] Abkhazia 2004; 2010; Melkonyan 2007.
According to Novikov (2006), the first batch of Abkhazian passports was produced in 2004 in Türkiye but was intercepted by Georgian authorities.
[321] Refers to the local domicile registration (system) in the Soviet Union. See Baiburin (2021: chap. 4).
[322] Abkhazia 1995b; Butba 2020; Lyubarskaya 2004; RA Cit№1; RA Exp№1.
[323] RA Exp№7.
[324] Uzel 2011.
[325] Abkhazia 2016.
This was due to the controversy surrounding the issuance of Abkhazian passports to ethnic Georgians in eastern Abkhazia (2009-2013) (further discussed in Chapter 7).
[326] In this context, passportization is defined as the extraterritorial and "mass conferral of Russian citizenship on the population of particular territories by distributing Russian passports" (Nagashima 2019: 188). Also see Artman (2013), IIFFMCG (2009: 169–171), Littlefield (2009), and (Peters (2010). Russian citizenship

citizenship prompted many to acquire Russian citizenship. Under the 1991 law, former Soviet citizens living in Russia had simplified access to Russian citizenship.[327] In parallel, from May 1999 until June 2002, regardless of place of residence, Russian citizenship could be acquired by "compatriots" who formerly had Soviet citizenship and never voluntarily acquired another citizenship.[328] The law recognised former Soviet citizens and their descendants who did not voluntarily acquire the citizenship of another state as Russian citizens.[329] In July 2002, a more restrictive citizenship law came into force in Russia.[330] The forthcoming law raised fear among Abkhazians that their access to Russian citizenship would be permanently closed and thus prompted the mass-scale acquisition of Russian citizenship. In anticipation of the new law, the Congress of Russian Communities in Abkhazia acted as an intermediary to help Abkhazians to acquire Russian citizenship. Thus, within a month (June 2002), over 120,000 Abkhazians had acquired Russian citizenship bringing the total population of Abkhazians with Russian citizenship to over 70%.[331]

The fear of the restrictiveness of the 2002 Russian citizenship law was not warranted, as it left an avenue for former Soviet citizens who remained stateless (from Russia's perspective) to acquire citizenship.[332] Abkhazian (and South Ossetian) citizenship was not recognised by Russia, and thus they were considered stateless.[333] Thus, those who had not voluntarily acquired any other citizenship could acquire Russian citizenship without renouncing the aspirant state citizenship. When Abkhazian citizens began to acquire Russian citizenship *en*

acquisition by Abkhazians and South Ossetians who had fled the 1990s war and settled in Russia should not be considered to have been acquired via passportization since they had done so under acquisition rules for residents on the territory of Russia. Another definition of passportization (in Russian) refers to the process where (aspirant) state authorities engage in the documentation and issuance of passports to individuls living in the territory under their control (Ganohariti 2021b). However, in annexed territories like like Crimea attempting to categorise passportization as an internal or external practice is difficult (Wrighton 2018).

[327] Ganohariti 2021b: 2; Russia 1991, Art. 18г & 19-3a.
Former USSR citizens residing in post-Soviet states and those who arrived to live in Russia after 6 February 1992 could acquire citizenship if before 31 December 2000, they declared their desire to acquire it. In practice, they only needed to provide a written declaration and did not need to renounce any other post-Soviet citizenship (if they had one).

[328] Russia 1999, Art. 11-4.

[329] These two provisions can be interpreted to mean that even if Abkhazians and South Ossetians were *de jure* Georgian citizens, they could still acquire Russian citizenship.

[330] Shevel 2012: 127–130.
This restrictive law was short-lived, and over the years, the Duma introduced amendments simplifying access to citizenship for specific groups (Russia 2002). For example, one of the latest amendments was the removal of the renunciation condition upon naturalisation (Ganohariti 2020b).

[331] Butba 2020: 71; Ganohariti 2021b: 3.
Since the citizenship applications were processed by the Russian MFA, individuals only acquired *zagran* passports. Until individuals received their *zagran* passports, the citizenship acquisition was initially confirmed by a stamp in their Soviet passport or receipt stating that they were Russian citizens. To acquire an internal passport an application must be made from within Russia.

[332] Russia 2002, Art. 14.

[333] Butba 2020: 70; Lomia 2014.

masse in mid-2002, dual citizenship was restricted in Abkhazian legislation, as permission to maintain dual citizenship (with any country) needed to be acquired from the Presidium/President.[334] In November 2002, the restriction was lifted, allowing Abkhazians to acquire Russian citizenship without gaining permission.[335] Thus, it could be said that the liberalisation occurred in response to Abkhazians acquiring Russian citizenship.[336] While there are no official statistics, the proportion of Abkhazians with Russian citizenship rose from 20% in June 2002 to 70% in July 2002 to over 80% in January 2008.[337] The current number of dual citizens is estimated to be at 90%.[338] While the necessity of gaining permission to maintain dual citizenship was removed, the states with which dual citizenship could be maintained have been largely restricted to the Russian Federation.[339] The Abkhaz are exempt and can maintain citizenship with any state.

Defining the South Ossetian Citizen[340]

The South Ossetian AO, within the Georgian SSR, was established in April 1922. However, unlike Abkhazia, South Ossetia did not have a constitution until 1993. Prior to this, the legal status of residents of the South Ossetian AO was derived from the Georgian SSR, Transcaucasian SFSR (1922-1936), and the USSR constitutions. Thus, there was no "South Ossetian citizen" status until its independence. In the early 1990s, it became necessary to define the new citizenry. The 1990 declaration of state sovereignty was based on the idea that South Ossetia was responsible for the destiny of the Ossetian nation (*Osetinskaya natsiya*). Furthermore, the people (*narod*) had a right to self-determination and established republican citizenship in tandem with the existing Soviet citizenship.[341]

The 1993 Constitution created the foundation for the South Ossetian citizenry, but it barely mentioned the rights and obligations of citizens.[342] In contrast, the 2001 Constitution states that South Ossetia has its own citizenship and outlines the rights and obligations of citizens.[343] In February 1995, South Ossetia passed its first citizenship law through which it defined its citizenry, and in 2006 a new citizenship law came into force.

[334] Abkhazia 1993, Arts. 7, 23.
[335] Butba 2020: 81–82.
[336] Ganohariti 2020a: 184.
[337] Ganohariti 2021b; Nagashima 2019.
[338] Chukunov 2020; Tarba 2022.
[339] Abkhazia 2005, Art. 6.
[340] For a discussion of the historical evolution of the political status of South Ossetia see Appendix A2.
[341] Council of People's Deputies of the South Ossetian AO 1990.
[342] Gagloyeva 2013.
[343] South Ossetia 2001, Arts. 16-46.

In the early years of independence, South Ossetians continued to use and be issued Soviet passports of the 1974 issue, with a note on the possession of South Ossetian citizenship.[344] However, by the mid-2000s, no blank passports remained, and officials issued documents printed on commercial printers. The first domestic South Ossetian passports were issued in August 2006 and *zagran* passports have been issued since 2014.[345] Despite the development of a citizenship regime, the citizenship remained unrecognised until 2008.

Like Abkhazia, South Ossetia was also affected by Russian passportization. Passportization in South Ossetia began in 2004, when the percentage of those with Russian citizenship rose from 55% (July 2003) to 95% (June 2004).[346] According to the 2015 Census, 91% of South Ossetian citizens residing on the territory had Russian citizenship (See Appendix B2). From the Russian perspective, as with Abkhazia, South Ossetians could easily acquire Russian citizenship until 2008 since Russia did not recognise South Ossetian citizenship. Initially, dual citizenship in South Ossetia was also restricted, such that permission of the President was required.[347] This requirement was removed as a consequence of passportization, but dual citizenship has also been restricted to the Russian Federation.[348] Formally, only individuals who regard Ossetia as their historical homeland are exempt and can maintain citizenship with any state.

Georgia's Position on Citizenship in Abkhazia and South Ossetia

Following Soviet dissolution, legal acts of Abkhazian and South Ossetian authorities have remain largely unrecognised (except by states that recognise them). Thus, the status of Abkhazian and South Ossetian citizens has limited legal effect internationally.[349] Instead, under Georgian and International Law, Abkhazian and South Ossetian residents automatically acquired (or were ascribed) Georgian citizenship in 1993.[350] Only those who explicitly refused Georgian citizenship in 1993 could be considered stateless under

[344] Zayats 2004; RSO Exp№2.
[345] MFA South Ossetia 2014; Novikov 2006.
[346] Ganohariti 2021b: 3; Nagashima 2019: 188.
[347] South Ossetia 1995 Arts. 3, 30-1г.
[348] South Ossetia 2006, Art. 6 & Art. 14-3.
While Abkhazia is clear on its position regarding dual citizenship, the South Ossetian legislation is somewhat ambiguous.
[349] Lagidze as cited in Novikov 2006.
[350] Georgia 1993, Art. 3; IIFFMCG 2009: 150–155; Peters 2010: 638–640.
Georgian citizenship legislation is primarily based on the ethnic understanding of the nation (see Tabachnik 2019: 165–178). The 1993 legislation granted six months for individuals to renounce Georgian citizenship in writing.

Georgian and International Law, until they acquired the citizenship of another state (i.e. Russia).[351]

Currently, persons born in Abkhazia or South Ossetia before December 1991 (and their descendants) who do not possess any other citizenship have the right to Georgian citizenship.[352] The category includes individuals who also maintain Russian citizenship acquired via extraterritorial naturalisation (i.e. applied for Russian citizenship via the MFA). From the Georgian perspective, the position is for the nonrecognition of Russian citizenship and passports conferred to individuals living in the "occupied territories" as it violates International Law, including Georgia's territorial sovereignty.[353] One argument is based on the abuse of rights principle.[354] This principle provides a legal framework to argue that if Russia intentionally engaged in extraterritorial naturalisation (passportization) for a purpose other than that for which the right was intended (e.g. as a pretext for subsequent military intervention), then it means that Russia violated International Law and thus "the international community should not recognize Russia's right to protect the citizens of South Ossetia [and Abkhazia] on the basis of their being Russian citizens".[355]

Because of Georgia's position on nonrecognition, by extension, some European states have refused to recognise, or have put restrictions, on Russian passports issued to residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[356] In 2022, following the invasions of Ukraine, the EU member states collectively agreed not to accept Russian travel documents "issued in or to persons resident in regions or territories in Ukraine which are occupied by the Russian Federation

[351] IIFFMCG 2009: 176.

[352] The law states that "the following persons shall be deemed Georgian citizens, except for persons who have acquired or will acquire Georgian citizenship under this Law: a) a person born in Georgia before 21 December 1991, who resided in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia or in the territory of Tskhinvali Region (former Autonomous Region of South Ossetia) before 21 December 1991, has not acquired foreign citizenship and no circumstance under Article 16 of this Law applies to him/her; b) a child of a person who was born in Georgia before 21 December 1991 and resided in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia or in the territory of Tskhinvali Region (former Autonomous Region of South Ossetia) before 21 December 1991, who has not acquired foreign citizenship and no circumstance under Article 16 of this Law applies to him/her" (Georgia 2014 [2018], Art. 30-1).

[353] IIFFMCG 2009: 155–183; MFA Georgia 2021; Tsikhelashvili 2017.
The IIFFMCG finds that in cases where there is a factual relationship between the person acquiring citizenship via extraterritorial naturalisation and Russia (e.g. via marriage or close family links) or is *de jure* stateless, then Georgia should recognise the conferral of Russian citizenship.

[354] Kiss 2006; Peters 2010: 675–677; Sironi 2013.

[355] Natoli 2010: 415–416. Also see Green (2010).
A less popular legal position is that by accepting Russian citizenship, Abkhazians and South Ossetians renounced the Georgian one since dual citizenship is heavily restricted (Georgia 1993, Arts. 1 & 32; 2014, Arts. 3 & 21), and thus they became illegal residents (Zubashvili as cited in Balavadze 2011a).

[356] Balavadze 2011b; Gvindzhia 2017; IIFFMCG 2009: 179–181; Khashig 2021.

or breakaway territories in Georgia".[357] This decision formalised the policy across the whole region, which, until now, was implemented on an ad-hoc basis.[358] Thus, from the Georgian perspective, (i) those who had acquired *de jure* Georgian citizenship in 1993 were citizens of Georgia at the time of the armed conflict in 2008, (ii) Russian citizenship acquired by individuals without a strong factual link via extraterritorial naturalisation should not be recognised.[359]

Despite the nonrecognition of Abkhazian and South Ossetian citizenship, Georgia recognises Abkhazian and South Ossetian civil documents for the purpose of issuing status-neutral identity/travel documents or determining Georgian citizenship.[360] The idea behind status-neutral documents was to provide an alternative to Russian passports. However, Abkhazian and South Ossetian officials have rejected these documents because they lack "true" neutrality as they are issued by the Georgian Ministry of Interior and are seen as a PR campaign.[361] In the first six years after their introduction, only 200 neutral passports were issued.[362]

Defining the Transnistrian Citizen[363]

The Moldavian ASSR (within the Ukrainian SSR) was established in 1924. The 1925 Moldavian ASSR Constitution did not discuss citizenship.[364] Thus, any citizenship status and rights were derived from the 1919 and 1929 Ukrainian and 1924 USSR constitutions. The second constitution of the Moldavian ASSR came into effect in 1938 following the adoption of the 1937 Ukrainian SSR Constitution and the 1936 Soviet Constitution. This new constitution (Art. 17) stated that residents of the Moldavian ASSR were concurrently entitled to the citizenships of the Moldavian ASSR, Ukrainian SSR, and the USSR, along

[357] European Parliament 2022.
In 2016, the EU issued guidelines on the non-recognition of Russian passports issued in Crimea (MFA Ukraine 2021).
[358] Gezerdava as cited in Sharia 2022b.
[359] Burjanadze 2007; IIFFMCG 2009: 158–160; Lagidze as cited in Novikov 2006; Peters 2010; Public Defender of Georgia 2017b.
Peters argues that conferring Russian citizenship to former USSR citizens residing outside of Russia does not meet the minimum criteria of a factual connection.
[360] Georgia 1996, Art.20-13; 2008, Art. 8; 2011; Kirova 2012: 37–39; Ministry of Justice Georgia 2011, Art. 7.
[361] Balavadze 2011b; Bigg 2012; Civil Georgia 2012; Zakareishvili 2012; RA Cit№5; RA Exp№4; RA Exp№5.
[362] Tsikhelashvili 2017.
[363] For a discussion of the historical evolution of the political status of Transnistria see Appendix A3.
[364] Kuznetsov 2015b: 180–184.
The only reference to citizenship relates to language rights of citizens of the Moldavian ASSR.

with associated rights and obligations.[365] This is similar to the status of Abkhazians between 1936 and 1991.

The status of citizens changed in 1940 when the Moldavian ASSR was upgraded to the Moldavian SSR. However, not all citizens of the Moldavian ASSR would become citizens of the Moldavian SSR since certain parts would remain within the Ukrainian SSR. Furthermore, due to the merger with Bessarabia, a new group of individuals would become citizens of this SSR and, by extension, the Soviet Union.[366] The 1941 Constitution of the Moldavian SSR recognised all its citizens as citizens of the USSR.[367] The status remained unchanged with the adoption of a new constitution in 1978.[368]

In the 1990s, with the rising tensions and following Transnistria's declaration of independence,[369] it became clear that Transnistria would develop on its own trajectory. As part of the state-building process, it adopted legislation related to citizenship. Following the September 1990 declaration stating the formation of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian SSR, the pathway to sovereignty/independence was set. Thus, the local authorities took steps to establish legislative authority over the region, including the drafting of citizenship legislation. The first regulation on citizenship was a presidential degree passed in February 1992. This document requested Transnistrian officials not to issue Moldovan citizenship on the territory of Transnistria.[370] Over the next three decades, Transnistria adopted three citizenship laws.[371] Transnistria's first constitution, which detailed citizens' rights and obligations, came into force on 17 January 1996 following a popular referendum.[372]

Transnistria has issued internal passports since October 2001, with over 500,000 passports issued to date,[373] but it does not issue *zagran* passports. Before 2001, Transnistrians were provided with an additional insert to their Soviet internal passport or any other passports that they possessed.[374] Soviet Passports, which indicate the ownership of Transnistrian

[365] Kuznetsov 2015c: 215–223.
[366] Supreme Soviet USSR 1945: 40.
[367] Kuznetsov 2015c: 390–399.
[368] Gasca 2012: 3.
[369] Transnistria 1991.
[370] Transnistria 1992a, Art. 4.
[371] Transnistria 1992b; 2002b; 2017.
[372] Transnistria 1996: sec. 2.
[373] Novosti PMR 2020; Transnistria 2001; 2002a.
[374] Malaev 2017; PMR Exp№2.

citizenship, continue to be recognised.[375]

Unlike Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the development of citizenship legislation and its interaction with the citizenship regimes of other states has been less complicated and contested in Transnistria. Since its inception, Transnistria has allowed dual citizenship, and most Transnistrians have multiple citizenships.[376] In the 1990s, it was difficult to access Russian citizenship, so Transnistrians acquired any recognised citizenship/passport that was available.[377] While Transnistrians may have access to a second passport from several states, including Russia, Moldova, Ukraine, Romania or Bulgaria, the position of Transnistrian authorities is in favour of the acquisition of Russian citizenship.[378] While many Transnistrians have acquired Russian citizenship, unlike Abkhazia or South Ossetia, Russia never engaged in passportization, rather, citizenship acquisition occurred at a constant pace.[379] That said, Russia has used citizenship to achieve its geopolitical goals in the region.

Moldova's Position on Citizenship in Transnistria

Moldova adopted its first citizenship law in 1991 and largely followed the "new state model" of citizenship, which allowed all residents with a *propiska* at the time of state formation to acquire citizenship.[380] Despite the influence of the pan-Romanian ethno-linguistic identity and ethnicising nationalism, Moldova adopted territorial-based legislation with all individuals born on the territory being recognised as citizens.[381] Those not born but permanently residing on its territory on or before 23 June 1990 could voluntarily acquire its citizenship if they applied before September 1993.[382] The above would result in all those

[375] Davink 2021; Transnistria 2002a [2018], Art. 10.
The internal Soviet passport also continues to be recognised as a valid identity document in Russia.
[376] It is estimated that out of a population of around half a million, approximately 220,000 hold Russian citizenship, 200,000 have Moldovan citizenship, and 100,000 have Ukrainian citizenship (Krasnoselsky 2019). This means that many have at least three citizenships. These numbers do not reflect the outmigration of dual citizens, and neither are they based on official census.
[377] Krasnoselsky 2019.
[378] Krasnoselsky 2020.
[379] Nagashima 2019: 194–196.
[380] Brubaker 1992b; Shevel 2009.
Each state defined the cut-off date differently. For some, it was the date of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, for others, it was the date of the declaration of independence or sovereignty.
[381] See Tabachnik 2019: 120–141.
The automatic acquisition of Moldovan citizenship was restricted in 2018, such that if neither parents haf Moldovan citizenship, then at least one of them needed to have a legal residence (Moldova 2000, Art. 11).
[382] Gasca 2012: 4–5; Moldova 1991a, Art. 2.
Additionally, (descendants of) persons who, before June 1940, lived in Bessarabia, Northern Bucovina, Herța district or in the Moldavian SSAR, if on the day of the adoption of the citizenship law resided in Moldova, descendants of persons born in Moldova, and spouses and children of Moldovan citizens can acquire citizenship.

born on the territory of Transnistria (post-1940 borders) being considered Moldovan, with many other residents being eligible to acquire Moldovan citizenship. However, according to Gasca, the legislation did not fully address the issue of citizenship for those who had moved to Transnistria during the Soviet Union since only around 4000 persons (from the whole of Moldova) made use of the "right of option" pathway. Furthermore, dual citizenship was restricted.[383] With the above, it can be interpreted that Moldova claimed and considered all those born on the territory of Transnistria as its citizens (if they did not have any other citizenship).

In 2000 Moldova adopted a new citizenship law. One development related to statelessness reduction, which provided several pathways for the simplified acquisition of Moldovan citizenship.[384] In 2002 the constitution was amended to allow dual citizenship, with the citizenship law being amended the following year.[385] The liberalisation of dual citizenship was in response to the mass acquisition of Romanian citizenship and becoming a party to the European Convention on Nationality.[386] The 2000 Citizenship Law (and subsequent amendments) continued to recognise those born in Transnistria as its citizens, but following 2002 those who had another citizenship could also acquire Moldovan citizenship. Furthermore, permanent residents of Soviet Moldova who had failed to acquire citizenship by recognition before September 1993, from July 2004, once again were able to do so.[387] This was done to accommodate those living in Transnistria.[388] The renunciation upon naturalisation requirement was removed in 2014.[389]

Since Transnistria allows dual citizenship and Moldova has (since 2003) liberalised its dual citizenship policy, many Transnistrians maintain multiple citizenships. Moldova recognises Russian and any other citizenship possessed by individuals living in Transnistria. This is drastically different from the situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Part II - Citizenship Constellations in Aspirant States

The preceding sections discussed the development of citizenship regimes in Abkhazia,

[383] Moldova 1991a, Art. 6; 1994, Art. 18.
[384] Gasca 2012: 8.
[385] Moldova 1994, Art. 18; 2000, Arts. 23-24.
[386] Gasca 2012: 13–15.
Since 1991, Romanian citizenship legislation has had provisions for descendants of residents of Bessarabia.
[387] Moldova 2000, Art. 12.
[388] Gasca 2012: 8, 12–13.
[389] Moldova 2000, Art. 17.

South Ossetia, and Transnistria and put forward the base states' positions. The evidence from the three cases illustrates the complexity of overlapping citizenship regimes. Building on previous work[390] and accounting for international legal doctrine on nationality, the following model demonstrates the entanglement of the different citizenship regimes.[391]

Table 6: Citizenship Constellations in Aspirant States.

	Recognition of aspirant state citizenship	**Nonrecognition** of aspirant state citizenship
Type I	Aspirant State Citizen	*de jure* Stateless Person
		Base State Citizen
Type II	Dual Citizen (of Aspirant State and Patron State)	Base State Citizen
		Patron State Citizen
Type III	Dual Citizen	Citizen of Recognised State(s)

Are Aspirant State Citizens Stateless?

Type I relates to individuals who hold only aspirant state citizenship from the perspective of the aspirant states and other states recognising it. These are states that have recognised Abkhazia and South Ossetia since 2008 (Russia, Nauru, Nicaragua, Syria, Venezuela). Concurrently, from a nonrecognition perspective, such individuals may be recognised as stateless because statelessness is the opposite of "national citizenship".[392] Thus, individuals may concurrently be stateless and citizens of a polity that is not recognised as a state (e.g. municipality, aspirant state).

When discussing statelessness, it is essential to differentiate between *de jure* and *de facto* statelessness. According to the 1954 Statelessness Convention, a *de jure* stateless person is someone "who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law".[393] The UNHCR argues that, while widespread recognition nor UN membership is necessary for an entity to be considered a state for the purposes of the Statelessness Convention, *de jure* statelessness can be a matter of legal position based on whether a state recognises another polity as a state.[394] For example, while some states may consider mono-citizens of aspirant states as stateless, states that recognise the aspirant state would not consider them as stateless persons. Thus, due to diverging tertiary rules, a citizen of an aspirant state could

[390] Ganohariti 2020a.
[391] This model does not discuss individuals who are not recognised as citizens of the aspirant state but reside within its borders (e.g. foreigners or stateless persons) since such individuals are not the focus of this thesis. For example, individuals who are recognised as stateless by aspirant state authorities may concurrently be recognised as stateless by the base state or ascribed the citizenship of the base state.
[392] Tonkiss 2017: 243.
[393] United Nations 1954, Art. 1.
[394] UNHCR 2014: paras. 19–21.

be treated as a national in one case and as stateless in another.

The term *de facto* stateless, which is not a legal concept, refers to persons who have a nationality according to law but lack a connection with the state, lack access to rights resulting from the nationality either inside or outside the state, or cannot prove their nationality.[395] In other words, the nationality is not effective.[396] However, the effectiveness of nationality is irrelevant in determining whether an individual is stateless.[397] Since this chapter is interested in determining the legal status of individuals, the term *de facto* stateless is avoided.

In the three cases presented, statelessness occurs in limited instances. In Transnistria, it applied to individuals born outside Moldavian SSR, but residing there when Moldova declared sovereignty in 1990, and had failed to acquire it before September 1993. This is because, between 1993 and 2004, they were not eligible for Moldovan citizenship by recognition.[398] However, following amendments in 2004, even this category became eligible for citizenship.[399] However, some individuals still do not have a recognised citizenship. This includes children who had moved to Moldova in the early 1990s but did not have any proof of registration in Moldova, or were unable to acquire citizenship via their parents. The other category comprises the older population who never needed or desired to acquire any other citizenship.[400] The existence of mono-citizens is also evidenced in naturalisation data where, over the years, more than 1200 stateless persons (at the point of naturalisation) acquired Transnistrian citizenship (See Appendix B3). A small proportion of mono-citizens also

[395] Kaneko-Iwase 2021: 46–50; UNHCR 2014: para. 7; van Waas & de Chickera 2017: 57; Weissbrodt & Collins 2006: 252.
Weis (1956: 168) considered this term to be a misnomer. Tucker (2014: 282) argues against using the term *de facto* stateless since "the lack of citizenship of any state is the only defining feature of statelessness under international law, by broadening the definition to include *de facto* statelessness, statelessness ceases to be a standalone issue [and] … the protection regime itself would cease to have any core definable purpose of whom it is meant to protect".
[396] See Van Waas & de Chickera's (2017: 62) critique of the use of "effective nationality" in identifying whether an individual is *de facto* stateless due to there being no "substantive minimum content of nationality". A low functionality of nationality does not erase the existence of a nationality.
[397] Harvey 2010; Peters 2010: 639–640; UNHCR 2014: para. 53.
A narrower definition describes *de facto* stateless persons as "persons outside the country of their nationality who are unable or, for valid reasons, are unwilling to avail themselves of the protection of that country" UNHCR 2010: 6). This definition aligns with the assumption of the drafters of the Statelessness Conventions that all *de facto* stateless persons are refugees, and thus such persons would gain protection via refugee law rather than statelessness law (Weissbrodt & Collins 2006: 252). However, this assumption does not address cases of statelessness *in situ* (Vlieks 2017) as is the case in aspirant states where statelessness occurs in a non-migratory context.
[398] Gasca 2012: 8, 12–13.
[399] Moldova 2000, Art. 12d.
[400] PMR Cit№9; PMR Exp№2; PMR Exp№3; PMR Exp№4; PMR Exp№5.
Georgia and Moldova have dedicated statelessness determination procedures.

exists in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In 2016, approximately 3000-3800 people had only Abkhazian citizenship; in 2017, they numbered 5000.[401] According to the South Ossetian Department of State Statistics, in 2015, 4188 (8.7%) citizens did not declare to have dual citizenship.[402] Thus, this group does not have access to a recognised citizenship.

From a nonrecognition perspective, individuals with only the citizenship of the aspirant state may be considered stateless by external actors.[403] However, as will be discussed in the following chapter, the fact that the individual may be considered stateless internationally does not mean that they do not have rights or obligations. Given that individuals can derive rights from the aspirant state citizenship and can participate in the local socio-political system, this citizenship becomes effective locally. As argued by Kingston (2014: 134), "international community's reliance on state-sponsored identities and documentation, however, leaves little space for rights protection outside the confines of bounded, legal nationality". Thus, the legal status of an individual cannot be divorced from the functionality of that status.

A further argument is that because nationality is the relationship between a state and an individual, and such a relationship exists in aspirant states, their citizens cannot be considered stateless, regardless of the lack of international recognition.[404] A more accurate term might be "limited statelessness", which was used by an interlocutor to refer to cases where citizens of aspirant states cannot access international mechanisms and procedures to protect human rights.[405] In other words, the effects of statelessness become visible only on the international level and only in states that do not recognise the aspirant state. From the International Law perspective, individuals with only aspirant state citizenship may be treated as stateless, domestically (and from the perspective of recognition granting states), they are nationals of a sovereign state. Thus, depending on an authority's position, the legal status of an individual may be interpreted differently.[406]

[401] S. Shamba as cited in Zavodskaya 2017; RA Exp№6.
[402] South Ossetia Department of State Statistics 2016.
[403] PMR Exp№9; RA Exp№1; RSO Exp№1; RSO Exp№2; RSO Exp№3.
[404] RSO Exp№1; RSO Exp№2.
[405] RA Exp№8.
[406] This echoes Fiona McConnell's (2013: 967) research on the Tibetans in India, who are "are simultaneously 'Tibetan citizens' in the eyes of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile, 'refugees' in the eyes of many within the international community, and 'foreign guests' in the eyes of the Indian state".

Are Aspirant State Citizens Nationals of the Base State?

Alternatively, rather than considering aspirant state citizens as stateless under International Law, they may be recognised as citizens of the base state.[407] This is because the base state claims territorial control over the aspirant state and, by extension, claims (most of) the territory's population. This results in a peculiar situation, where, even if residents of aspirant states have the right to acquire the internationally recognised citizenship conferred by the base state, in practice, they may be unable or unwilling to realise this right since the base state has lost effective control of the territory.[408]

Most individuals residing in the aspirant states are entitled to citizenship of the base state.[409] Even the President of Georgia, in her New Year address, congratulated "our citizens in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali Region for the coming year… I know that we need to make it easier for you to live today, we need to reach out to you, give you citizenship documents more easily, so that you can become closer to Europe".[410] This is despite the fact that the base state cannot prove that a specific individual is its national, unless they voluntarily undergo civil registration procedures to confirm citizenship.[411] Furthermore, the base state has no access to the aspirant states' civil registration databases, making it impossible to know how many citizens it has in the aspirant state, let alone know their details.[412] This can be linked to James Scott's (1998) discussion on legibility. Despite the base state's desire, it cannot document (and control) the population due to a lack of effective control over the claimed territory. Until residents of those territories undergo civil registration procedures, they will remain illegible to the base state.

Therefore, rather than being labelled "stateless", such individuals can be considered "undocumented nationals".[413] These persons have a legal claim to a nationality but lack

[407] Atcho 2018: 247–249; RA Exp№1; RA Exp№5.
[408] Ganohariti 2020a: 186–187.
[409] Georgia 2014; Moldova 2000; Georgian Exp; Moldovan Exp№1.
[410] Zourabichvili 2023.
This rhetoric is not new and has been echoed previously by President Zourabichvili (2020; 2022) and other officials like the State Minister for Reconciliation Ketevan Tsikhelasvili (2016) or the MFA's Ketevan Chumbadze (2021).
[411] Georgian Exp; Moldovan Exp№2; PMR Cit№6; RA Exp№4; RA Exp№5; RA Exp№7; RA Exp№12.
[412] RSO Exp№2.
[413] If a state "has a good record in terms of recognising, in a non-discriminatory fashion, the nationality status of all those who appear to come within the scope of the relevant law… this may indicate that the person concerned is considered as a national" (UNHCR 2014: para. 18).

documentary proof due to administrative hurdles.[414] As a result, until individuals undergo civil registration procedures, this nationality remains latent or dormant.[415] Some may also be considered "persons with undetermined nationality" if they lack proof of nationality and their legal status is contested.[416] While Georgia and Moldova collectively consider (most) aspirant state citizens as their nationals, such persons on an individual basis should be regarded as undocumented nationals or as persons whose Georgian/Moldovan nationality remains undetermined.

A further situation that complicates the legal status of Abkhazians and South Ossetians under Georgian law is the policy on status-neutral documents, which do not prove nationality.[417] The Abkhazian government-in-exile explicitly mentions that the status-neutral documents are for persons who do not have (proof of) Georgian citizenship.[418] This position blurs the legal status of Abkhazian/South Ossetian residents under Georgian law as Georgia also acknowledges the right of Abkhazians and South Ossetians to Georgian citizenship.[419] Thus, residents of the two regions can be considered as persons whose Georgian nationality status remains undetermined or undocumented until they undergo Georgian citizenship determination procedures.[420]

A critique of the attribution of base state citizenship is whether a state can claim citizens

[414] Hunter 2019.
While citizenship and passports are not the same, in practice, to prove citizenship, one must have some form of documentation, such as a passport. This links to the tension between the right to nationality and proof of nationality via access to a legal identity document (Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion 2020; UNDP et al. 2020). While in theory, the two are independent of each other, in practice, civil registration is a prerequisite to prove nationality.
[415] A. Grossman 2001: 863.
[416] UNHCR 2021: 56.
[417] Bendianishvili as cited in Balavadze 2011b; Georgia 2010; Kirova 2012: 37.
Issuing such documents is not a new phenomenon. Saharawis living in Algerian can access Algerian passports which are considered to be only travel documents and do not confer citizenship (Manby 2020: 19). Similarly, since Jordan withdrew its sovereignty over the West Bank/Jerusalem in 1988 and stripped Jordanian citizenship, West Bank and East Jerusalem Palestinians can acquire five-year-long temporary Jordanian passports (without national ID number) for international travel (Qafisheh 2019: 120). Gaza strip Palestinian refugees, who never acquired Jordanian citizenship and continue to reside in Jordan, have access to two-year-long passports (Ramahi 2015: 8). Palestinians who had acquired Jordanian citizenship and lived outside the West Bank continued to maintain Jordanian citizenship. However, Jordan has engaged in a campaign of arbitrarily stripping some Jordanians of Palestinian origin, forcing them to acquire alternate identity documents (Ramahi 2015). In the TRNC, those who lack Turkish or Republic of Cyprus citizenship are eligible for special (laissez-passer) Turkish passports (Bryant 2021: 35). "An Ordinary Turkish Passport can be issued to TRNC citizens upon request. After obtaining the Foreigners' Identity Number (starts with 99) from our representations, passports with a maximum validity of 5 years are issued upon application with the necessary documents" (MFA Türkiye n.d.).
[418] Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia n.d..
[419] Georgia 2014 [2018], Art. 30-1.
[420] Public Defender of Georgia 2017a; Public Service Development Agency n.d..

without an effective (factual) or genuine link.[421] This claim is particularly relevant in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where residents (besides ethnic Georgians) reject the ascription of Georgian citizenship.[422] Furthermore, aspirant state authorities prohibit their citizens from acquiring the base state's citizenship.[423] Unfortunately, there is "no requirement of a 'genuine' or an 'effective' link implicit in the concept of 'national'" under the 1961 Statelessness Convention or International Law more broadly.[424]

Thus, particularly in the context of state secession, Georgia and Moldova are free to determine whom it considers as its national.[425] This creates a precarious situation where individuals (who do not have citizenship of a third state) are recognised as nationals of the base state, even though this nationality may not be effective since they are unable, or unwilling, to access the rights associated with the base state nationality.[426] In such cases, if a nationality does not offer the best possible protections and the conferral is not in the best interest of the person, stronger protections may be guaranteed if the individual were regarded as stateless under International Law.[427] Since Abkhazians and South Ossetians refuse Georgian citizenship, those not possessing a recognised citizenship may be better treated as stateless persons internationally.

While it is possible to legally renounce Georgian citizenship, in practice, the likelihood of individuals going through this is highly unlikely due to their outright refusal to engage with Georgia and because they do not recognise the ascription. Even if a resident of Abkhazia or South Ossetia had an interest in going through the renunciation procedure, many would not

[421] RA Exp№7; RSO Exp№2.
[422] Referring to the Sahrawis, Manby (2020) argues that individuals who have not claimed Moroccan or any other nationality must be considered stateless. There is no international legal obligation for Sahrawis to accept Moroccan nationality if it has been forcefully ascribed.
[423] Abkhazia 2005; South Ossetia 2006.
[424] International Law Commission 2006, Art. 4; Sironi 2013; UNHCR 2014: para. 54.
The ICJ case argued that despite Nottebohm having acquired citizenship under Liechtenstein law (which the court did not dispute), Lichtenstein did not have the right to use the claim of diplomatic protection to institute proceeding in the ICJ against Guatemala due to the lack of a genuine link between Nottebohm and Lichtenstein. Under this principle, nationality is defined as a "a legal bond having as its basis a social fact of attachment, a genuine connection of existence, interests and sentiments, together with the existence of reciprocal rights and obligation. It may be said to constitute the juridical expression of the fact that the individual upon whom it is conferred… is in fact more closely connected with the population of the State conferring nationality than with that of any other State" (International Court of Justice 1955: 23). However, Sloane (2009) and Peters (2010: 684–688) argue that this principle has been misinterpreted (as it applied only to cases of diplomatic protection of dual citizens) and a genuine link is not required to establish a legal bond between a person and a state. Also see Sloane (2009).
[425] IIFFMCG 2009: 150–155.
[426] Atcho 2018: 255–258; L. Kingston 2014: 132–133; Littlefield 2009: 1471–1472.
[427] Swider 2017.

be able to do so since proof of acquisition of another recognised citizenship is needed.[428] Further, since Georgia does not recognise the Russian passports held by Abkhazians and South Ossetians, such individuals would also not be able to renounce their Georgian citizenship. From Georgia's perspective, accepting the renunciation applications would mean such individuals would become stateless, which contravenes its commitment to the 1961 Statelessness Convention.[429] Lastly, given the political nature of such a renunciation, Georgian authorities are unlikely to accept applications from persons from Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

In contrast, in Transnistria, there are no restrictions to acquire Moldovan citizenship. Eligible individuals can acquire it and exercise rights and obligations associated with it.[430] Thus, unlike in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, there is a low probability of individuals ascribed with or eligible for Moldovan citizenship ending up as undocumented nationals.[431]

Internationally aspirant state citizens may also be mis/mal-recognised as citizens of the base state. For example, in legal cases from the UK and Australia, individuals from Norther Cyprus were treated as citizens of the Republic of Cyprus.[432] More recent examples include the forceful deportation of Taiwanese citizens to Beijing instead of Taipei[433] or designating Taiwanese citizens as Chinese on residency documents in Iceland and Norway.[434] However, there is no evidence from Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria, where mono-citizens of aspirant states are treated as base state citizens internationally. This is likely a result of individuals being unable to use their aspirant state passports to travel to non-recognising states, unlike citizens of Taiwan or, to a lesser extent, the TRNC. Thus, within the Type I citizenship constellation, an individual may concurrently be a citizen of an aspirant state and be *de jure* stateless or deemed to possess the citizenship of the base state.

[428] Georgia 2014, Art. 20.
[429] Public Defender of Georgia 2017b; 2021b: 258–259; Trier et al. 2010: chap. 85; United Nations 2022; RA Exp№8.
[430] Similarly, in the TRNC, individuals eligible for the Republic of Cyprus citizenship may take steps to acquire it (Bryant 2014: 132; Hopman et al. 2018).
[431] In cases where the base state does not claim the aspirant state citizen, citizens of aspirant states can be treated as *de jure* stateless persons who have a right of return to a particular place of origin (Atcho 2018: 250–252; A. Grossman 2001: 874; Manby 2020: 29).
[432] A. Grossman 2001: 870.
[433] Shams 2020; Wang 2021.
[434] Central News Agency 2018; 2019; Gerber 2016.

Are Aspirant State Citizens Dual Nationals?

Due to the nonrecognition of the aspirant state citizenship, authorities in all the aspirant states have liberalised and even actively encouraged dual citizenship.[435] This becomes a strategic reason for acquiring a recognised citizenship.[436] The ease of acquiring another citizenship (in a non-migratory context) differs among aspirant states. In Somaliland, most residents do not have easy access to another citizenship (besides that of Somalia).[437] In Kosovo, access to secondary citizenship is differentiated between Serbian and Albanian Kosovars, with the former easily and voluntarily acquiring Serbian citizenship, and in the TRNC, individuals can access Turkish and/or Republic of Cyprus citizenship.[438]

In Abkhazia and South Ossetia, where dual citizenship is restricted,[439] most have acquired Russian citizenship, and the majority of Transnistrians have another citizenship, most commonly that of Moldova, Russia or Ukraine.[440] Thus, Type II and Type III relate to individuals with dual citizenship[441] from the aspirant state perspective.

What differentiates the two constellations is whether the compensatory citizenship is contested or not. The Type II constellation is a consequence of the base state's opposition to the voluntary acquisition of another recognised citizenship, most commonly that of the patron state. This position is generally a direct response to the passportization process initiated by the patron state.[442] From the perspective of the aspirant state, citizens would now possess dual citizenship with the patron state, and internationally, they are treated as citizens of the patron state. On the other hand, the base state and other states supporting its position (via tertiary rules) do not recognise the conferral of the patron state citizenship.[443] Rather, like the situation in Type I, the base state can continue to treat aspirant state citizens as its nationals, even if this nationality is not effective.

As discussed, Georgia's position has been for the nonrecognition of Russian citizenship and

[435] Ganohariti 2020a; 2021b.
[436] Harpaz 2019a.
[437] Krasniqi 2018: 36–37.
[438] Bryant 2021: 35; Hopman et al. 2018; Krasniqi 2019: 8, 11.
[439] Abkhazia 2005, Arts. 5-6; South Ossetia 2006, Art. 6.
[440] Ganohariti 2021b.
[441] This thesis defines dual citizens as persons possessing two or more citizenships.
[442] Burkhardt et al. 2022; Cuvelier 2018; Nagashima 2019.
[443] Artman 2013; Ganohariti 2021b.

passports conferred to individuals living in the "occupied territories".[444] This is in line with the international legal principle, which asserts that while states are generally free to determine who their nationals are, third-states are not obliged to recognise this nationality if the ascription is inconsistent "with international conventions, international custom, and the principles of law generally recognized with regard to nationality".[445] As a result, even though Georgian legislation until 2018 did not allow dual citizenship,[446] the acquisition of Russian citizenship by individuals residing in Abkhazia and South Ossetia did not result in the automatic loss of Georgian citizenship. This point echoes Georgia's reservation to the 1961 Statelessness Convention. Georgia asserts that the convention "cannot be construed as recognition of citizenship granted by the Russian Federation in violation of International Law and Georgian legislation to the population residing in" Abkhazia and South Ossetia.[447] This implies that Georgia does not recognise Russia's justification for granting citizenship to stateless persons. Further, third states who follow the nonrecognition policy will also align with the base state's position. Consequently, even if a person acquires Russian citizenship, the passport may not be recognised as a valid travel document in all states.

The UNHRC argues that the illegality of nationality conferral on the international level is irrelevant for determining whether an individual is a national of a state or not.[448] Russian citizenship conferral is valid under Russian law (and is opposable to other states that recognise the conferral). Therefore, while Russia's passportization may be in contravention of international obligations (i.e. non-opposable), its effects on individuals (including Russia's obligation to diplomatic protection) must not be ignored.[449] States that do not recognise the aspirant state but do not contest the citizenship/passport acquired from the patron state would consider such individuals as nationals (mono-citizens) of the patron state. Thus, a conflict of laws in relation to nationality may result in individuals being claimed by multiple citizenship regimes (Georgia, Russia, Abkhazia/South Ossetia), resulting in the Type II constellation, where each citizenship lacks universal recognition.

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[444] Similarly, Ukraine considers the post-2014 acquisitions of Russian citizenship by residents of DPR and LPR illegal and considers them to be its citizens (Kasianenko 2021: 114; MFA Ukraine 2019; 2020).
[445] IIFFMCG 2009: 155–183.
[446] Georgia 1993, Arts. 1 & 32; 2014, Arts. 3 & 21.
Currently (until December 2024), Georgia permits dual citizenship acquisition, albeit restrictively, since the individual must seek permission to maintain dual citizenship (Georgia 2014, Arts. 21-1 & 32-2).
[447] United Nations 2022.
[448] UNHCR 2014: paras. 54–56.
[449] This follows the Namibia Advisory Opinion, which stated that while there was a duty to not recognise the South African administration, this "should not result in depriving the people of Namibia of any advantages derived from international co-operation" and should include the recognition of life cycle documents (International Court of Justice 1971: para. 125; International Law Commission 2006, Art. 4).

Lastly, the Type III citizenship constellation has the least contestation since only the aspirant state citizenship is contested, and there is no debate over the recognition or legality of any other citizenship an individual may possess. This is common in Transnistria, where citizens maintain multiple citizenships, including Russian, Moldovan, and/or Ukrainian citizenship. The acquisition of non-Moldovan citizenship by Transnistrians is not contested by Moldova since, i) it allows dual citizenship in general, and ii) it does not contest the Russian citizenship held by Transnistrians in particular.[450] While Moldova recognises (the right of) many Transnistrians to be(come) Moldovan citizens, it does not object to the possession of other citizenships. Furthermore, the aspirant state authorities and population accept base state citizenship for pragmatic reasons.[451] As a result, individuals simultaneously can possess the citizenship of the aspirant state and the nationality of the base state or any other state. From the nonrecognition perspective, only the aspirant state citizenship remains unrecognised, and there is no contestation concerning the other citizenship(s) that the person possesses.

The Type III constellation is also observed among the diaspora. For example, in the case of Abkhazian-Syrian dual citizens, the individuals are recognised as dual citizens by both states following Syrian recognition in 2018. In contrast, in the cases of Abkhazian-Turkish dual citizens, the individuals are recognised as dual citizens only by Abkhazia since Türkiye does not recognise Abkhazia. The chance of this constellation occurring in South Ossetia is low since no policy encourages the Ossetian diaspora to acquire citizenship.[452]

Thus, within the Type II citizenship constellation, an individual may concurrently be treated as a dual national (of the patron and aspirant state) by a minority of states, or as a mono-citizen (of either the base state or the patron state). The Type III citizenship constellation is the least contentious, with only the aspirant state citizenship being contested, while other citizenships an individual holds are recognised by all states.

Diachronic Changes

An individual's position within a citizenship constellation is not static. In addition to it

[450] Gasca 2012; Moldova 2000; PMR Exp№1.
[451] Bryant 2014: 132; Ganohariti 2020a: 185–186.
A similar position exists in the TRNC.
[452] RSO Exp№1; RSO Exp№2.

changing based on whether an administrative authority recognises a citizenship or not, the position also changes over time. This is particularly observable in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Russia's position changed in 2008 when it switched from the right-hand side to the left-hand side of the Type I and Type II constellations, due to the recognition of Abkhazian and South Ossetian citizenship. Until August 2008, Abkhazians and South Ossetians who acquired Russian citizenship were recognised only as Russian citizens and those with only Abkhazia/South Ossetian citizenship were considered stateless.[453] Post 2008, in Russia's view, citizens of the two republics were no longer stateless, and those who had previously acquired Russian citizenship were now regarded to have multiple citizenships.[454] Those wishing to acquire Russian citizenship now had to renounce Abkhazian/South Ossetian citizenship (a restriction in place until mid-2020) and meet other conditions, such as residency in Russia.[455] Thus, in an unfortunate twist of fate, state recognition, which is valuable to state survival, negatively affected the rights and opportunities of mono-citizens. A telling case is of one Abkhazian citizen who failed to acquire Russian citizenship due to bureaucratic difficulties in acquiring necessary documents (some of which were destroyed during the war).[456] Thus, those who had missed this window could no longer easily acquire Russian citizenship. More than a decade after recognition, dual citizenship agreements were signed and ratified.[457] It is envisaged that these agreements will simplify access to Russian citizenship for the mono-citizen population.

A similar observation could be made regarding other states (de)recognising Abkhazia and South Ossetia after 2008, such as Syria a decade later.[458] After 2018, Syria regards those with Abkhazian/South Ossetian and Syrian citizenship as dual citizens and those only with Abkhazian/South Ossetian citizenship as citizens of a recognised state. In contrast, Türkiye does not recognise aspirant state citizenship acquired by its citizens and regards them only as Turkish nationals. Similarly, the recognitions in 2011 and subsequent derecognition by Tuvalu (2014) and Vanuatu (2013) resulted in citizens of Abkhazia/South Ossetia moving

[453] Ganohariti 2021b; Russia 2008a; 2008b.
[454] Butba 2020; Littlefield 2009: 1473; Suhov 2009.
[455] Ganohariti 2020b; Kelekhsayeva 2019.
[456] RA Cit№2.
[457] Abkhazia & Russia 2022; South Ossetia & Russia 2021.
The two agreements were ratified in 2023 and 2022 respectively.
In Russia, there is a legal distinction between "dual citizenship" and a person with two citizenships. Only in the former case does Russia legally recognise that an individual possesses dual citizenship (Russia 1993, Art. 62; 2002, Art. 6). In all other cases, the master nationality rule applies. Until the dual citizenship agreements were signed, legally dual citizens were regarded as mono-citizens by each state (Abkhazia 2005, Art. 6; South Ossetia 2006). Russia has also signed such an agreement with Tajikistan (1995).
[458] Visoka n.d. [Forthcoming]; Visoka et al. 2020.

their position back and forth within the constellation. The table below illustrates the Citizenship Constellation Model as applied to Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Table 7: Citizenship Constellations in Abkhazia & South Ossetia.

	Recognition of aspirant state citizenship		**Nonrecognition** of aspirant state citizenship	
Type I	Citizen of Abkhazia/South Ossetia	Russia after Aug 2008 Syria after May 2018	*de jure* Stateless Person	Russia until Aug 2008
			Georgian Citizen	Georgia & states backing its position
Type II	Dual Citizen of Abkhazia/South Ossetia and Russia	Russia after Aug 2008	Georgian Citizen	Georgia & states backing its position
			Russian Citizen	Russia until Aug 2008
Type III	Dual Citizen of Abkhazia/South Ossetia and another state	Syria after May 2018	Dual Citizen of Recognised State(s)	Syria until May 2018 Türkiye (in relation to Abkhaz diaspora)

In Transnistria, there were fewer diachronic changes. The only significant change was the 2004 amendment which granted former permanent residents of Soviet Moldova who had failed to acquire citizenship by recognition before September 1993 to once again able to acquire it.[459] As a result, Moldova recognised the vast majority of Transnistrians as its citizens. The table below presents the citizenship constellation as applied to Transnistria.

Table 8: Citizenship Constellations in Transnistria.

	Recognition of aspirant state citizenship		**Nonrecognition** of aspirant state citizenship	
Type I	Citizen of Transnistria		*de jure* Stateless Person	Moldova (Sep 1993-2004)
			Moldovan Citizen	Moldova (before Sep 1993 and after Jul 2004)
Type III	Dual Citizen of Transnistria and another state		Citizen of Recognised State(s)	Moldova, Russia, Ukraine

Conclusion

This chapter adopted a macro-level approach to citizenship and focused on the historical foundations of Abkhazian, South Ossetian, and Transnistrian citizenry. Then, it discussed the post-1991 developments, including the positions of Georgia and Moldova. The dissolution of the USSR and the separation of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria from their base states put them on a trajectory to establish citizenship regimes which remain largely unrecognised. This limited recognition prompted aspirant states to liberalise their

[459] Moldova 2000, Art. 12.

dual citizenship policies, albeit sometimes restrictively.

Subsequently, the chapter presented the Citizenship Constellation Model to illustrate the entanglement of multiple legal regimes in the context of contested statehood. The model places aspirant state citizens into one of three types. In Type I, the individual may concurrently be a citizen of an aspirant state, be *de jure* stateless and/or possess the citizenship of the base state. In Type II, the individual may possess dual citizenship from the perspective of the aspirant state, while from a nonrecognition perspective, they may be regarded as citizens of the base state or the patron state. Lastly, in Type III, the individual has multiple citizenships, of which only the aspirant state citizenship is contested.

The tension within each constellation shows that an individual may simultaneously possess different legal statuses depending on the administrative authority (i.e. state) which engages in (non)recognition of an individual's citizenship(s). Furthermore, not in all instances will the individual accept and recognise the citizenship ascribed to them. Despite this, the conferral of nationality by both the base state and the patron state, even if it is not effective or violates International Law, does not negate the possession of nationality by the individuals (from the perspective of the base/patron state).

In addition, legislation is not static, and depending on how (non)recognition and citizenship policies evolve over time, an individual's position within the Model can change. In the three decades, citizens have moved between the different cells of the Citizenship Constellation Model. Sometimes, this occurs when individuals voluntarily acquire a second citizenship, while in other cases, political developments and state (de)recognition automatically change individuals' legal status.

Accordingly, individuals linked to aspirant states can simultaneously possess a multiplicity of (competing) legal statuses, each with different degrees of recognition. Thus, depending on administrative authority and diachronic changes, aspirant state citizens can be considered stateless, nationals of the aspirant state, citizens of the base state, citizens of another recognised state, or dual nationals (of the aspirant state and another state). While the Constellation Model is a valuable tool to determine the different legal statuses of aspirant state citizens, it is equally important to explore the consequences of these statuses on rights and obligations. Thus, the next chapter adopts a law in context approach and explores the socio-political implications of these statuses.

Chapter 6
Functions of Citizenship in Aspirant States

Nonrecognition can result in aspirant states having limited opportunities to engage internationally, ranging from economic relations to sports. As a result, aspirant states have had to deploy alternative strategies, such as engaging in para/hybrid diplomatic practices and other measures as part of the "engagement without recognition" framework.[460] The existing literature has primarily focused on how aspirant states and other international actors navigate the phenomenon of nonrecognition.[461] The impact of nonrecognition on the lived experiences of individuals living in aspirant states has received less focus. Notable exceptions include the edited volume by Bryant and Reeves, large-n studies by O'Loughlin et al., and several case studies from the post-Soviet region.[462]

The previous chapter argued that due to the aspirant state's contested status, citizens could simultaneously maintain a multiplicity of legal statuses depending on diachronic changes and the position of different administrative authorities. However, it is crucial to go beyond a purely doctrinal analysis and adopt a law in context approach to fully understand the socio-political implication of these legal statuses on the lived experiences of individuals. This chapter adopts a bottom-up approach to explore how citizens respond to the restricted functionality of local citizenship and how they develop their citizenship identity. Drawing from in-depth interviews and primary survey data, this chapter answers three questions; How does contested citizenship affect the rights (and obligations) of individuals living in aspirant states?[463] How functional is their local citizenship, and how do individuals overcome its limitations? How do citizens of aspirant states frame and experience their (contested) citizenships?

[460] See Armakolas & Ker-Lindsay 2019, Bouris & Fernández-Molina 2018, Harzl 2018, Ker-Lindsay 2015, McConnell 2017, and McConnell et al. 2012.
[461] See Blakkisrud & Kolstø 2011, Caspersen 2008; 2018, Frear 2014, Ó Beacháin et al. 2016, Ramasubramanyam 2016, Taniya & Shanava 2018, and Waal 2018.
[462] Bryant & Reeves 2021; Kvarchelia 2014; O'Loughlin et al. 2011; 2014; Ostavnaia 2017.
[463] At the onset of this research, I expected that the gathered empirical data would cover the obligations of citizens towards their state(s) since citizenship literature emphasises both rights and obligations arising from citizenship. For example, I anticipated dual citizens to discuss issues associated with military service, taxes, or restrictions on employment in the civil service. This was not the case, and interlocutors seldom discussed citizens' obligations towards their state(s). Given the limited empirical data, this chapter only tangentially discusses the obligations of citizens. On the other hand, greater emphasis was made on the state's obligations towards its citizens based on the social contract.

The chapter argues that while nonrecognition has significant consequences in determining the legal status of aspirant state citizens, its impact on human security is more nuanced. Nonrecognition of citizenship affects the functionality of citizenship since the aspirant state is restricted in its ability to provide and guarantee the rights and security afforded by citizenship.[464] The functionality of citizenship is particularly restricted in its external dimension since aspirant states citizens are hindered in exercising their rights outside the aspirant state, the most important being freedom of movement. The impact of nonrecognition is less critical and more subtle in its effects on the internal functionality of citizenship.

The limited external functionality of aspirant state citizenship pushes individuals to acquire compensatory citizenship. This entanglement of citizenship regimes results in the compounding of rights, and individuals draw from a multiplicity of sources (i.e. citizenships) to improve their quality of life. Whilst living within the aspirant state, individuals primarily depend on the rights granted by aspirant state citizenship, and the relationship reverses when the person leaves the aspirant state, with the compensatory citizenship becoming primary. Furthermore, the chapter finds that the level of pride and attachment towards the local citizenship was not negated by its limited (external) functionality. The multiplicity of legal statuses seldom results in a multiplicity of citizenship identities (as in Transnistria). Instead, individuals generally maintain a stronger attachment to their local citizenship (as in Abkhazia and South Ossetia).

Part I of this chapter discusses the external and internal functionality of the aspirant state citizenship. Respondents primarily discussed travel freedoms being most affected by nonrecognition, along with the inability of the aspirant state to act as an intermediary to represent its citizens internationally. Concurrently, respondents emphasised that their citizenship was vital to carry out day-to-day activities and to realise one's rights on the territory of the aspirant state. Within the aspirant state, nonrecognition has a limited impact on economic, educational, and other social rights. However, individuals remain restricted in realising these rights outside the aspirant state. Part II focuses on compensatory citizenship acquired by aspirant state citizens due to the limited external functionality of their local citizenship. This section discusses the choices behind compensatory citizenship and how

[464] L. Kingston 2014.

they are used to expand individual rights and quality of life. Part III discusses citizens' sentiments towards their citizenship(s). Despite the negative impact of nonrecognition on the quality of life of individuals, aspirant state citizens had a strong sense of attachment to their local citizenship.[465] In comparison, individuals had less emotional attachment to their compensatory citizenship.[466] The second citizenship was, first and foremost, utilitarian and having multiple citizenships did not reduce the value and attachment towards the aspirant state citizenship.

Part I - Functionality of Aspirant State Citizenship

As highlighted in the literature review, it is essential to differentiate between citizenship's external and internal functionality when studying the effects of contested statehood. Nonrecognition primarily affects external functionality, while internal functionality is comparable to recognised states.[467] The QNI measures external functionality via the level of travel freedom and settlement freedom associated with the citizenship. Internal functionality comprises economic strength (via GDP), level of human development (via the HDI), and level of peace and stability (via the Global Peace Index). Meanwhile, the CQI measures external functionality using the Passport Index, and internal functionality is measured by the level of security (via the State Fragility Index), opportunity (via the HDI), and rights (via the Democracy Index). Ultimately, the level of internal functionality is largely influenced by the degree of a polity's internal sovereignty.[468] Given the lack of data on these indicators in relation to aspirant states, this thesis does not aim to quantify the functionality of the aspirant state citizenship. Rather, this section qualitatively demonstrates how nonrecognition (if at all) affects external and internal functionality, and in turn, the physical and material security of the individual.

External Functionality of Aspirant State Citizenship

When asked how aspirant state citizenship affects their rights, all interlocutors highlighted the general restrictions on mobility due to the nonrecognition of the aspirant state's passport.

[465] From 277 respondents, 74% agreed that they were proud of their citizenship, 15.9% were somewhat proud, and 10.1% did not feel proud of it. From 260 respondents, 69.2% strongly identified with their citizenship, 24.2% somewhat identified with it, and 6.5% did not.
[466] From 231 respondents, 51.1% agreed that they were proud of their compensatory citizenship, 28.1% were somewhat proud, and 20.8% did not feel proud. From 259 respondents, 28.6% strongly identified with their compensatory citizenship, 53.2% somewhat identified with it, and 18.2% did not.
[467] Lindeboom 2018.
[468] Berg & Kuusk 2010.

Respondents voiced their disappointment that their citizenship lacked widespread international recognition and admitted they felt like "second-class citizens" when compared to citizens of other states.[469] This limited external functionality is also demonstrated in 45.5% and 35.5% of survey respondents agreeing that the aspirant state citizenship restricts their freedom of movement and rights outside the aspirant state, respectively. The negative effect was particularly evident among Transnistrian citizens, whose passports are not recognised by any UN member state.[470]

Table 9: Aspirant state citizenship's impact on freedom of movement.

	Abkhazia	South Ossetia	Transnistria	
Negatively Affected	43.5%	25.0%	57.0%	45.5%
Has Not Affected	39.1%	57.8%	39.3%	43.0%
Positively Affected	17.4%	17.2%	3.7%	11.5%
N	115	64	135	314

Table 10: Aspirant state citizenship's impact on rights outside of the aspirant state.

	Abkhazia	South Ossetia	Transnistria	
Negatively Affected	34.0%	21.1%	42.9%	35.5%
Has Not Affected	50.9%	61.4%	55.6%	55.1%
Positively Affected	15.1%	17.5%	1.5%	9.5%
N	106	57	133	296

It is logical that due to nonrecognition, a larger proportion of respondents felt a negative effect (than a positive effect) on external functionality. However, what is surprising is that around half the respondents stated that the aspirant state citizenship did not affect external functionality. One reason may be that these individuals had citizenships from several UN member states, thus making their local citizenship redundant outside the aspirant state. For some citizens, this might be because "no one bothers about the fact that the rest of the world has not recognised [our citizenship]... We will take Russian citizenship, and we will travel everywhere like Russians" or because "isolation of Abkhazia from the outside world does

[469] RA Exp№12; RSO Exp№1.

[470] A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were differences in the impact of aspirant state citizenship on rights outside the aspirant state between Abkhazia (n=115), South Ossetia (n=64) and Transnistria (n=135). Mean Ranks were statistically significantly different between groups, $\chi 2(2) = 21.757$, $p < .001$. A pairwise comparison (using Dunn's post hoc test with a Bonferroni correction) revealed statistically significant differences in mean ranks between Abkhazia (165.43) and Transnistria (134.89) (p=.010) and between South Ossetia (190.95) and Transnistria (p=.000), but not between Abkhazia and South Ossetia (p=0.142).
A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were differences in the impact of aspirant state citizenship on rights outside the aspirant state between Abkhazia (n=106), South Ossetia (n=57) and Transnistria (n=133). Mean Ranks were statistically significantly different between groups, $\chi 2(2) = 15.287$, $p < .001$. A pairwise comparison (using Dunn's post hoc test with a Bonferroni correction) revealed statistically significant differences in mean ranks between Abkhazia (155.91) and Transnistria (131.01) (p=.035) and between South Ossetia (175.54) and Transnistria (p=.001), but not between Abkhazia and South Ossetia (p=0.346).

not affect us at all. For better or worse, all members of my family are Russian citizens. So, we can solve all problems through Russia".[471] Interlocutors were aware that their aspirant state passport and citizenship lost their value as soon as they departed the aspirant state, and one Transnistrian considered it "a regular souvenir".[472] Thus, the compounding of rights due to multiple citizenships may eliminate the need to consider the external functionality of the citizenship with lesser travel freedoms.

The lack of (negative) effect felt amongst Abkhazians and South Ossetians could also be attributed to their citizenship being recognised in the most important destination – Russia. Furthermore, international travel may not be a priority for every resident, and even then, most would only travel to the neighbouring region (e.g. Sochi for Abkhazians or North Ossetia for South Ossetians).[473] Abkhazian and South Ossetian interlocutors highlighted that the 2008 recognition by Russia expanded the external functionality of their citizenship and the aspirant states' international position more broadly. The recognition was essential to those who only had the citizenship of the aspirant state. Now, these individuals could travel to Russia and a handful of other countries.[474] In contrast, little changed for dual citizens. While they could now also travel to Russia with their local passports, they still had to continue relying on their Russian citizenship for other international travel. Compared to mono-citizen Abkhazians and South Ossetians, Transnistrian mono-citizens have it much worse since they are stuck on the territory of Transnistria and Moldova.[475] This premise is confirmed by the fact that none of the mono-citizen Transnistrian respondents who said that

[471] RA Cit№3; Enik as cited in JAM News 2021.
[472] PMR Cit№1; RA Cit№3; RSO Cit№1.
[473] RA Cit№3; RA Exp№1.
This point differed from my assumption at the onset of the research, which assumed that all residents would regard the travel restrictions to be the most pertinent issue. This assumption was based on the importance of travel in my own life, which, upon reflection, may not be a priority or financially accessible to many residents of low-income regions.
[474] RA Exp№6; RSO Exp№2.
Abkhazians and South Ossetians could travel visa-free to Russia following the signing of bilateral agreements (Abkhazia & Russia 2009; South Ossetia & Russia 2010). Even then, Abkhazians are restricted in the length of stay (90 days). Since 2015, South Ossetians have no limit on the period of stay (South Ossetia & Russia 2015).
Another caveat lies in the limited effects on travel freedoms that occurred following the recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia by Nauru, Nicaragua, Syria, and Venezuela. While theoretically, the functionality of the citizenship improved, in practice, it had limited effects on individuals since the likelihood of (mono)citizens being interested and having the means to travel to these places on the local passports is limited (RA Exp№5).
[475] Moldova has no border control between Transnistrian and Moldovan-controlled territory. Even then, Transnistrians would not be able to access any Moldovan government services. Citizens of the aspirant states can also enter other post-Soviet aspirant states on their passports. However, with the exception of travel between Abkhazia and South Ossetia, they would still need a recognised citizenship to transit third states. Two Transnistrians, did however proudly state that they had used their passports to travel to Abkhazia (PMR Cit№5; PMR Exp№3).

their citizenship positively affected travel freedom or external rights.[476] Thus, individuals with a recognised citizenship (and, to a lesser extent, Abkhazian and South Ossetian mono-citizens whose passport is recognised by Russia) are largely unhindered in their international engagements. Individuals will utilise their citizenships to compound their rights to gain the best possible outcome.

The above discussion provides a general understanding of individuals' stance on the external functionality of their aspirant state citizenship. However, conversations with interlocutors provided nuances on how nonrecognition affected external functionality. One consequence of nonrecognition is the aspirant state's inability to guarantee its citizens' physical and material security, thus being unable to fulfil its social contract fully and effectively. Aspirant states cannot fulfil their obligations since they have limited power in protecting their citizens outside the aspirant states (e.g. consular diplomacy), nor can they defend citizens via international legal mechanisms.[477]

Abkhazia and South Ossetia can only carry out consular activities in Russia and several other recognition-granting states without hindrance.[478] Transnistria also maintains representative offices in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and, most importantly, Russia. Though it provides vital consular services in Moscow (since 2019), it is not an Embassy/Consulate under the Vienna Convention and thus is restricted in its activities. Thus, all three aspirant states are generally limited in protecting and meeting their citizens' needs abroad. Another issue is the inability of the aspirant state authorities to directly participate in international human rights mechanisms (e.g. European Court of Human Rights) and sign-up for international legal mechanisms and conventions. Nor can the aspirant state directly represent the interest of their citizens in international legal mechanisms.[479]

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[476] Out of the nine mono-citizen respondents, three stated that their citizenship had no effect on travel freedom or external rights, while the rest stated that it had a negative effect. This finding is more difficult to explain but could also be attributed to respondent error. A Mann-Whitney U tests determined no statistically significant difference between mono-citizens and dual citizens in the effect of aspirant state citizenship on travel freedom or external rights.

[477] PMR Exp№1; PMR Exp№8; RA Exp№1.

[478] Abkhazian and South Ossetian citizens have the right to seek consular assistance from Russian missions in third countries (Abkhazia & Russia 2008, Art. 10; South Ossetia & Russia 2008, Art. 10). However, in practice, this would have limited effect since the individual cannot travel on their local passport to nonrecognition granting states.

[479] PMR Exp№8; RA Exp№8; RA Exp№13.
Neither can individuals (as citizens of the aspirant state) or state parties bring cases against aspirant state authorities. See Ilaşcu and Others v. Moldova and Russia (2004); Caldare and Others v. Moldova and Russia (2012); Dzhioyeva and Others v. Georgia (2019); Georgia v. Russia (2021); Mamasakhlisi and Others v. Georgia and Russia (2023).

Despite the nonrecognition of Transnistrian citizenship, Transnistria has a greater international engagement than the other two cases. It is a party to the conflict via the 5+2 negotiation format and engages with Moldovan authorities more often and more directly.[480] As part of this format, the Transnistrian authorities respond to violations of their citizens' rights by Moldovan and Ukrainian authorities.[481] Despite the 2018 Protocol on regulating Transnistrian vehicles, an often cited example was the restrictions placed by Moldova on vehicle registration for Transnistrian residents.[482] Meanwhile, for Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the only platform to engage with Georgia is the Geneva International Discussions. However, Georgia does not recognise the two aspirant states as parties to the conflict. Thus, progress has been limited compared to the Transnistria-Moldova conflict.

A core aim of aspirant states in engaging in dialogue with the base state via formats such as the 5+2 and the Geneva International Discussions is to find a diplomatic solution to the conflict and achieve recognition. While this remains a somewhat distant goal, in the meantime, the success of the platforms and the negotiation processes can be measured in the ability to establish mechanisms that improve the physical and material security and the quality of life of residents of contested territories. The negotiation process has been the most successful in Transnistria, where the conflicting parties have signed several agreements over the years.[483] The remainder of this section presents instances where the rights of aspirant state citizens can be expanded without the need for state recognition.

Private International Law generally does not acknowledge the legal acts of aspirant states. Abkhazian and South Ossetian civil registration documents are recognised only in states that have granted state recognition.[484] While recognition of passports generally follows state recognition, in certain cases, passport acceptance can be divorced from sovereignty and recognition.[485] As illustrated in the table below, passports issued by aspirant states may be recognised as travel documents by nonrecognition granting states.[486] This may be regarded

[480] This format has been frozen following the invasion of Ukraine in 2022. See the OSCE website.
[481] PMR Exp№3.
[482] Pokalova 2015; Transnistria & Moldova 2018; PMR Cit№4; PMR Cit№8; PMR Exp№2.
[483] Shtanski 2014.
[484] The legalisation of documents for Russia can be carried out at the Russian Embassy in Sukhum and Tskhinval.
[485] A. Grossman 2001: 860.
[486] One former Abkhazian civil servant highlighted that regardless of recognition, the authorities must continue improving the quality and security of legal identity documents (RA Exp№11). They state that when Russia first recognised Abkhazia, there were issues with using Abkhazian documents for border crossing as they lacked safety/security features. This was a secondary reason for producing the 2016 version of the internal passport. This highlights the work that aspirant states do in preparation for eventual recognition, such that when recognition is achieved, administratively they are also ready.

as a form of legal liminality as, despite formal nonrecognition of the aspirant states and their citizenship, aspirant state identity documents are recognised in certain cases.

Table 11: Relationship between state recognition and passport recognition. [487]

	Recognition by UN members	**Recognition of passports (as travel documents) by UN members**
Palestine	~140	~190
Taiwan (ROC)	13	~190
Kosovo	~100	~175
Western Sahara (SADR)	~45	~45
Somaliland	0	~15
Northern Cyprus (TRNC)	1	~10
Abkhazia South Ossetia	5	5
Donetsk PR (~Sep 2022) Luhansk PR (~Sep 2022)	3	3
Artsakh (Nagorno-Karabakh) Transnistria (PMR)	0	0

The recognition of aspirant state documents as proof of legal identity is most evident in Transnistria. In 2001 Transnistria and Moldova signed a protocol on mutual recognition of documents issued by competent authorities.[488] Based on this, over the years, procedures have been put in place to convert Transnistrian civil status documents related to birth, marriage, and death into Moldovan ones.[489] In other words, Moldova recognises the data in Transnistrian documents as proof of legal identity.[490] Via this process, individuals entitled to Moldovan citizenship can convert their Transnistrian birth certificates to Moldovan ones and thereafter have proof of Moldovan citizenship. Furthermore, to guarantee the freedom of movement between residents of the left and right banks, in 2013, Moldovan authorities eliminated the possibility of imposing administrative penalties on Pridnestrovian residents with foreign passports (and lacking Moldovan documents).[491] One way to prove this is for non-Moldovan citizens living in Transnistria is to acquire a Moldovan residency permit or undergo consular registration at their Embassy based in Chișinău and receive a stamp in their passports stating that they are a resident of Transnistria.[492] However, most interlocutors stated that they simply showed their Transnistrian passport to Moldovan immigration

[487] The data presented are estimates based on publicly available data (as of March 2023). In practice, all citizens of Artsakh have or are entitled to Armenian citizenship (Armenian SSR & National Council of Nagorno-Karabakh 1989; JAM News 2022).
[488] Transnistria & Moldova 2001.
Transnistria interlocutors critiqued Moldovan authorities stating that they have not always abided by this protocol due to political disagreements (PMR Exp№2; PMR Exp№3).
[489] Moldova 2019; Public Service Agency Moldova n.d.
An exemption to this is the recognition of documents related to divorce and adoption due to Transnistrian and Moldova having different administrative procedures (Moldovan Exp№2).
[490] Moldovan Exp№1; PMR Cit№10.
[491] Moldova 2013; Transnistria et al. 2014.
[492] PMR Exp№2; PMR Exp№3.

officials as proof of permanent residency. Thus, *de facto* and indirectly, Moldova recognises the Transnistrian passport as a legal identity document, even though officially it is not recognised.[493]

Russia also accepts Transnistrian documents. Citing ICJ's Advisory Opinion on Namibia, the Loizidou case, and the 2001 Protocol on mutual recognition of documents, the Russian Ministry of Justice recognises many official Transnistrian documents.[494] Similarly, Georgia accepts Abkhazian and South Ossetian documents as valid documents for obtaining healthcare services from Georgian authorities. These documents are also recognised for the purposes of issuing status-neutral identity/travel documents or confirming Georgian citizenship.[495] Overall, any action towards recognising legal identity documents issued by the aspirant state must be taken as a positive step towards improving their holders' physical and material security.

Overall, nonrecognition hinders the ability of the aspirant state to meet its obligations vis-à-vis its citizens internationally, as well as the ability of aspirant state citizens to use their local passports to travel internationally. In contrast, state recognition, recognition of legal identity documents, the network of official representations abroad, and positive dialogue with other actors enhance the rights of aspirant state citizens abroad.

Internal Functionality of Aspirant State Citizenship

Internal functionality can be linked to political rights (e.g. voting, standing for national elections) and the right to enter/exit and abode in the aspirant state. Citizenship also provides access to civil and social rights within the aspirant state. Despite the limited external functionality, most interlocutors were quick to highlight that their citizenship provided them with all rights associated with citizenship inside the aspirant state, on par with citizenship of recognised states. Interlocutors living in the aspirant state stated that they felt they were citizens of a full-fledged state (*polnotsennaya strana*) and that they were only restricted in international travel,[496] which means that nonrecognition was not critical to the internal

[493] PMR Exp№1; PMR Exp№2.
[494] European Court of Human Rights 1996; International Court of Justice 1971; Ministry of Justice Russia 2014.
[495] Georgia 2008, Art. 8; 2011, Art. 11; 2018: 5–6; Ministry of Justice Georgia 2011, Art. 7.
Abkhazian officials have previously engaged with Turkish and Armenian officials in the hope of having their passports recognised (RA Exp№1). Outside official contexts, some interlocutors claimed to have used the Transnistrian passports as an identity document, such as proving age when buying alcohol or converting currency (PMR Cit№7; PMR Exp№3).
[496] PMR Cit№4; PMR Cit№9; RSO Cit№2.

functionality of citizenship compared to external functionality. Political rights were the least discussed, most likely because they are the least affected by nonrecognition.[497]

Interlocutors stated that their passport facilitates interactions with local authorities and provides benefits such as access to social services (e.g. pensions, education), having preferential tariffs compared to foreigners (e.g. healthcare), engaging in banking and real estate transactions, and free access to tourist sites.[498] This sentiment was also reflected in the survey results. Only 4.5% of respondents stated that their local citizenship negatively affects their rights inside the aspirant states, while 52.2% said it had a positive effect.[499] Even the Georgian Ombudsman recognised that possessing aspirant state documents is necessary to realise many "basic rights" of the local population.[500] Thus, both the survey responses and discussions with interlocutors point to a critical finding; nonrecognition has a limited impact on rights enjoyed inside the aspirant state compared to those enjoyed outside of it. These rights exist independent of the aspirant state citizenship's international recognition.

Despite interlocutors highlighting the adequacy of aspirant state citizenship to fulfil rights inside the aspirant state, nonrecognition does impact the overall quality of life (i.e. level of physical and material security). 65% of survey respondents agreed that the contested political status of the aspirant state impedes their rights and quality of life.[501]

Concerning the economic sphere, aspirant states "find themselves in a position of pariah country which restrains their economic performance. [They] are unable to attract foreign investors, join international organization… trade on the global market… [and] leads to frustration among population and depopulation, brain-drain and loss of human capital".[502]

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[497] For a discussion of political rights and obligations in the aspirant states, see works by Czachor (2015), Kosienkowski (2013; 2021), and Ó Beacháin (2015; 2016).
[498] PMR Cit№4; PMR Cit№9; PMR Exp№1; PMR Exp№3; PMR Exp№4; PMR Exp№8; RA Cit№3.
[499] The rest of the respondents (out of 314) stated that the aspirant state citizenship had not affected their rights inside the aspirant state. A Kruskal-Wallis H test determined no statistically significant difference between the three aspirant states.
[500] Public Defender of Georgia 2017b; 2021a: 13.
[501] Of 346 respondents, 65% agreed, 21.7% somewhat agreed, and 13.3% disagreed with the statement. A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were differences in the impact of contested political status on rights and quality of life between Abkhazia (n=129), South Ossetia (n=67) and Transnistria (n=150). Mean Ranks were statistically significantly different between groups, $\chi 2(2) = 8.599$, $p = .041$. A pairwise comparison (using Dunn's post hoc test with a Bonferroni correction) revealed statistically significant differences in mean ranks between South Ossetia (148.81) and Transnistria (185.16) (p=.010) but not between Abkhazia (172.76) and Transnistria (p=.664), nor between Abkhazia and South Ossetia (p=0.179).
[502] Riegl 2014: 29.
It must be acknowledged that the consequences of nonrecognition extend to all residents of aspirant states (e.g. Georgian citizens living in Abkhazia and South Ossetia).

Transnistrian businesses wishing to export goods (via Moldova) must complete Moldovan customs papers, thus increasing costs.[503] Compared to the other two cases, Transnistria is in a better economic position, as it has reached a compromise by accepting a subordinate status to Moldova in order to be able to economically benefit from trade with the EU.[504] Abkhazia and South Ossetia have been more economically isolated, with Russia being the only significant and viable economic partner. Because of this, "there are no large stores, and the economy is also not very developed. Their prices are much higher than in Russia for this equipment. The salary is lower on the other hand. The loan system is not very highly developed. There are no mortgages at all... International foreign banks cannot operate here... Our banking system does not work abroad".[505] The economic isolation also results in heavy reliance on Russia to fill the gaps in the state budget. During 2016-2022, approximately 90% of South Ossetia's budget and 50% of Abkhazia's were funded by Russia.[506]

Nonrecognition also extends to education. While children in aspirant states can gain an education, they struggle with the limited international recognition of school-leaving certificates and university degrees.[507] Only Russia has signed agreements with Abkhazia and South Ossetia on recognising education qualifications.[508] Therefore, for many, the only viable option is to continue their education in Russia since "there is no way to get any other kind of education. This is such a serious violation of children's rights. But we don't have the opportunity anyway. We are in a blockade, no international organisations cooperate with us because sanctions are imposed on them by Georgia".[509] While some locals have managed to seek education in other countries, such as via the UK's Chevening Scholarship, the options are limited.[510] However, a recognised passport is still required. Interlocutors with Abkhazian bachelor's degrees accepted to European universities had to travel on their Russian passports.[511] Georgia has also adopted policies aimed at attracting residents by providing funding to continue education in its institutions and thereafter continue their

[503] UNECE 2017: 67–80; PMR Cit№4; PMR Cit№5.
[504] Coppieters 2019a: 27–31.
[505] RA Exp№13.
[506] See the official websites of the Parliament of South Ossetia and the Committee of Abkhazia on Statistics. Russia does not directly contribute to Transnistria's budget but provides assistance through subsidised gas, supplements to local pensions, and loans.
[507] Coppieters 2021; Kanashvili 2022; Waal & von Löwis 2020.
[508] Abkhazia & Russia 2017; South Ossetia & Russia 2017.
[509] RA Exp№12.
[510] Ganohariti 2021a; UNPO 2020; 2021.
The Rondine Cittadella della Pace in Italy also provides scholarships for individuals from the South Caucasus. See the Chevening and the Rondine websites.
[511] RA Cit№7; RA Exp№13; RA Exp№6.

education abroad.[512] However, most Abkhazians and South Ossetians refuse to study in Georgia for political reasons. Furthermore, competence in Georgian is required; thus, most individuals to benefit are ethnic Georgians, many of whom are Georgian citizens.[513]

Transnistrian education diplomas also have limited recognition, but Transnistrians have more opportunities than Abkhazians and South Ossetians. As early as 2004, Moldova adopted regulations for harmonising school and university education.[514] Currently, Transnistrians wishing to follow a Bachelor's in Moldova must follow a year-0 course at a university or finish the 12th year in a Moldovan school as Transnistria follows the Russian system and has only 11 years of schooling.[515] In 2017, Transnistria and Moldova also established procedures for apostilling degrees issued by the Taras Shevchenko State University in Tiraspol.[516] Thus far, approximately 500 diplomas have undergone this procedure.[517] However, one Moldovan human rights expert was quick to note that the Apostillation does not equal recognition of the Transnistrian higher education system but is limited to the authentication of the signatures in the diploma, and thus acceptance into universities is not guaranteed. Meanwhile, Russia recognises Transnistrian school leaving certificates.[518] Furthermore, since 2015 the Taras Shevchenko State University has been accredited in Russia, which means that its diplomas are recognised on par with diplomas from Russian universities.[519] Prior to this, the authentication process was time-consuming, as "it was necessary to prove that Russian language in Transnistria is the main language of communication, that the education curriculum in Transnistria follows Russian templates. I needed 10 months to prove that the Diploma issued by T.G. Shevchenko University from Transnistria is equivalent to the Russian one."[520] Thus, while within the aspirant state individuals can get an education, the limited recognition of the qualifications restricts the freedom to freely choose an education, with the situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia being more restrictive.

Overall, compared to the effects of nonrecognition on external functionality, the domestic impact is limited and less directly observable. Citizens of aspirant states can exercise

[512] Georgia 2018; Ministry of Education Georgia 2019; SMR Georgia n.d.-a; n.d.-b.
[513] Coppieters 2021.
[514] Ministry of Education Moldova 2004.
[515] OSCE 2022.
[516] Transnistria & Moldova 2017.
[517] Government of the Republic of Moldova 2022b.
[518] Rosobrnadzor Russia 2016.
[519] Rosobrnadzor Russia 2015; 2021.
[520] Al as cited in Ostavnaia 2017: 80.

political, civil, and social rights, sometimes even better than in recognised states.[521] That said, nonrecognition contributes to overall political and economic isolation, which in turn affects physical and material security. The economic isolation and low economic prosperity (inherent to the broader region) hinder the aspirant state authorities from providing adequate and high-quality social services. Nonrecognition of internal attributes of statehood (such as the education system) also hinders the overall prospects of individuals. Even in those cases where the local education is recognised, individuals must have a recognised citizenship to travel to the place of education. Thus, even though rights associated with citizenship exist independent of state recognition, nonrecognition hinders individual rights and freedoms and results in human insecurity. The limited recognition of the state and its citizenship pushes individuals to acquire a compensatory citizenship that enhances their rights, freedoms, and human security.

Part II - Functionality of Recognised Citizenship

As discussed above, nonrecognition of statehood primarily affects the external functionality of the aspirant state citizenship. The question that follows is, how do individuals overcome this limitation? The answer for many is to maintain a compensatory citizenship from a recognised (UN member) state, which they can use for international travel and other activities (e.g. gaining a foreign education). However, as subsequently discussed, its functionality may also be limited.

Most respondents' and interlocutors' attitudes toward their second citizenship were utilitarian and pragmatic. Due to the extremely limited (external) functionality of aspirant state citizenship, all interlocutors highlighted the need to acquire citizenship of a recognised state in order to circumvent the limitations posed by nonrecognition. Recognised citizenship becomes a "tool that allows you to be a full-fledged subject of legal relations outside your own country," with individuals, first and foremost, needing a recognised passport to "cross the border, and had Transnistria been recognised, a second citizenship would have been unnecessary for me".[522] The second citizenship becomes "just a document that helps to achieve something that cannot be achieved with Abkhazian citizenship".[523] Thus, for interlocutors (particularly those living in the aspirant state), the main, if not the only, reason

[521] In the 2021 Freedom House Index, Abkhazia was considered "Partly Free", while South Ossetia and Transnistria were considered to be "Not Free". Russia was ranked "Not Free" and was below Transnistria.
[522] RA Exp №1; PMR Cit№4.
[523] RA Cit№4.

for the second citizenship is the ability to travel.[524] The survey results came to a similar conclusion. 89% of respondents (strongly) agreed that their compensatory citizenship had expanded their travel freedom. Among the three cases, compensatory citizenship had the strongest positive effect on Transnistrians.[525] This could be explained by the fact that Transnistrian passports are not recognised anywhere in the world, while Abkhazian and South Ossetian passports are recognised by Russia - the most important travel destination. These results echo the broader literature on why individuals with weaker a citizenship choose to acquire a compensatory second (more powerful) citizenship.[526]

Table 12: Expansion of travel freedom by the compensatory citizenship.

	Abkhazia	South Ossetia	Transnistria	
Disagree	8.6%	4.0%	1.5%	4.3%
Neither Agree nor Disagree	9.7%	16.0%	0.8%	6.5%
Agree	57.0%	62.0%	44.4%	51.8%
Strongly Agree	24.7%	18.0%	53.4%	37.3%
N	93	50	133	276

Besides facilitating international travel, recognised citizenship allows individuals to engage in international business, gain a foreign education, and access social services. 53.7% of survey respondents (strongly) agreed that their compensatory citizenship had strengthened their economic security, while 46.8% (strongly) agreed that their compensatory citizenship had aided in achieving their education goals.[527] All in all, 73.2% of respondents (strongly) agreed that the recognised citizenship compensates for the limitations of the aspirant state citizenship, with the strongest positive effect on expanding rights being among Transnistrians.[528] In contrast, linking to the discussion on internal functionality, only 31.8% of respondents stated that compensatory citizenship had improved the quality of life inside

[524] PMR Exp№3; RA Cit№3; RA Exp№1; RA Exp№10; RA Exp№11.
[525] A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were differences in "Expansion of travel freedom by the compensatory citizenship" between Abkhazia (n=93), South Ossetia (n=50) and Transnistria (n=133). Mean Ranks were statistically significantly different between groups, $\chi2(2) = 37.159$, $p<.001$. A pairwise comparison (using Dunn's post hoc test with a Bonferroni correction) revealed statistically significant differences in mean ranks between Transnistria (165.62) and Abkhazia (116.41) (p=.000) and between Transnistria and South Ossetia (107.44) (p=.000), but not between Abkhazia and South Ossetia (p=1.000).
[526] Harpaz 2019a; 2019b; Harpaz & Mateos 2019.
[527] A Kruskal-Wallis H test determined no statistically significant difference between the three aspirant states.
[528] A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were differences in the "Overall impact of the compensatory citizenship" between Abkhazia (n=93), South Ossetia (n=50) and Transnistria (n=133). Mean Ranks were statistically significantly different between groups, $\chi2(2) = 35.389$, $p<.001$. A pairwise comparison (using Dunn's post hoc test with a Bonferroni correction) revealed statistically significant differences in mean ranks between Transnistria (165.92) and Abkhazia (116.51) (p =.000) and between Transnistria and South Ossetia (106.46) (p=.000), but not between Abkhazia and South Ossetia (p=1.000).

the aspirant state.[529] This further confirms that compensatory citizenship is primarily needed to guarantee human security outside the aspirant state.

The survey results paralleled the conversations with interlocutors, who highlighted that Russian citizenship allowed dual citizens to receive social benefits from Russia. Interlocutors highlighted the low level of local pensions and that Russian pensions significantly improved their quality of life.[530] Russian citizens living in Abkhazia and South Ossetia are eligible for social pensions.[531] Transnistrians are also eligible to receive pensions from the country of their second citizenship, with the Russian pensions being the highest.[532] Russia also provides a supplement of a few hundred roubles for all Transnistrian pensioners.[533] Another category eligible for Russian pensions are those who had worked during the Soviet Union.[534]

Having access to a recognised citizenship also opened the doors for education opportunities both in the country of compensatory citizenship and outside of it.[535] This is a crucial difference between dual citizens and mono-citizens since the latter's rights are restricted to the territories where their citizenship is recognised. Residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are allocated (funded) places in Russian universities.[536] Transnistrians are allocated education quotas by Russia, Moldova, and Ukraine, with migration toward Russia being the most prominent.[537]

[529] A Kruskal-Wallis H test determined no statistically significant difference between the three aspirant states.
[530] RA Cit№3; RA Exp№5; RSO Exp№2.
The social (old-age) pension in Abkhazia is 500 roubles (with an additional supplement of 2500 roubles for mono-citizens), but the guaranteed minimum social pension by Russia was just above 10,000 roubles in 2021 (Kotova 2022; Pension Fund of Russia 2021; Zavodskaya 2018a). South Ossetian social pensions stood at 3250 roubles in 2019 (RES 2019). In Transnistria, the basic pension stood at 2700 roubles in 2019 (Ministry of Social Protection and Labour Transnistria 2021). Thus, individuals who do not have dual citizenship, and at a significant disadvantage. Generally, dual citizens must decide which pension they opt for.
[531] Abkhazia & Russia 2015; South Ossetia & Russia 2016.
[532] PMR Cit№1; PMR Cit№5; PMR Exp№3.
[533] Novosti PMR 2018; Ria News 2022.
[534] RA Cit№3; RA Exp№10.
The payment of pensions to Russians abroad is not unique to the aspirant states and is implemented through bilateral agreements (Pension Fund of Russia 2021). However, the number of eligible individuals is decreasing since work experience after the dissolution of the Soviet Union is not counted (Mikhalchevsky 2022; RA Cit№7; RA Exp№13). For example, in Abkhazia, as of 2018, over 6000 pensioners were not eligible for Russian pensions (Zavodskaya 2018a), and by 2020 had increased to 9000 people (Zavodskaya 2021).
[535] PMR Cit№2; PMR Cit№7; RA Cit№5.
[536] Study in Russia 2018.
[537] Ostavnaia 2017: 28–37.

While in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the most widespread citizenship is that of Russia, in Transnistria, a wide array of secondary citizenships exist, including Moldovan, Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, and Bulgarian, with many having multiple citizenships. Even among 148 Transnistrian survey respondents, 30.4% had multiple citizenships. For many, Moldovan citizenship is the most straightforward and sometimes only option since it considers many Transnistrians as its citizens. In the case of Russia or Ukraine, individuals need to actively take steps to acquire this citizenship (if not guaranteed by birth) and undergo an administrative process.[538] Among the top three compensatory citizenships, Russian is usually the most desired. However, some interlocutors were critical of Russia, saying it is not doing enough to ease citizenship acquisition, despite having liberalised its citizenship law in general and supporting Transnistria in other areas.[539] Transnistrians are not eligible for simplified acquisition of Russian citizenship since they must reside in Russia.[540] Transnistrian authorities have called for Russia to simplify the acquisition rules.[541]

When individuals did have multiple recognised citizenships, their use of passports was highly functional, such that the citizenship that best assists with their aims was used. Citizens acknowledged the multiplicity of their citizenships and associated rights since "depending on in what legal, political context a citizen is located he has many faces, in one case he can be a citizen of Pridnestrovie when he applies to Pridnestrovian structures. When he applies to Moldovan structures, he uses a Moldovan passport. When talking about some other context, he uses other passports. Therefore, in terms of citizenship, he lives in different dimensions."[542] For some, the desired migration path (for employment) influences citizenship choices.[543] If an individual wished to migrate to Russia (the most popular choice for a long time), they would try to acquire Russian citizenship, to Ukraine a Ukrainian one, to Moldova a Moldovan one, and to the West a Moldovan/Romanian/Bulgarian one. This was the reason for the parents of one Transnistrian to acquire Russian citizenship when he was a teenager, since they saw their future in Russia, while another co-citizen applied for Moldovan citizenship (after already having a Russian one) because she wanted to move to the EU.[544] In other cases, the inability to obtain a particular (e.g. Romanian) citizenship for

[538] PMR Cit№5; PMR Cit№9; PMR Exp№4; PMR Exp№8.
[539] PMR Exp№2; PMR Exp№3.
[540] Transnistrians have also faced delays in renewing their Russian passports and having their citizenship applications processed on time (Zatulin as cited in Shulga 2022).
[541] Krasnoselsky 2020; 2022; Russia 2019; Solovyov 2020.
[542] PMR Exp№6.
[543] PMR Cit№2; PMR Cit№7; PMR Exp№6; PMR Exp№8.
[544] PMR Cit№2; PMR Cit№3.

which the individual might have been eligible for potentially closed certain opportunities.[545] The fluidity of using multiple citizenships is also evident in cases of border crossings. An illustrative case is of one interlocutor who has Moldovan and Russian citizenship and in 2014 went to study in Russia.[546] Initially, he used to fly, but at some point, it became too expensive. Thankfully he could use his Moldovan passport to travel by bus via Ukraine to Russia, something he would not have been able to do if he only had a Russian passport due to Ukraine's policy following the annexation of Crimea. Thus, he departed Transnistria as a Transnistrian, entered and left Ukraine as a Moldovan, and then entered Russia as a Russian.

This case is a perfect illustration of the fact that, depending on which state the second citizenship is, individuals will have qualitatively different (compounding of) rights, as illustrated in the table below. In addition, possessing an EU citizenship grants settlement freedoms across the whole region, which non-EU citizens need a residence permit for.

Table 13: Compounding of Travel Freedoms (visa on arrival). [547]

	№ of Compensatory Citizenships							
Russian passport	X		X	X		X		
Moldovan passport		X	X	X	X		X	
Ukrainian passport			X		X			X
Romanian passport (EU citizenship)	X	X						
№ of destinations	174	170	165	162	150	125	148	124

Despite having multiple recognised citizenships, some respondents admitted that they almost exclusively used one. One interlocutor admitted that after obtaining his Moldovan passport, he only used his Russian passport to vote for parliamentary elections.[548] Two Transnistrians were not even sure if their other recognised passport was still valid.[549] This illustrates that the multiplicity of legal statuses may not always result in the holder utilising the rights associated with each citizenship. Furthermore, as discussed in the subsequent section, not all compensatory citizenships provide the full set of rights that other individuals with the same citizenship possess, thereby creating a form of *semi-citizenship*.[550]

Having spoken to 46 citizens, one observation is that when discussing compensatory

[545] PMR Cit№1.
[546] PMR Cit№2.
[547] Arton Capital 2023.
[548] PMR Cit№6.
[549] PMR Cit№3; PMR Cit№5.
[550] E. F. Cohen 2009b.

citizenship, Abkhazians and South Ossetians were very reflexive about their choices and the effects of this second citizenship. Here the second citizenship was highly valued, and respondents were grateful for having Russian citizenship. In contrast, the Transnistrians were more relaxed when discussing the options for compensatory citizenship acquisition. When there is a wide array of citizenship options in society, individuals frame citizenship acquisition akin to "citizenship shopping". Thus, the availability of options makes the fear of not having a recognised citizenship and the gratefulness for having one less prominent.

Limited Functionality of Recognised Citizenships

Russian Citizenship

For those who acquire citizenship of a recognised state, it would be logical to assume that the legal identity derived from the nationality would be universally recognised. However, in certain instances, this may not be the case. Georgia and Ukraine argue for the nonrecognition of Russian passports issued to residents of the "occupied territories" as the extraterritorial naturalisations have not been authorised by Tbilisi and Kyiv, respectively.[551] Thus, even if an individual acquires a legal identity of a recognised state, it may not be universally recognised.[552] Thus, due to the contested nature of how the second citizenship was acquired, it may also have limited external functionality. In practice, this means Russian *zagran* passports issued in or to residents of the aspirant states cannot be used for travel to EU and Schengen countries.[553]

Little information exists on how the nonrecognition policy has been implemented, and according to (former) government representatives, the enforcement of the policy over the last few years (until 2022) became less common.[554] One way to identify is based on where the passport was issued. Before 2008, the issuing authority of the Russian passports for Abkhazians was the MFA office (based in Sochi); the process that occurred in South Ossetia

[551] Ganohariti 2021b: 4; Norwegian Refugee Council 2018.
Countering this point, a former MFA official used the examples of Israel, Hungary, and Ireland as cases where the extraterritorial naturalisation policies have not been contested (RA Exp№4).
[552] This is similar to the situation of Israeli citizens who are refused admittance to several countries due to the Arab League boycott.
[553] European Parliament 2022; Gvindzhia 2017; RA Exp№4; RA Exp№6.
RA Exp№4 stated that the nonrecognition of these passports by Georgia was not an issue (since the desire to travel to Georgia is not high), but the subsequent nonrecognition by other states was more critical.
Until the 2022 EU decision, the nonrecognition policy was implemented on an ad-hoc basis, and only by some EU member-states (Gezerdava as cited in Sharia 2022b).
[554] RA Exp№4; RA Exp№6.

is less clear.[555] In the first years after recognition, non-biometric passports issued in Abkhazia and South Ossetia had the name of the Embassy written as the issuing authority.[556] Since then, biometric passports have come into circulation with the issuing authority written as "MFA Russia" plus a code.[557] This makes it more challenging to identify whether a passport was issued via the Russian Embassy in Abkhazia or South Ossetia. It may nonetheless be possible to identify the issuing authority via certain codes in the passport.[558] As a result, individuals needing Schengen visas may first try to get their *zagran* passport issued in Russia.[559] Even in cases when passports were issued in Russia, visa applications may be denied if the Embassy is made aware that the individual is a citizen/resident of Abkhazia or South Ossetia. The foreign embassies (in Russia) could refuse visas to those whose place of birth is a city in the aspirant state or who do not have a Russian *propiska*.[560] Instead, these embassies instruct the applicant to direct their application to their mission in Georgia since, according to them, the individual should apply to the mission that is accredited in the *de jure* territory they reside in. Following the invasions of Ukraine in 2022, the nonrecognition policy became standardised when EU member states collectively agreed not to accept Russian travel documents "issued in or to persons resident in… breakaway territories in Georgia".[561]

A consequence of this nonrecognition policy is that, once again, individuals are restricted in their mobility rights and other secondary rights, such as accessing foreign education or healthcare. For example, one interlocutor referred to an incident where a cancer patient with Russian citizenship could not go for treatment in Germany because "somehow the German consulate in Russia learned that he was also a citizen of the Republic of Abkhazia and they told him that he should apply [at the German Embassy] in Georgia".[562] Thus, the nonrecognition of Russian passports further affects mobility rights, even though Russian citizenship was first and foremost acquired to expand this right.

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[555] See Illarionov 2009: 57; Nagashima 2019.
Prior to recognition, Russia's Human Rights Ombudsperson (2008) questioned the (procedural) legality of distributing Russian passports to South Ossetian and Abkhazian residents, given that Russia did not maintain any diplomatic missions nor had any jurisdiction in the territories.
[556] MFA Russia n.d.; 2008, Art. 52.9.
[557] Biometric passports were first issued in 2006 (valid for 5 years). The current version with a validity of 10 years has been in circulation since 2010 (Russia 1996 Art. 10; 2005).
[558] PMR Exp№3; RA Exp№13.
[559] Akaba 2022; Kotova 2022.
[560] Gvindzhia 2017; Lomia 2014; RA Exp№7; RA Exp№13.
[561] European Parliament 2022.
In 2016, the EU issued guidelines on the non-recognition of Russian passports issued in Crimea (MFA Ukraine 2021).
[562] RA Exp№7.

Abkhazian and South Ossetian authorities have condemned the policy of nonrecognition of Russian passports, including the EU's 2022 decision which standardised state practices across the region. They argue that the restrictions "are a gross violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights. The decision of the European Parliament prevents the citizens… from exercising their inalienable right to freedom of movement".[563] Despite this, the Russian passport remains highly valued by Abkhazians and South Ossetians as it grants access to the most important destination – Russia.

The continued acceptance and demand for Russian citizenship also illustrates that Georgia's position that the passportization was "illegal" and "forced"[564] is viewed differently in the aspirant states. Russia's passportization (and subsequent recognition) should not be exclusively seen as a top-down act aimed at using citizenship as a tool to broaden Russia's geopolitical ambitions.[565] Acquisition of Russian citizenship was a direct response to the limited functionality of the aspirant state citizenship, and recognition by Russia was seen as something that Abkhazia and South Ossetia had rightfully earned.[566] Rather than exclusively framing Russia's actions as an act of oppressive nationality attribution[567] or geopolitical expansionism, it is important to acknowledge the agency (or *securitability*) of citizens in their effort to improve their rights and human security.

In contrast, Transnistrians have not been affected by the nonrecognition policy of the EU. However, because of the Russia-Ukraine war and the subsequent closing of airspace and border and limiting Schengen visas for Russian nationals, Transnistrians who held only Russian passports found it difficult to travel to Russia and the EU. Consequently, an upsurge in applications for Moldovan citizenship and passports were observed. During 2022, almost 5900 persons were recognised as Moldovan citizens, which is above the average of the previous years.[568] Transnistrians quickly recognised the benefits of having Moldovan documents given the now reduced external functionality of Russian citizenship.[569] This is a

[563] MFA Abkhazia 2022; MFA South Ossetia 2022; Shakryl 2022.
[564] MFA Georgia 2021.
[565] Ganohariti 2021b.
[566] Chirikba 2022a; Kopeček et al. 2016; Tasoyev 2009.
[567] Ganohariti 2022.
[568] Tabaranu 2022; Moldovan Exp№1.
[569] Government of the Republic of Moldova 2022a; 2023.
In the period 2018-2021, on average 4500 Transnistrian acquired Moldovan citizenship anually.

further example of diachronic changes in the functionality of citizenship. It also illustrates how a hierarchy is created between Transnistrians with Russian citizenship and those with Moldovan citizenship (which allows easy access to the EU).

Furthermore, unlike Georgia or Ukraine, Moldova has not adopted a nonrecognition policy towards Russian citizenships held by Transnistrians. But in the past, some Russian passport holders were scrutinised by Moldovan authorities (e.g. extra passport checks, interrogations) when travelling through Chișinău airport.[570] This issue was formally resolved after the agreement that eliminated the "possibility of application of administrative sanctions to the movement of Pridnestrovian residents with foreign passports".[571] However, Transnistrian authorities highlight that certain Transnistrians (particularly government representatives) continue to be restricted in their freedom of movement.[572]

The second distinction that results in *semi-citizenship* is Russia's own policies, which can affect all citizens. Russia maintains two passports, the internal and the *zagran*. However, not all who have Russian nationality have an internal passport.[573] When prompted to discuss the consequence of not having an internal passport, a few interlocutors were critical and argued that the Russian citizenship of aspirant state citizens with only a *zagran* passport was "not a full-fledged citizenship".[574] The lack of an internal passport creates restrictions when individuals wish to exercise their rights within Russia, such as getting access to social services or opening a bank account.[575] Thereby creating a hierarchy of citizenship within Russian nationality. On the other hand, others noted that acquiring an internal passport was not critical for those permanently residing in the aspirant state, and once needed, it could be acquired via a generally straightforward administrative procedure.[576] Another instance of the *semi-citizenship* is encountered by expectant mothers who find it difficult to access social benefits like *Materinskiy Kapital* (benefits for families with children) whilst residing outside Russia, forcing them to travel to Russia to give birth.[577]

[570] PMR Cit№5.
[571] Moldova 2013.
[572] Manakov 2023; Novosti PMR 2023.
[573] The *zagran* passport is generally not recognised as a valid document by many institutions (Russia 1997). The lack of an internal passport is not unique to aspirant states but is common amongst citizens living outside Russia.
[574] RA Exp№3.
[575] RA Exp№1; RA Exp№5, RA Exp№7; RA Exp№13.
[576] RA Cit№3; RA Exp№1; RA Exp№4; RA Exp№5, RA Exp№7; RA Exp№11, RA Exp№13.
[577] Kotova 2022; Sanakoeva 2011; RA Exp№13.

Another case for "diminished citizenship rights" (not mentioned by interlocutors) relates to political participation. For example, Russia opened polling stations for the 2021 Duma elections in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria, but did not do so in eastern Ukraine.[578] Donbas residents had to travel to Russia if they wished to vote, and even then, they could only vote for the party, resulting in a hierarchy among Russian citizens living in the different aspirant states. A final, but relatively minor restriction that some individuals face is that if they wish to enter specific government positions, they cannot maintain dual citizenship.[579]

Overall, while Russian citizenship improves individuals' physical and material security, it does not always confer full rights associated with the citizenship. The reduced rights conferred by Russian citizenship to citizens of some aspirant states results in a hierarchy where the rights and security of some Russian citizens are broader than others.

Georgian and Moldovan Citizenship

As discussed in Chapter 5, in some instances, the base state may ascribe its citizenship to residents of aspirant states. Such attributions also bring forth a set of rights and obligations. Or, more correctly, the lack thereof. Both Georgia and Moldova engage in ascriptive citizenship. However, the two policies have drastically different consequences.

The attitude of Abkhazian and South Ossetian officials and citizens towards Georgian citizenship is negative since they see Georgia's ascription as an infringement of their sovereignty. Interlocutors stated that due to the ongoing conflict and past grievances, it is morally (and legally) impermissible to maintain dual citizenship with Georgia.[580] Maintaining dual citizenship is seen as allegiance to an enemy state. Interlocutors questioned what the obligations of such citizens would be if an armed conflict were to resume.

Georgia's policy has been to try its best to incentivise Abkhazians and South Ossetians to acquire Georgian passports (or status-neutral documents), which would allow access to benefits and services. Georgia has used the ability to travel visa-free to Europe or access

[578] Burkhardt et al. 2022.
Each diplomatic mission is attached to a particular federal subject in Russia; thus, individuals can vote both for the party and contestants.
[579] S. Shamba as cited in Zavodskaya 2017; RA Exp№4.
[580] RA Cit№2; RA Exp№6; RA Exp№10; RA Exp№11; RA Exp№14.

Georgian universities as a carrot; however, this is seen as Georgian propaganda by the aspirant states.[581] The only exemption is access to healthcare. The Georgian Referral Programme, since 2010, provides Abkhazian and South Ossetian residents access to subsidised healthcare. In the first ten years, over 5000 Abkhazian residents and 3000 South Ossetian residents utilised this program.[582] Interlocutors generally commended Georgian authorities for providing this service.[583] However, they were critical of past cases where Georgian authorities compelled patients to sign documents (written in Georgian) that declare that the individual agrees to be bound by the Georgian Constitution and thus acknowledge their Georgian citizenship.[584] Such ascriptions result in a *sticky citizenship* that "does not always confer advantage and, even more ominously, can even render the affected person less secure".[585] The following quote is illustrative of this:

> There was a story 3-4 years ago at the parliamentary elections in South Ossetia when a person born on the territory of South Ossetia and ran for deputies was suddenly told that he is a citizen of Georgia... It turned out that children who in the 1990s passed through the territory of Georgia to Europe on vacation were unilaterally issued some documents by Georgia. The person did not declare any desire to become a citizen of Georgia, but Georgian citizenship was established because of some documents. (RSO Exp№2)

Even those who (secretly) confirm their Georgian citizenship (for utilitarian reasons) and acquire identity documents (including ethnic Georgians) find it difficult to access services from the Georgian government because of difficulties in crossing the border and limited support from Georgian authorities.[586] Thus, this ascribed Georgian citizenship takes the form of a *semi-citizenship* since it brings forth limited rights.[587]

Ultimately, even if Georgia considers residents of the two territories to be its nationals, this nationality is hollow. While legally, Georgian citizenship brings forth rights and obligations, these rights and obligations cannot be exercised on an individual level. As long as individuals do not engage with the Georgian state and remain undocumented, except for

[581] Gvindzhia 2017; Tsikhelashvili 2017; RA Cit№2; RSO Exp№1.
A hierarchy of functionality is also created between an individual with documents that confirm Georgian citizenship (IDs/passports) and those with status-natural documents (which neither confirms nor refutes Georgian citizenship). Only a handful of countries accepted the latter as a valid travel document (Zakareishvili 2012). Further, the question of who is responsible for providing consular assistance has been raised (Civil Georgia 2012; RA Exp№4). Meanwhile, in 2023 the Tbilisi Court of Appeals ruled that holders of status-neutral documents have the same social rights as Georgian citizens (Center for Social Justice 2023).
[582] Bakradze 2022; Gvindzhia 2017; Parulava 2020.
[583] RA Cit№1; RA Cit№4; RA Exp№6; RSO Exp№3.
[584] Zakareishvili 2012; RA Exp№6; RA Exp№12.
[585] Macklin 2015: 223.
[586] Beslier 2022; Center for Social Justice 2023; Kvarchelia 2014; Prelz Oltramonti 2016.
[587] Georgian Exp; RA Exp№13.

healthcare, they will not be able to enjoy rights conferred by the Georgian state. Similarly, the Georgian state will not be able to compel these individuals to fulfil any obligations since it has limited capacity to enforce them.

Moldova has also used visa-free access to the EU to incentivise Transnistrians to acquire Moldovan passports.[588] Similarly, in the past, Moldovan authorities removed administrative fees to incentivise Transnistrians to acquire Moldovan citizenship.[589] Transnistrian authorities have no objection to the voluntary acquisition of Moldovan citizenship. Interlocutors highlighted individuals' right to choose their compensatory citizenship (amongst several) to improve their quality of life.[590] The narrative on dual citizenship was human rights-focused, and the need to separate political conflict with Moldova and the rights of individuals while working to ensure that Transnistria does not lose its achieved sovereignty was highlighted.

Given that over 350,000 Transnistrians possess Moldovan citizenship,[591] the likelihood of *semi-citizenship* is low. There are two instances where this might happen. Firstly, individuals eligible for Moldovan citizenship but who choose not to acquire any documentation may face difficulty when engaging with Moldovan authorities. For example, an individual with Russian and Transnistrian citizenship, but born in Moldova, would not be issued Moldovan residency documents because Moldova regards most individuals born on its territory as its citizens.[592] Thus, one must acquire Moldovan documents if they wish to interact with Moldovan authorities and be able to indisputably prove their right to reside on the *de jure* Moldovan territory. This may be a particular concern for individuals not wanting to be considered Moldovan citizens for ideological reasons. Two interlocutors with Ukrainian citizenship said they refused to acquire Moldovan documents based on moral considerations because of the past conflict, even though they had a legal right.[593] Transnistrians who wish to claim Russian citizenship under the statelessness procedures[594] first must prove that they do not have Moldovan citizenship.[595] For this, Transnistrians must

[588] PMR Cit№8; PMR Cit№9; PMR Exp№2; PMR Exp№3.
[589] Călugăreanu 2005; Zhluktenko 2005.
[590] PMR Cit№9; PMR Exp№2; PMR Exp№3; PMR Exp№4; PMR Exp№8.
[591] Government of the Republic of Moldova 2023.
[592] Moldova 2000; 2010; Moldovan Exp№1; PMR Exp№3.
[593] PMR Cit№4; PMR Cit№10.
[594] Russia 2002, Art. 14.
[595] One interlocutor claimed that, during a certain period, individuals (who may have had Moldovan citizenship) could acquire Russian citizenship by declaring at the Russian consulate that they are stateless, even though officially they never received proof of statelessness from Moldova authorities (PMR Exp№1).

turn to Moldovan authorities to receive the necessary documents. However, Moldovan authorities will not issue proof of statelessness as, per its laws, the individual is likely to be a *de jure* citizen of Moldova.[596] Seemingly in order to curb such requests, in 2008, Moldova restricted citizenship renunciation to individuals who reside outside of *de jure* Moldova and can prove that they have acquired or are eligible to acquire another citizenship.[597] Moldova's policies could be argued to result in Transnistrians being compelled to acquire Moldovan citizenship out of necessity (if it is their only option).[598] However, no interlocutor said they felt forced (by Moldova) to acquire Moldovan citizenship.

The second category is individuals who have yet to activate their Moldovan citizenship via a relatively straightforward administrative procedure. This is the case among the youth who have yet to activate their Moldovan citizenship. Several interlocutors stated that they acquired Moldovan citizenship much later in life (as young adults), even though they were eligible for Moldovan citizenship by birth.[599] This creates a peculiar case where individuals who are Moldovan citizens by birth only confirm it after going through the required administrative procedures. Thus, in the case of such individuals, one could argue that they have an undocumented and dormant nationality and that Moldovan authorities would not be aware of their existence until they register with them for the first time.

As observed in this section, the attitude towards base state citizenship differs between Abkhazians and South Ossetians on the one hand, and Transnistrians on the other hand. It was shown that in instances where Georgian citizenship is ascribed, it brings forth (almost) no benefits since they Abkhazians and South Ossetians seldom utilise the associated rights. Thus, even if it legally exists, it is ineffective and may threaten citizens' human security. In contrast, Transnistrian interlocutors did not frame their secondary citizenship as a *sticky citizenship*. Rather, when they identified any limitations, it was framed relative to other recognised citizenships individuals might have. This and previous sections highlighted that even if individuals are determined to possess a certain citizenship, it may not bring forth the full package of associated rights, and in certain cases, bring forth no rights at all.

[596] Bureau for Migration and Asylum n.d.-a; PMR Exp№4.
[597] Moldova 2000, Arts. 22 & 33.
This change is reflected in the renunciation approvals. See 2009 vs 2011 data. Further reasons behind the 2008 amendment were not found.
[598] Pridnestrovian Meridian 2022.
[599] PMR Cit№5; PMR Cit№6; PMR Cit№9.

Part III - Sentiments Towards Citizenship

This chapter thus far highlighted two points. First, the conceptualisation of the (functionality of) citizenship should go beyond its relationship with nonrecognition. Despite having an immense impact on external functionality, the effects of state recognition on internal functionality are limited. Secondly, to expand the (external) functionality, individuals need a compensatory citizenship, albeit its functionality may also be restricted due to nonrecognition policies of other states. Given the influence of nonrecognition on the functionality of citizenship, how do citizens frame and experience their (contested) citizenships?

Citizenship as identity refers to people's individual and collective views on what it means to be a citizen. Individuals and societies are defined by a "fleeting multiplicity of possible identities",[600] and each identity interacts with others in varying degrees depending on time and place. This section explores the attitudes and sentiments towards local and compensatory citizenships to examine how individuals identify with them.

Sentiments Towards Aspirant State Citizenship

In response to the question of "what it means to be a citizen of the [aspirant state]", some interlocutors (particularly those with a legal background) discussed the legal relationship between the state and citizen or the functional aspects that the citizenship provides. Most, however, responded from a non-legal perspective.[601] In Abkhazia and South Ossetia, individuals were proud to be members of their political communities. Citizenship was framed as a symbol of home, family, ethnic and linguistic belonging, and historical memory (of war and displacement), even if, in practice, the citizenship/passport had limited functionality. The following quotes are illustrative of this:

> For me, this citizenship is the result of a certain path that my people have travelled because the state is, in a sense, the highest form of a nation's development. And the fact that we have achieved it in such conditions, for me, is a matter of pride of great prestige. Finally, for me, this is also the result of the victims of the war, the path that my people have been on. (RSO Exp№1)

> This is my identity. I was born and raised in Abkhazia. My history is rich... And the mission is to help my small country that has always been conquered and invaded. Today we receive support only from Russia. The rest of the world does not hear us...

[600] Kinnvall 2019: 153.
[601] RA Cit№5; RA Exp№12; RA Exp№13.

> I am always proud of my ancestors and proud of my history. And even though we don't have the best political situation right now... there is hope in me, and there is a desire in me to try to move forward. (RA Cit№7)

The effects of limited international recognition also entered the discourse. For one Abkhazian, "the very fact of nonrecognition, and now partial recognition in Abkhazia, is, of course, the basis for forming an understanding of citizenship. My generation fought for the independence of Abkhazia; the post-war generation grew up on the recognition of this independence".[602] Despite the effects of nonrecognition on the functionality of citizenship, one South Ossetian pointed out that it did not reduce their emotional attachment to the passport, which is an object that "confirms my identity and the existence of my state".[603]

Krasniqi (2019: 302) argued that aspirant state citizens "are neither citizens nor stateless" but fall in a legally indeterminant and ambiguous position and "most often ... are 'invisible' when it comes to international law". While some interlocutors did acknowledge that their citizenship might be "invisible" under International Law, to most, their citizenship is complete and does not possess any liminal characteristics. They referred to having decided (self-determined) their future status and having established a state and a citizenry with various attributes as proof that their citizenship exists.[604] Interlocuters did not present themselves or their state as being in a state of exception. The following quotes are illustrative of this discourse.

> We are also citizens, and no matter how someone looks at it or evaluates the legitimacy, we live in a legitimate state. We go for elections, we have our president, our government, our money, our legislation. (PMR Exp№8)

> Every day we go to work, get sick, study, children grow up, tragic events happen… All this is within the legal dimension of our state. I'm not talking about some ultra-patriotism. I am talking about the everyday life of people… they absolutely feel like citizens of Pridnestrovie. Another point is that we, like any other citizen of another country, in some ways are satisfied, in some ways are dissatisfied. (PMR Cit№4)

> We do not consider ourselves to be some kind of transitional state. Our children grow up, they go to school, and we fully feel ourselves as citizens of Abkhazia and do everything to ensure that this land develops… Here we feel full-fledged; we are not in this state of incomplete citizenship… We are an unrecognised territory or, as they say, partially recognised. But Britons do not need someone's recognition to be British, and the same thing with Americans and Europeans. Abkhazians do not need to be recognised by the whole world to live, give birth to children, raise them, and develop. (RA Exp№11)

[602] RA Exp№10.
[603] RSO Exp№1.
[604] PMR Cit№8; PMR Cit№9; RA Cit№4; RA Cit№5; RSO Cit№1.

Despite acknowledging that the nonrecognition has hindered the development of the aspirant state and has infringed on the rights of its citizens, residents argued that this does not reduce the empirical existence of the citizenship, citizenry, or the state (with their associated attributes). The liminal character was only reflected when travelling to countries that are yet to grant recognition to the aspirant state. An interlocutor acknowledged that, "legally, we are Abkhazia. But because we do not have widespread recognition, we are forced to indicate the Russian Federation everywhere... The only thing that can affect [the citizenship] is that we cannot use our Abkhazian passport, as if it does not exist".[605] These responses can be taken as evidence of the absence of (or at most minimal) ontological insecurity among interlocutors vis-à-vis their sense of being a citizen of the aspirant state.

The strong attachment towards Abkhazian and South Ossetian citizenship also supports the argument that both aspirant states are founded on an ethno-nationalistic principle, where the core aim is to preserve the titular group. Linking Abkhaz/Ossetian ethnic identity with citizenship and the state was prominent among these two groups. Interlocutors acknowledged that Abkhazia and South Ossetia are the only states where the cultural and linguistic identity of the two groups is guaranteed. One Abkhazian stated that "[Abkhazian statehood] is the only opportunity to have the right to live on their land and develop my culture because in no other passport or Constitution is it written that Abkhazia is the homeland of the Abkhaz. This is a place for the realisation of the development of the culture of my people. Therefore, this is the only country where it is free to create and build our own state". [606] One difference between the two groups was that while in Abkhazia, the multicultural make-up of the society was manifested both in discourse and legislation, in South Ossetia, being South Ossetian by default meant that one was an Ossetian.[607]

Transnistrians' attachment to their state and citizenship was less pronounced. Some explicitly stated that this citizenship has no material or emotional worth.[608] A couple of Transnistrians living abroad frame their status more positively, highlighting their unique position of possessing something (i.e. unrecognised citizenship) that others do not have.[609] Most, however, framed their sense of attachment to their citizenship in terms of regional identity, the past and present multicultural identity, family ties, great hospitality and weather,

[605] RA Cit№7.
[606] RA Cit№5.
[607] RSO Exp№1.
[608] PMR Cit№1; PMR Cit№3; PMR Exp№4.
[609] PMR Cit№3; PMR Cit№6.

tolerant society, peace and simplicity.[610] The inclusiveness/acceptance of Transnistrian identity was heightened on several occasions. Respondents stated that if the individual accepted the values of the Transnistrian society, they could become Transnistrian, regardless of their ethnic or linguistic background. A couple also referred to the historical memory of the 1990s war that helped strengthen Transnistrian identity.[611]

Compared to Abkhazian and South Ossetian national identity, which was framed in more exclusive and ethnic terms, Transnistrian identity was fluid, expansive, and comprised a multiplicity of identity dimensions related to citizenship.[612] A couple of interlocutors (almost jokingly) said that to be a citizen of Transnistria "is the same as to be a citizen of Moldova, but only in the Russian language" and it "means to have three passports".[613] In other words, a person can concurrently be Transnistrian, ethnically Ukrainian, have Moldovan citizenship, and feel they belong to the *Russkiy-Mir*. This awareness was highlighted by a Transnistrian sociologist who stated:

> We have many levels of identity. From ethnic identity - I am an ethnic Moldovan. A regional identity that characterizes me as a resident of a certain region. I identify myself not by the regional identity in which I now live (Tiraspol) but by the regional identity of my origin, where my parents live. The third identity is civic. This supra-ethnic identity is associated with the awareness of oneself as part of the Pridnestrovian society, the acceptance of certain political values that characterise our society and the state... Another level of identity that characterizes us is civilizational identity... This is an identity that relates to the *Russkiy-Mir*. If we conduct a sociological survey in Pridnestrovie, then for the vast majority, the identity of the Russian world, that is not a Russian ethnic identity [*Russkiy*], but Russian citizenship identity [*Rossiyanin*], namely the *Russkiy-Mir* characterizes us. Because there is a certain information sphere that exists; this is an education system that copies the standards of the Russian Federation and, of course, the support that Russia provides to Pridnestrovie. (PMR Exp№6)

Despite the greater fluidity of Transnistrian identity, it does not mean they experienced some form of ontological insecurity. The survey also revealed similar findings. There was a statistically significant difference between Transnistria and the other two republics concerning the level of pride in their citizenship. Abkhazians and South Ossetians were prouder of their citizenship.[614] Analogous results were observed in the degree of attachment

[610] PMR Cit№1; PMR Cit№6; PMR Cit№9; PMR Cit№10; PMR Exp№6; PMR Exp№8.
[611] PMR Cit№8; PMR Exp№6.
[612] Bauman 2000; Crenshaw 1989; Verkuyten et al. 2019.
[613] PMR Cit№6; PMR Cit№2.
[614] A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were differences in "Pride in aspirant state citizenship" between Abkhazia (n=102), South Ossetia (n=56) and Transnistria (n=119). Mean Ranks were statistically significantly different between groups, $\chi 2(2) = 67.624$, $p<.001$. A pairwise comparison (using Dunn's post hoc test with a Bonferroni correction) revealed statistically significant differences in mean ranks

(feeling) to their aspirant state citizenship.[615] There was also a statistically significant difference related to the level of belonging to the *Russkiy-Mir*, with Transnistrians exhibiting the strongest attachment.[616] These findings echo those of O'Loughlin et al. (2016: 764) and Marandici (2020) on the increasing identification and perforation of *Russkiy-Mir* identity in daily life.

Having discussed the level of attachment to citizenship, the next question is, how does this compare to the functionality dimension of citizenship? Is equal weight attached to both dimensions? Survey results showed that around 53% of respondents gave equal importance to internal functionality and identity-based dimensions. Given that, when living in the aspirant state, individuals must be able to exercise their rights and freedoms, all the while acknowledging their desire for statehood, this result is not surprising. Extrapolating from the data, one can see that the utilitarian character of citizenship is equally important to the identity dimension of citizenship. For the rest, Abkhazians and South Ossetians attached greater importance to the identity dimension of their citizenship, while the relationship was reversed for Transnistrians.

Table 14: Aspirant State Citizenship is important because of…

	Abkhazia	South Ossetia	Transnistria	
Internal Functionality>Identity	6.4%	2.8%	37.7%	18.9%
Identity>Internal Functionality	34.3%	45.8%	13.6%	27.9%
Ties	59.3%	51.4%	48.7%	53.2%
N	140	72	154	366

The difference in sentiment towards their citizenship between Transnistrians, on the one hand, and Abkhazians and South Ossetians, on the other hand, is evidence of the type of citizenship configuration each aspirant state has (further discussed in Chapter 7).

between Abkhazia (167.32) and Transnistria (104.06) (p=.000) and between South Ossetia (161.66) and Transnistria (p=.000), but not between Abkhazia and South Ossetia (p=1.000).

[615] A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were differences in "Attachment to aspirant state citizenship" between Abkhazia (n=86), South Ossetia (n=48) and Transnistria (n=126). Mean Ranks were statistically significantly different between groups, $\chi2(2) = 57.246$, $p<.001$. A pairwise comparison (using Dunn's post hoc test with a Bonferroni correction) revealed statistically significant differences in mean ranks between Abkhazia (162.51) and Transnistria (101.45) (p=.000) and between South Ossetia (149.42) and Transnistria (p=.000), but not between Abkhazia and South Ossetia (p=.696).

[616] A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were differences in the "Feeling of belonging to the *Russkiy-Mir*" between Abkhazia (n=98), South Ossetia (n=53) and Transnistria (n=125). Mean Ranks were statistically significantly different between groups, $\chi2(2) = 29.586$, $p<.001$. A pairwise comparison (using Dunn's post hoc test with a Bonferroni correction) revealed statistically significant differences in mean ranks between Abkhazia (108.30) and Transnistria (163.27) (p=.000), but not between Abkhazia and South Ossetia (135.93) (p =.092), nor South Ossetia and Transnistria (p=.089).

There was no statistical difference between the three groups in relation to individual feelings of being European. 40.6% did not feel European, 26.7% somewhat felt European, and 32.6% felt European (n=243).

Transnistrian identity is not ethno-national but civic, supra-ethnic and territorial, while the Abkhazian and South Ossetian states are founded on a strong sense of ethnic identity aimed at protecting the titular group from assimilation.[617] As a result, the Abkhazians and South Ossetians had a more exclusive national identity despite having multiple legal identities. In comparison, the sense of Transnistrian identity was weaker and intersected with other identities. Despite their identity's intersectional and fluid nature, Transnistrians attached greater importance to the functional dimension of their citizenship. This contributes to the argument that Transnistrian identity is a new phenomenon and is still being consolidated.

Sentiments Towards Compensatory Citizenship

As discussed, most respondents and interlocutors had a strong emotional connection to the aspirant state citizenship. Given this, how does the acquisition of compensatory citizenship influence individuals' identity and emotional attachment towards this citizenship?

Interlocutors, first and foremost, saw their second citizenship as a strategic tool to expand one's rights (and reduce physical and material insecurity) due to the nonrecognition of their aspirant state citizenship. In Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the attitude towards an individual's compensatory (Russian) citizenship was utilitarian and held limited emotional attachment. An Abkhazian said, "I do not consider myself a citizen of Russia and do not consider Russia my country and place. This is a forced measure to get an education and see this world. Unfortunately, we cannot be otherwise".[618] Interlocutors were quick to point out that just because they may have Russian citizenship does not make them ethnically Russian, especially if they were not born in Russia.[619] On the other hand, there can also be instances of misrecognition that result in the distortion of an individual's sense of self.[620] This occurred among interlocutors who travelled using a Russian passport.[621] In states where Abkhazia is not recognised, they are recognised solely as Russian citizens, and when interacting with the state, they must identify as "Russian" even if they have no emotional attachment to this citizenship/identity. However, outside of official settings, they presented themselves as Abkhaz(ian). Similarly, in Russia, individuals are expected to use their

[617] Blakkisrud & Kolstø 2011: 196; Chamberlain-Creangã 2006; PMR Exp№6; RA Exp№5; RA Exp№11; RSO Cit№2.
[618] RA Cit№5.
[619] RA Cit№4; RA Exp№14; RSO Cit№2.
The fluidity of terminology was observed in how respondents switched between the terms *russkiy* and *rosiyanin/grazhdanin Rossii* to refer to the citizenship of the Russian Federation. The former has an ethnic connotation, and the latter a civic one.
[620] Martineau et al. 2012; C. Taylor 1992: 25.
[621] RA Cit№7; RA Exp№6; RA Exp№9.

Russian documents, though this is not a strict rule.[622] This misalignment results in cognitive dissonance and some ontological insecurity since the way individuals feel does not align with how they were legally identified. In other words, while from a functional level, compensatory citizenship provides legal visibility and recognition internationally, from an emotional or ontological standpoint, individuals may still feel unrecognised and lack attachment or allegiance to their second citizenship.

In Transnistria, the influence of ethnic or linguistic identity on the choice of secondary citizenship was prominent compared to the other two cases.[623] An ethnic Russian/Russian speaker may be more inclined to acquire Russian citizenship, and they would most likely travel to Russia since it is easier to integrate there.[624] Thus, ethno-linguistic attachment to their country of compensatory citizenship may serve as a pull factor to migrate there. When individuals choose to migrate to the country of their citizenship, they are likely to feel at home and not identify as foreigners, even if, prior to this, they had always lived in the aspirant state. [625] Thus, there is limited opportunity to experience foreignness and maintain/develop a distinct diasporic identity. Concurrently, migration trajectories are influenced by economic opportunities, study opportunities, and family reunification and the acquisition of a second citizenship was firstly based on pragmatism.[626] Referring to the acquisition of Romanian citizenship by Transnistrians, a sociologist highlighted that "citizenship acquisition is not ideological. This is not based on pro-Romanian sentiments... [it] is a tool for obtaining citizenship of a country of the EU".[627]

In cases where Moldovan citizenship is the only option, individuals with no emotional connection to Moldova may feel compelled to acquire this citizenship.[628] Unlike in Abkhazia or South Ossetia, the acquisition of Moldovan citizenship by Transnistrians is not seen as an act of treason. Nonetheless, they will acquire it since utilitarian reasons are at the forefront. Thus, identity-based reasons play a role only when an individual has a choice between multiple citizenships. However, if the individual has access to only one recognised citizenship, they will put their identity-based preferences aside and accept the available citizenship. A similar observation could be made among the survey respondents, with only

[622] RA Exp№7.
[623] PMR Cit№7; PMR Cit№9; PMR Exp№6; PMR Exp№8.
[624] Ostavnaia 2017: 42–57; PMR Cit№9; PMR Exp№2; PMR Exp№3; PMR Exp№8.
[625] PMR Cit№8; PMR Exp№2, 2021; PMR Exp№6.
[626] Fomenko 2017; Ostavnaia 2017; Moldovan Exp№1; Moldovan Exp№2.
[627] PMR Exp№6.
[628] PMR Cit№4; PMR Cit№8; PMR Cit№10; PMR Exp№2; PMR Exp№6.

a minority stating that compensatory citizenship was important for sentimental (or ontological) reasons rather than for functional ones. Interestingly, 42.9% of respondents gave equal importance to both dimensions. This finding provides evidence that counters the expectation that compensatory citizenship serves an exclusively utilitarian function.

Table 15: Compensatory Citizenship is important to me because of…

	Abkhazia	South Ossetia	Transnistria	
Functionality (outside AS) > Identity	51.1%	47.9%	43.1%	46.6%
Identity>Functionality (outside AS)	9.1%	10.4%	11.5%	10.5%
Ties	39.8%	41.7%	45.4%	42.9%
N	88	48	130	266

While in all three cases, citizens gave greater importance to the functionality of compensatory citizenship, the level of pride towards compensatory citizenship differed. South Ossetians were significantly prouder of their second citizenship than Abkhazians, with Transnistrians falling in the middle.[629] Similar results were observed in the degree of attachment (positive feeling) to their compensatory citizenship. South Ossetians had the strongest attachment to their compensatory citizenship, followed by Transnistrians and Abkhazians.[630] This strong sense of attachment by South Ossetians could be linked to their desire to unite with their kin in North Ossetia and, by extension, Russia.[631]

Lastly, if we compare sentiments towards aspirant state citizenship and compensatory citizenship, the level of attachment and pride was always stronger towards the former.[632] Particularly in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, citizens were prouder of their local citizenship, and their citizenship identity was more exclusive. On the other hand, a multiplicity of

[629] A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were differences in "Pride compensatory citizenship" between Abkhazia (n=77), South Ossetia (n=44) and Transnistria (n=111). Mean Ranks were statistically significantly different between groups, $\chi 2(2) = 11.176$, p=.004. A pairwise comparison (using Dunn's post hoc test with a Bonferroni correction) revealed statistically significant differences in mean ranks between Abkhazia (99.97) and South Ossetia (137.78) (p=.003), but not between Abkhazia and Transnistria (119.78) (p=.094) nor South Ossetia and Transnistria (p=.284).

[630] A Kruskal-Wallis H test was conducted to determine if there were differences in "Attachment to compensatory citizenship" between Abkhazia (n=86), South Ossetia (n=48) and Transnistria (n=125). Mean Ranks were statistically significantly different between groups, $\chi 2(2) = 23.319$, p <.001. A pairwise comparison (using Dunn's post hoc test with a Bonferroni correction) revealed statistically significant differences in mean ranks between Abkhazia (107.73) and South Ossetia (168.22) (p=.000), and between South Ossetia and Transnistria (130.65) (p=.004), but not between Abkhazia and Transnistria (p=.056). Though in the last pair, the value is very close to the cut-off point (p=0.05), and thus may also be regarded as significant.

[631] Grobman 2022; RSO Exp№1.

[632] Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks tests was conducted to determine if there were differences in "Attachment to aspirant state citizenship" and "Attachment to compensatory citizenship" for each aspirant state: Abkhazia (n=86), South Ossetia (n=48) and Transnistria (n=125). The tests indicated that, on average, Abkhazians (Z= -6.946, p<.001), South Ossetians (Z= -3.402, p<.001) and Transnistrians (Z= -3.237, p=.001) all had a stronger sense of attachment to their local citizenship than their compensatory citizenship. However, 36.7% of respondents indicated equal levels of attachment.

citizenship identities was observed among Transnistrians, but the effect of the local identity was still the strongest.[633]

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the individual level and, started by discussing the external and internal functionality of the aspirant state citizenship and its effects on lived experiences. The initial assumption of this research was that nonrecognition would play the most important role in the discourse on citizenship in aspirant states. While nonrecognition has significant consequences in determining the legal status of aspirant state citizens, its impact on functionality is more nuanced. Nonrecognition of citizenship is a significant hindrance to individuals being able to exercise their freedom of movement internationally. Restrictions to freedom of movement also limit individuals from exercising other rights like accessing foreign education and healthcare or engaging in international business. However, the impact of nonrecognition was less critical to the internal functionality of citizenship. Nevertheless, the limited external functionality of aspirant state citizenship pushes individuals to maintain a compensatory citizenship.

This chapter then discussed the role of compensatory citizenship. In general, recognised citizenship improves physical and material security due to the compounding of rights and is primarily acquired for utilitarian reasons. The section also emphasised that compensatory citizenship(s) can be used for different purposes, and the combined functionality of an individual's citizenships changes depending on the specific citizenship constellation. Thus, even if one possesses a recognised citizenship, a hierarchy is created between citizens of each aspirant state since secondary citizenships have different levels of functionality. Furthermore, the nonrecognition of Russian passports issued to residents of the "occupied territories" by the base state and its allies results in its reduced functionality. Meanwhile, when citizenship is ascribed (i.e. Georgian citizenship), individuals hardly benefit from the associated rights.

[633] Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks tests was conducted to determine if there were differences in "Pride in aspirant state citizenship" and "Pride in compensatory citizenship" for each aspirant state: Abkhazia (n = 77), South Ossetia (n = 43) and Transnistria (n = 105). The tests indicated that, on average, Abkhazians (Z= -5.619, p<.001) and South Ossetians (Z= -3.095, p =.001) prided their local citizenship more than their compensatory citizenship. There was no statistically significant difference amongst Transnistrians (Z= -0.068, p=.966) in pride towards their Transnistrian citizenship vs compensatory citizenship. However, 52.2% of respondents indicated equal levels of pride.

The chapter concluded with a discussion of the individuals' sentiments towards their citizenship(s). In all three cases, attitudes towards the second citizenship were primarily utilitarian and a multiplicity of citizenship identity was observed less often. Individuals may "feel" that they are members of the political community of the aspirant state but have no such feeling towards their other citizenship(s). Only when there were multiple options for secondary citizenship (as in Transnistria) did identity-related reasoning enter the discourse on citizenship acquisition. In all three cases, individuals displayed a stronger sense of attachment towards their local citizenship. Nonrecognition and the possession of additional citizenships seldom result in ontological insecurity. While citizens from the three aspirant states showed different levels of attachment to their citizenships, there was no observable clash of citizenship identities. Ultimately depending on diachronic changes (including state recognition and citizenship law), the determination by administrative authorities as to what legal status(es) an individual holds, and the individual's physical location, aspirant state citizens are affected by and possess a multiplicity of (competing) citizenship regimes, each with different degrees of recognition, functionality, and influence on the lived experiences.

Chapter 7

Citizenship and Politics of Belonging in Aspirant States

This chapter jumps back to the macro/state level and explores how the state uses citizenship as a tool for demographic engineering, by including desirable groups and excluding undesirable groups. By studying citizenship regimes, one can gain insights into the national identity and structure of the state that enforces it. States use citizenship as an instrument of social closure; thus, how citizenship regimes are constructed reflects how inclusive a particular society is. Citizenship as a political tool is used to construct "the population recognized by the state [as citizens] through claims of political empowerment and 'protection', if not 'defense' of the body politic from threatening outsiders next door and within".[634] This chapter focuses on the final dimension of citizenship: *the politics of belonging*, and answers the question of how aspirant states define their citizenry and utilise citizenship regimes in the nation-building process. The analysis finds that history, the nation-building model, demographics, diaspora politics, and the level of contestation with the base state affect citizenship regime construction in the three aspirant states. The desire for ontological and physical security and the need to ensure ethnodemographic security of the body politic influences aspirant states to adopt citizenship policies that exclude undesired groups and include desired groups.

The first part of this chapter adopts a "citizenship from above" approach and discusses how the aspirant states define the citizenry and engage in nation-building. Nation-building involves building an "imagined political community" by constructing a shared identity through state symbols (i.e. banal nationalism), ideology, propaganda, collective memory, and desires to create a secure future.[635] The "national question" became particularly contentious with the dissolution of the USSR and the burgeoning national self-determination movements, which were shaped by the "territorial-political crystallization of nationhood".[636] Those at the republican level could become sovereign states, but other sub-state territories were not entitled to independence based on the *uti possidetis* principle. However, this did not prevent some territories from declaring independence since "the hallmark of national self-determination, and thus of modern collective ontological and physical security, is

[634] Kochenov 2019: 25.
[635] B. Anderson 2006; Berenskoetter 2014; Kolstø & Blakkisrud 2008.
[636] Brubaker 1994: 61.

independent statehood".[637]

These new, albeit unrecognised, states also needed to engage in state- and nation-building. Over three decades, just like other newly independent states, aspirant states have developed in terms of consolidating statehood,[638] citizenship (regimes), and national identity. However, interlocutors suggested that in the first ten years, there was no sense of a consolidated national identity. Several factors influenced this, including the sudden break-up of the USSR, where for the first decade or so, vestiges of the Soviet Union, like its passport, still had widespread acceptance. Secondly, the armed conflicts resulted in aspirant states and individuals being preoccupied with individual and collective physical security. After that, they were preoccupied with the consequences of the war, including political isolation, low quality of life, and fear of the resumption of hostilities. As a result, state- and nation-building took a slow start.

Part of consolidating this imagined community has involved the construction of citizenship regimes. Interlocutors highlighted that the formation of citizenship regimes is "fundamental as the declaration of independence, coat of arms, the flag, the anthem" and "is a political, and legal and cultural, mental and social mechanism for consolidating society under a single platform". [639] As part of this process, (aspirant) states may engage in *nationalising nationalism,* which refers to newly independent states defining the "core nation" along ethnocultural terms, and in *homeland nationalism*, which occurs when states assert their right to protect the interests of coethnics abroad.[640] While in other cases, (aspirant) states may adopt a more territorial and/or civic definition of the nation.[641] The analysis finds that Abkhazia, and to an extent South Ossetia, follow the former approach, while Transnistria follows the latter. Further, the (aspirant) state may grant its diaspora simplified access to citizenship. Concurrently, it may restrict access by placing conditions on dual citizenship. Depending on the objectives of the state, the various purposes can be blended to create insular or expansive citizenship regimes.[642] The type of citizenship regime reflects how the state (and its people) sees who can constitute the citizenry.[643] As argued by Brubaker (1992b:

[637] Grzybowski 2022: 509.
[638] See Blakkisrud & Kolstø 2011.
[639] PMR Exp№2; RA Exp№1.
[640] Bauböck 2010a; Brubaker 1994; 1996.
In post-Soviet states, the formerly titular group of the republic-level territorial union was to be the core nation.
[641] Shevel 2017; Tabachnik 2019.
[642] Vink & Bauböck 2013.
[643] Brubaker 1992a: xi; Tabachnik 2019; Vink 2017; Vink & Bauböck 2013.

289), "formal citizenship cannot be divorced from the broader questions of substantive belonging".

The second half of the chapter turns to the securitisation and instrumentalisation of citizenship. The Abkhaz diaspora is instrumentalised due to its security-guaranteeing potential, while the local ethnic Georgian population is securitised as it is considered a demographic threat. In South Ossetia, the diaspora is securitised by some segments of society as there is a fear that if they (mostly Russian citizens) *en masse* begin acquiring South Ossetian citizenship, it will negatively affect electoral politics. Similarly, in Abkhazia, there is apprehension about simplifying access to Abkhazian citizenship for Russian citizens, as it would further affect the demographic balance. In Transnistria, there is no observable securitisation or instrumentalisation of citizenship. Thus, depending on the demographic composition, the aspirant state can adopt policies that strengthen the ethnodemographic security of the titular group.

Part I - Citizenship Engineering and Nation-Building

A core task of a state is to define the citizenry, and states use various criteria to determine who belongs and who does not. By exploring "citizenship from above," it is possible to explore how the state, through legislation and policy, defines its citizenry in attempts to create a collective national identity.[644]

States can adopt policies that are ethnic, territorial or a combination of the two to determine who belongs and who does not. Concurrently, states may promote a civic membership that goes beyond primordial ties (be it based on blood or soil) and is based on shared values, equality of membership, liberal-democratic norms, and active membership in the society.[645] To identify the degree of inclusion/exclusion of a citizenship regime, three factors need to be considered: how the citizenry was defined on the date of state formation, the policy on citizenship acquisition at birth, and the policy on acquisition of citizenship later in life (e.g. naturalisation, recognition).

[644] Lebow (2016: 28) argues that states are not actors in their own right but rather are "passive receptacles for the multiple identities and biographical narratives imposed on them" by domestic actors. Thus, state identity (or identities) is a consequence of competition and negotiation between various political actors. While keeping this in mind, for this chapter, what matters is the outcome of these negotiations, which is evidenced in law/policy. Thus, when analysing citizenship legislation of aspirant states, these laws and policies can be understood to represent the position of a unitary actor – the state.
[645] Joppke 2010; Tabachnik 2019.

As discussed in Chapter 2, citizenship laws have five purposes: intergenerational continuity, territorial inclusion, singularity (dual citizenship), special ties, and genuine links.[646] Depending on the objectives of the state, these purposes can be blended to create insular or expansive citizenship regimes, which may be used either to exclude undesired groups or (forcefully) include others. Regardless, citizenship regimes aim to draw a boundary between the in-group and the out-group. These regimes reflect the national identity and become powerful tools for achieving and defending state sovereignty. This section discusses the degree of inclusiveness/exclusiveness of the three citizenship regimes and explores their underlying logic.

The formation of new states in the former Soviet space resulted in the need to define the initial body of citizenry.[647] South Ossetia and Transnistria recognised all those habitually residing on the territory as citizens.[648] Abkhazia took a more nuanced approach. Initially, it recognised individuals whose parents or grandparents were born on its territory as citizens, whilst other eligible individuals (diaspora and long-term residents) had to opt-in via registration or naturalisation.[649] The law became ethnicised when retroactive laws were adopted in 2005. Now, all Abkhaz were automatically recognised as citizens,[650] whilst other ethnic groups (even if they had acquired citizenship under the 1993 rules) had to prove that between 1994 and 1999, they had continuously resided in Abkhazia. Thus, the Abkhazian citizenship law makes a clear distinction on ethnic grounds.

The next factor relates to how citizenship can be acquired by birth, which can take two forms: *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*. Using the CITLAW Index coding scheme, it was possible to conclude that since the adoption of the first citizenship laws, Abkhazia and South Ossetia have maintained strong *jus sanguinis* citizenship acquisition policy (see Appendix C2). For

[646] Vink & Bauböck 2013: 626.
[647] Shevel 2017.
[648] South Ossetia 1995, Art. 12; Transnistria 1992b, Art. 1.
[649] Abkhazia 1993, Arts. 11, 15-16; Butba 2020: 51–64.
This approach fits more closely to the territorial definition of citizenship since membership is defined by the double *jus soli* principle. The exact procedure for confirming the right to citizenship by recognition vs registration was never detailed.
[650] Under the law, this entitlement is granted to all persons of "Abaza nationality". This group is understood to include a number of ethnic groups, including Abkhaz, Abazins, and Circassians (Trier et al. 2010: 82). This expansive definition of the titular group allows groups closely related to the Abkhaz to access citizenship. The Abkhaz diaspora ranges between 500-800 thousand, primarily located in West Asia, with the largest population in Türkiye (Berg & Sarıoğlu 2021; Dbar 2019; RA Exp№9). Even when citizenship is automatically granted, individuals must administratively confirm this by getting a passport or, in the past, an insert in their Soviet (*zagran*) passport (Butba 2020: 387; Malaev 2017; Zayats 2004; PMR Exp№9; RSO Exp№2).

the most part, Transnistria has had a strong *jus soli* citizenship acquisition policy and, until 2018, a moderate *jus sanguinis* citizenship acquisition policy. The 2018 amendments strengthened Transnistria's *jus sanguinis* citizenship acquisition policy to be on par with the other two cases.

The third factor relates to the accessibility of citizenship via naturalisation or other simplified citizenship acquisition procedures. Abkhazian and South Ossetian ordinary naturalisation procedures are more restrictive than Transnistria. Currently, the residency requirement in the three places is: Abkhazia 10 years; South Ossetia 5 years; Transnistria one year.[651] The ethnicised nature of Abkhazian citizenship law is also reflected in its naturalisation policy, which requires all individuals wishing to naturalise to be fluent in Abkhaz (Art. 13). In South Ossetia, naturalising individuals must either speak Russian or Ossetian (Art. 13), while in Transnistria there is no language requirement. While language competence is common amongst naturalisation policies,[652] what makes the Abkhazian case interesting (like Ireland and Bolivia) is that the Abkhaz language is given predominance despite being spoken by a minority of the population.

The third factor also relates to who is eligible for simplified citizenship acquisition. The CITLAW Index coding demonstrated that the three aspirant states have a relatively similar level of restrictiveness to citizenship via simplified naturalisation. However, the aggregate score of the index does not reflect the specific conditions for citizenship acquisition; thus, these conditions must be independently explored. For example, Abkhazia and South Ossetia have specific citizenship acquisition pathways for diaspora/ethnic kin, while Transnistria does not. Also, dual citizenship in Abkhazia and South Ossetia is restricted, while in Transnistria, it is not. In Abkhazia, non-titular groups are allowed to only acquire Russian citizenship, but the Abkhaz can maintain dual citizenship with any state.[653] In South Ossetia, individuals have the right to maintain dual citizenship with Russia, but an exception is made for individuals with historical roots in South Ossetia.[654] One explanation for such an

[651] To be able to apply for naturalisation under normal procedures, in Abkhazia and Transnistria residency period is counted from the time of getting permanent residency (*vid na zhitel'stvo*) (Abkhazia 2005, Art. 13; Transnistria 2017 Art. 13). Over the years, over 18,000 individuals naturalised under normal procedures in Transnistria. Unlike in Abkhazia or South Ossetia, this information is publicly available (see Appendix B3). The condition of permanent residency is not uncommon across the world. See Condition A06a in the GLOBALCIT Citizenship Law Dataset (Vink et al. 2021a).
[652] See Condition A06c in the GLOBALCIT Citizenship Law Dataset Vink et al. 2021a.
[653] Abkhazia 2005, Arts. 5-6.
[654] South Ossetia 2006 [2008], Art. 14-3.
The concept of "historical roots" refers to a documented family relationship of a person applying for

approach is that this restriction simply codified reality because most Abkhazians started acquiring Russian citizenship (as compensatory citizenship) before dual citizenship was liberalised, and to make these acquisitions legal, the law was amended.[655] Allowing dual citizenship only with Russia further demonstrates the close relationship and ties between Russia and Abkhazia/South Ossetia. Alternatively, permission to hold dual citizenship only with Russia is to prevent any loopholes through which ethnic Georgians from concurrently maintaining Abkhazian (or South Ossetian) citizenship (discussed in Part II of this chapter).[656] It may also be argued that the restriction of dual citizenship has no effect since the majority maintains dual citizenship with Russia, and there is no easy access to another citizenship besides Georgia.[657] Instead, in the case of Abkhazia, this policy can be seen as an exception that targets a specific sub-set of the Abkhaz: its diaspora. Ultimately, the level of dependence on the patron state (and its citizenship), the unresolved conflict with the base state, and diaspora politics all influence dual citizenship policies.

Having discussed the various factors of the citizenship regimes, it is possible to determine their inclusiveness/exclusiveness and identify where they fall in Vink and Bauböck's (2013) two-dimensional citizenship configuration. Since Abkhazia and South Ossetia have had strong ethnicised citizenship regimes that provide specific rights and privileges to the titular group and its diaspora, they fall into the Ethnoculturally Selective quadrant. Their policies are similar to those adopted by other ethnically homogeneous polities (e.g. Artsakh, Armenia) or those established after a titular group (e.g. Latvia, Estonia).[658] Within the ethnoculturally selective quadrant, it is also possible to argue that Abkhazia is more ethnoculturally selective because of i) the restricted access to citizenship for non-Abkhaz, ii) the preferential access to citizenship for the Abkhaz. Thus, creating a hierarchy in relation to access to Abkhazian citizenship. In contrast, in South Ossetia, while citizenship is based on *jus sanguinis* and dual citizenship is restricted, the legislation has fewer ethnic undertones. Meanwhile, Transnistria's policy has not been ethnicised; instead, it has adopted a more expansive, territorial, civic, and supra-ethnic identity, and at the same time, it is heavily influenced by the idea of the *Russkiy-Mir*. Thus, it falls into the expansive quadrant.

citizenship with a person born in the territory of the Republic of South Ossetia, the South Ossetian Soviet Democratic Republic or the South Ossetian Autonomous Region (i.e. from April 1922) (Embassy of South Ossetia 2016).

[655] Ganohariti 2020a: 184.

[656] RA Exp№6.

[657] One interlocutor suggested that if ethnic Armenians were allowed to acquire Armenian citizenship via long-distance acquisition, there would be a demand for it (RA Exp№1).

[658] Järve & Poleshchuk 2019; Makaryan 2010.

Table 16: Citizenship Configurations in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, & Transnistria.

Ethnocultural Inclusion	Strong	*Ethnoculturally Selective* **Abkhazia** **South Ossetia**	*Expansive* **Transnistria**
	Weak	*Insular*	*Territorially Selective*
		Weak **Territorial Inclusion**	Strong

A few reasons can explain the above differences. First is the region's historical identity.[659] The two Caucasian aspirant states are (part of) the historical homeland of the Abkhaz and the Ossetians, and the political entities of SSR Abkhazia/Abkhaz ASSR and the South Ossetian AO were established after the respective titular group (*gosudarstvo obrazuyushchikh natsional'nost'*). Particularly in Abkhazia, where the Abkhaz only make up 51% of the population, the privileged treatment of the Abkhaz may be regarded as discriminatory against other groups. However, interlocutors justified this differentiated treatment by citing the demographic threat to the Abkhaz nation and the Abkhaz diaspora's right to return to their historical homeland.[660] Thus, despite the Constitution guaranteeing equality for all citizens and defining the people of Abkhazia in civic terms, the Abkhaz are considered more equal.[661]

Despite the similarity between Abkhazia and South Ossetia, in the latter case, "there is no concept of a separate South Ossetian nation… What is seen to exist is one Ossetian nation that is divided into two separate political units - South Ossetia, and the North Ossetian Republic in the Russian Federation".[662] However, this position seems to be changing as evidenced by empirical results in the previous chapter, where South Ossetians demonstrate a strong degree of attachment towards their citizenship.

In contrast, Transnistria has never had a titular group. Since the 19th Century, it has been multicultural and at the intersection of Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, and Turkish influence. During the Soviet Union, the region had a significant level of in-migration, which

[659] Shevel 2017; Tabachnik 2019; Vink & Bauböck 2013
[660] RA Exp№1; RA Exp№9; RA Exp№12.
Former foreign minister Chirikba (2023) argued that only when the "Abkhazian ethnos is not is not threatened by demographic (and consequently) political marginalisation along with language-assimilation, will it be possible for us to relax the current regime of the exclusive approach and smoothly transition to civic nation-building". The ethnic differentiation is not limited to citizenship legislation but is observable in other laws and policies, such as the language policy, which disadvantages those not competent in the Abkhaz language or not belonging to the titular group (Clogg 2008: 315–316; Trier et al. 2010: 74–81).
[661] Abkhazia 1994; Adleyba 2019; Clogg 2008; Kolstø & Blakkisrud 2008.
[662] Kolstø & Blakkisrud 2008.

also influenced the formation of a multicultural identity. Furthermore, Transnistria's foundations are based on the Soviet citizenship model, which did not have an ethnic dimension, and is reflected in the 1996 Constitution that begins with "We, the multinational people of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic". Compared to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the Transnistrian state has had to make an extra effort to build the Transnistrian identity and citizenship.[663] While in the former two cases, the national identity was an extension of the ethnic identity of the titular group, this was not the case in Transnistria. Transnistrian identity is more expansive, territorial, civic, and supra-ethnic in nature and was established with the creation of the Transnistrian state. Over the decades, Transnistria's stateness/nationness has consolidated, and a Transnistrian identity has formed.[664] One sociologist argued that "if 15-20 years ago, *I am a Pridnestrovian* was not widespread among people, because there was still a Soviet identity, now there is already a new generation of people who identify themselves as *I am a Pridnestrovian* [and not] *I am a Soviet person*".[665]

As a part of consolidating the state-building process, and with the gradual disuse of Soviet artefacts, it was necessary to introduce new state symbols in all three aspirant states, like passports in the early/mid-2000s. According to South Ossetian ex-civil servants, only with the introduction of state symbols, such as passports, did people come to more closely identify with the state. However, "when these passports began to be issued to many, including Ossetians, it seemed ridiculous. Many people even laughed and asked why it was needed. But 15-16 years have passed since then, and now the South Ossetian citizenship has developed… and the prestige of this citizenship in the eyes of the population of South Ossetia has grown a lot".[666] Thus, the collective identity changed from being "residents of South Ossetia" to "citizens of South Ossetia".[667] This support Torpey's (2018) argument that institutionalisation of political membership via documentation has assisted states in drawing the boundary between the in-group and the out-group and in the nation-state building project. Furthermore, documents shape individual personhood and subjectivities and assist in creating a new social reality in the aftermath of state dissolution.[668] In all three cases, the

[663] Marandici 2020.
[664] Blakkisrud & Kolstø 2011; Chamberlain-Creangã 2006; PMR Exp№6; PMR Exp№8.
[665] PMR Exp№6.
Approximately 1000 respondents in the 2015 Census identified themselves as "ethnically" Transnistrian (Tynyaev 2017).
[666] RSO Exp№1.
Boguslaw (2019) comes to similar conclusions regarding Kosovan state symbols.
[667] RSO Exp№2.
[668] Vasiljević 2018.

state is interested in "popularising the citizenship" by requiring the use of local documents in the every-day, such as requiring it for political participation and access to social services. When dealing with local authorities, "you need a [Pridnestorivian] passport… Being a citizen of Russian or Ukraine is not helpful, so Transnistrian citizenship is necessary, as in any other country".[669] A Transnistrian civil servant also emphasised the need to "take citizenship as seriously as possible because otherwise, it is impossible to perceive ourselves as an established state. This policy has not changed since the creation of Pridnestrovie".[670] However, a few critiqued people's lack of awareness of the importance of using these documents wherever possible to display the achieved sovereignty. Referring to the example of border crossings with Russia, interlocutors argued that dual citizens must make a conscious decision to use their local passports.[671]

State recognition also has played a role in strengthening the state and its attributes (e.g. diplomatic protection).[672] In Abkhazia and South Ossetia, *zagran* passports were introduced only after the 2008 recognition, while Transnistria lacks a *zagran* passport. The ability to travel internationally with local documents "led to the feeling of being… a citizen of South Ossetia. This is connected precisely with legal consciousness".[673] Thus, just like in recognised states, documentation plays an important role in state- and nation-building.

The second condition that influences citizenship regimes relates to external threats. The external threat in all three aspirant states was an important condition in consolidating a national identity (that was in opposition to that of the base state). The (re)establishment of Abkhazia and South Ossetia was in direct response to the *nationalising nationalism* observed in Georgia and the fear that the titular group (the Abkhaz and Ossetians) would lose their rights in a newly independent Georgian state. Transnistria's secession was also in response to the ethnising nationalism (Romanization) by Moldova, which would result in the loss of the region's Russophone identity and multi-ethnic culture.[674] However, in contrast, Transnistria did not adopt a *nationalising nationalism* policy and instead adopted a territorial and civic approach to nation-building aimed at preserving its multi-ethnic identity.

[669] PMR Exp№8.
[670] PMR Exp№3.
[671] RA Cit№7; RA Exp№1; RA Exp№7.
[672] RA Cit№5; RA Exp№13.
[673] RSO Exp№2.
[674] The origins of the conflict related to the status of Russian and Moldovan/Romanian languages in the Republic of Moldova, and thus what constitutes Moldovan identity has been politicised (Blakkisrud & Kolstø 2011: 195; Marandici 2020).

The last reason can be linked to the need to ensure the ethnodemographic security of the titular group, and by extension, the state. The desire of the aspirant state to ensure its ontological and physical security results in the securitisation and instrumentalisation of citizenship. As a result, one goal of Abkhazia (and South Ossetia) is to preserve the titular group, and this has been reflected in the citizenship legislation, which provides them with preferential access to citizenship. In Transnistria, on the other hand, the population has been very heterogeneous, equally divided among ethnic Moldovans, Russians, and Ukrainians. Thus, the idea of preserving the demographic balance and ensuring ethnodemographic security[675] in favour of a particular ethnic group is not reflected in citizenship legislation. Another difference is the existence of a significant diaspora, particularly in the case of Abkhazia, which also influences the ethnicization of citizenship. Even before the adoption of citizenship legislation, the Abkhazian Supreme Council in March 1993 recognised the "historical right" to citizenship for the Abkhaz diaspora whilst being able to maintain dual citizenship with any state.[676] The following section will turn to how aspirant states use citizenship regimes to ensure their demographic (physical) and ontological security.

Part II - Securitisation and Instrumentalisation of Citizenship

To guarantee their ontological and physical security, states engage in securitising or instrumentalising issues, groups, or phenomena. Demographics play an important role in this, and states can use citizenship legislation to strengthen their sense of "self" and guarantee that the titular group is not minoritised. This can take three forms: excluding minority groups that threaten the demographic balance, granting citizenship to members of the titular group to change the demographic balance in its favour, and sometimes adopting a cautious approach towards (individuals possessing the) patron state citizenship.

Securitising Minority Groups

When asked what the most contentious issues related to citizenship in Abkhazia are, interlocutors unanimously stated that it relates to whether the 42,000 ethnic Georgians/Mingrelians[677] living in eastern Abkhazia should have access to citizenship. The

[675] Brubaker 1992b.
[676] Butba 2020: 52–53, 375.
[677] While the Georgian census considers Georgians and Mingrelians to be homogeneous, the State Committee of Abkhazia on Statistics (2021: 27) separates Georgians (17.8% of the national population) and

question of ethnic Georgians is not just a politically sensitive topic but also highly securitised.[678]

Even though Abkhazian passports were issued from 2006, their distribution in the eastern regions peaked after the creation of Special Commissions, which between 2008 and 2013 issued over 23,500 passports.[679] Unlike the Abkhaz, who see Abkhazian citizenship as an attribute of their sovereignty and acquire passports for patriotic/identity-based reasons, ethnic Georgians cited pragmatic reasons, such as being able to cross the Abkhaz-Georgian border and own property.[680] They believed that Abkhazian citizenship would increase their quality of life in Abkhazia.

The passportization of ethnic Georgians was opposed by certain political factions and led to the change of Abkhazia's leadership in 2014, with the new Khajimba regime being more nationalistic.[681] The main concern related to the ethnodemographic balance of the region: by providing citizenship and passports to ethnic Georgians, the Abkhaz, who made up 51% of the population in 2011, would once again become a minority.[682] This point can be linked to Abulof's (2009: 232) argument about the ontological insecurity faced by "small peoples" who are "characterized by heightened and historically prolonged uncertainty regarding their past-based ethnic identity and the viability of their future-driven national polity". Thus, despite having achieved a substantial degree of sovereignty, the Abkhaz continue to feel threatened about their survival (both as an ethnic group and a state).

The opposition also argued that the incumbent Bagapsh government was engaging in electoral manoeuvres to gain the vote of ethnic Georgians in the 2009 Presidential elections.[683] Further, fears exist that Georgia can use this group as a "fifth column" to influence Abkhazian domestic politics.[684] These (perceived) threats contributed to making

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Mingrelians (1.3%). Most ethnic Georgians/Mingrelians live in the eastern regions of Gal (98% of the population), Tkvarchal (62%), and Ochamchire (10%).

[678] Kvarchelia 2014; RA Exp№4.

[679] Butba 2020: 115–116; RA Exp№12.
This passportization was voluntary, and Abkhazian authorities never forced anyone to acquire Abkhazian citizenship (RA Exp№12). That said, it has been argued that ethnic Georgians had no option but to acquire passports if they wished to enjoy certain rights, such as buying property and working for the local government (Clogg 2008: 313; Human Rights Watch 2011).

[680] Kvarchelia 2014: 5–6; Matsuzato 2011: 818.

[681] RA Exp№4; RA Exp№5; RA Exp№12.

[682] Chirikba 2022b; Clogg 2008: 319.
See Lerner (2016) for a detailed analysis of Soviet Nationality Policy in Abkhazia during 1921-1953.

[683] Ashuba as cited in Butba 2020: 108; Civil Georgia 2009a; Dembińska 2019; Prelz Oltramonti 2016: 256; RA Exp№2; RA Exp№5.

[684] ARUAA 2022; Clogg 2008: 320; Prelz Oltramonti 2016; Sharia 2021.

the citizenship regime exclusive. This echoes Brubaker's (1992a: 30) argument that the formal closure against noncitizens may overlap with informal closure against ethnocultural outsiders. Thus, citizenship becomes just part of the repertoire for excluding undesirable populations.

In 2013, a parliamentary investigation revealed that these passports were issued in contravention of law via Special Commissions. The legal claim was that these passports were issued to individuals who maintained Georgian citizenship and passports. Due to the unresolved nature of the conflict, it is inconceivable for Abkhazians (and South Ossetians) to maintain dual citizenship with Georgia.[685] Further, by maintaining Georgian citizenship, the individual acknowledges that Abkhazia is not a state,[686] further threatening Abkhazia's ontological security.[687] Over the years, political forces in Abkhazia were successfully able to frame ethnic Georgians as citizens of an enemy state and a security threat.[688] Previously in 2009, an attempt was made to regularise the legal status of ethnic Georgians by recognising them as Abkhazian citizens provided that they unilaterally renounce Georgian citizenship without official confirmation from Georgia.[689] This amendment was soon withdrawn due to political opposition, but passportization continued as an administrative practice.[690] The investigation revealed that as the Commissions required applicants to sign a declaration of renunciation of Georgian citizenship instead of providing proof of renunciation issued by Georgian authorities, which was not possible under Georgian law, their Abkhazian citizenships were deemed to have been illegally acquired.[691]

Following the 2013 investigation, Abkhazian authorities passed several laws and amendments which had retroactive effect. The citizenship law was amended so that all non-Abkhaz who had previously been recognised as citizens could now only maintain dual citizenship with Russia, and those with another citizenship lost Abkhazian citizenship.[692] In the 2005 version, individuals (not belonging to the titular group) who had uninterrupted

[685] Kvarchelia 2014: 8–9; RA Cit№5; RA Exp№3; RA Exp№4; RA Exp№5.
[686] Taniya 2021.
[687] Grzybowski 2022.
[688] RA Exp№4; RA Exp№5.
[689] Butba 2020: 104–109; RA Exp№7.
[690] Civil Georgia 2009a; 2009b; Matsuzato 2011: 818.
[691] Butba 2020: 104–128; Clogg 2008: 313; Human Rights Watch 2011; Vartanyan 2013; RA Exp№12. One must question if this commission considered all residents of Gal to be Georgian citizens as per Georgian law, regardless of whether individuals could prove this. Interestingly, this may be evidence that for ethnic Georgians, Abkhazia does recognise Georgia's claim over them while not doing so for other groups. Thus, while generally, it is the aspirant state citizens that are misrecognised, the case of ethnic Georgians illustrates how the aspirant state can also engage in misrecognition.
[692] Abkhazia 2005, Arts. 5, 6 & 17.

residency between 1994-1999 were automatically recognised as Abkhazians, regardless of any other citizenship they may possess. Secondly, the Parliament declared that passports issued with the involvement of the Special Commissions to no longer prove the possession of Abkhazian citizenship, and thus steps were taken to replace all Abkhazian internal passports from 2016.[693] This can be linked to Sadiq's (2008) concept of *paper citizens*, which refers to individuals who have (authentic) documents that prove citizenship and were administratively treated as citizens but were not legally entitled to that citizenship and passport.

Consequently, it is estimated that over 20,000 persons were stripped of their passports, and were thereafter regarded as foreigners (or stateless persons).[694] Following the mass-scale annulment, individuals have been compelled to acquire residency documents (valid for five years), which provide limited rights.[695] As of 2021, in Gal and Tkvarchal, approximately 22,000 individuals had residence permits, and a thousand possessed Abkhazian passports.[696] This is a significant increase from 2019, when only 6000 permits had been issued.[697] Thus, while many ethnic Georgians ended up in limbo after 2016, the absolute number of such individuals has decreased.[698]

Another reason not identified by the parliamentary investigation that would have made many non-Abkhaz retroactively lose their citizenship is the uninterrupted residency requirement of five years between 1994-1999.[699] While some ethnic Georgians started to return from 1994, the majority returned in/after 1999.[700] However, this issue affected other non-ethnic Abkhaz (e.g. Armenians, Russians) who had been issued passports in the first wave of passportization but now had to re-confirm their citizenship and undergo additional

[693] Abkhazia 2016; Parliament of Abkhazia 2014.
Due to delays in passportization, the validity of the old version was extended until March 2019 and passportization was almost complete by January 2020 (Abkhazia 2018; Sputnik 2020). Since January 2019, the old passports can no longer be used for border crossings (UNGA 2021: 6).
[694] Public Defender of Georgia 2021b: 14; RA Cit№1; RA Exp№2; RA Exp№4; RA Exp№6.
[695] Borovikova 2021; RA Exp№5.
[696] Gezerdava 2022; Piliya 2022; Public Defender of Georgia 2021a: 259.
[697] Public Defender of Georgia 2021b: 14.
[698] RA Exp№7; RA Exp№10.
That said, the passportization of the in Eastern Abkhazia is not fully resolved to this day (Gezerdava as cited in Sharia 2022b). Georgian authorities have critiqued the issuance of residency permits, citing that ethnic Georgians' rights were being restricted due to being forced to give up their Abkhazian passports (MFA Georgia 2016: 6–7). Georgia has used the plight of these people to advance its position in international fora such as the UNGA and Geneva International Discussions (RA Cit№7; RA Exp№4).
[699] Abkhazia 2005, Art. 5; Human Rights Watch 2011.
[700] Zavodskaya 2013.

checks with the 2016 wave of passportization.[701] According to the 1993 citizenship law, all residents of Abkhazia (who had an ancestor born in Abkhazia) were recognised as citizens.[702] However, with the passing of the 2005 law and the 2013 amendment, this population was no longer automatically recognised as Abkhazian. Despite the changes, individuals who were no longer regarded as citizens, under the 2005 law, were still issued passports.[703] A telling case is of one Armenian lady who was unable to renew her passport in 2016 because she had been studying outside Abkhazia between 1994-1998.[704] However, she was issued a passport in 2006. The problem materialised only a decade later following the passportization controversy in eastern Abkhazia, resulting in her not having a valid passport for several years. Following public pressure, Article 5 was amended in 2018 to provide several exemptions, including for those who were studying abroad.[705] In effect, during these two years, her Abkhazian citizenship was suspended. Thus, a certain form of liminality could be observed in the cases of individuals who were first denied their citizenship but later re-claimed it since the 2018 amendment acknowledged that they had always been citizens (but without being able to exercise any associated rights). This case is further evidence of misalignment between law and administrative practices which resulted in the individual becoming a *paper citizen*[706] as a result of having maintained a passport (which is a proof of citizenship), and been treated as an Abkhazian citizen, despite *de jure* not falling within the criteria of being a citizen (2005-2018).

Some have critiqued the government's policy of retroactively amending the citizenship eligibility criteria, which disproportionately targeted ethnic Georgians who were presumed to have Georgian citizenship, even if they had no proof of it.[707] The first critique relates to the general legal principle that prohibits the imposition of *ex post facto* laws. A further argument is that when President Ardzinba permitted ethnic Georgians to resettle after the war, he had *de facto* recognised it as the resettlement of Abkhazian citizens.[708] Many affected individuals had also previously engaged in Abkhazian politics and thus had

[701] Adleyba 2019; RA Exp№2; RA Exp№5.
[702] Abkhazia 1993, Art. 11; Ashuba as cited in Butba 2020: 105; Zavodskaya 2013.
[703] RA Exp№2.
[704] German 2018; Zavodskaya 2018b.
[705] Pertaya 2018.
[706] Sadiq 2008.
[707] Gezerdava 2022.
A survey carried out in 2015 showed that over 18,000 individuals (adults) living in the Gal region said that they have Georgian citizenship (JAM News 2016). Note that the acquisition of Georgian citizenship is also pragmatic as it brings forth rights (e.g. pensions, healthcare, travel benefits, education) that the Abkhazian state has either been unable or unwilling to provide to these individuals (Kvarchelia 2014; RA Cit№1; RA Exp№5; RA Exp№10; RA Exp№12).
[708] Zavodskaya 2013; RA Exp№5.

behaved like citizens.[709] Only with the 2006 passportization did the status of ethnic Georgians become contentious, before which all residents of Abkhazia had used either Soviet passports or Form №9 to prove permanent residence (and citizenship).[710] The policy also affected individuals who had never travelled to Georgia proper (post-1991) and considered themselves Abkhazian.[711] Following the amendments, some ethnic Georgians who could not be proven to have Georgian citizenship were considered stateless by Abkhazian authorities, with a blank appearing in front of their nationality in the newly issued residency permits.[712]

A further concern is that the mass-scale annulment occurred in contravention of the citizenship law, which states that citizenship annulment must be taken on an individual basis and be based on a court decision.[713] While Abkhazia's policy of annulling passports has been regarded as discriminatory on the grounds of ethnicity, the veteran Group ARUAA has argued that the policy has nothing to do with ethnicity but is related to the possession of Georgian citizenship.[714] In contrast, affected individuals framed the annulment of citizenship as ethnic-based discrimination rather than due to legal violations.[715] Ultimately it does not matter if the issue of ethnic Georgians' citizenship is masked in legal language; rather, the securitisation of this issue must be understood within the broader context of social exclusion and general distrust of ethnic Georgians in eastern Abkhazia.

There is another identity dimension related to those living in eastern Abkhazia. According to official Abkhazian discourse, the original population of this region were not ethnic Georgians and should be regarded as indigenous people of Abkhazia.[716] However, over the Soviet period, they were assimilated into the Georgian ethnos.[717] One group are the

[709] RA Exp№5; RA Exp№7.
According to the Abkhazian Speaker of Parliament N. A. Ashuba (as cited in Butba 2020: 105–106; Matsuzato 2011: chaps. 816–817), 7000 residents of Gal (>90% ethnic Georgians) had participated in the 1996 parliamentary election, 13,000 voted in the 1999 referendum, and 14,500 participated in the 2004 presidential elections by showing their residence permits. In 2007, 12,000 individuals from Gal were registered to vote for the parliamentary elections (Melkonyan 2007). Another example was that some ethnic Georgians who had even served in the Abkhazian army were stripped of their citizenship (RA Exp№13).
[710] Lyubarskaya 2004; Public Defender of Georgia 2021a; Zavodskaya 2013; RA Exp№12.
Since January 2022, Form №9 is no longer a valid document.
[711] RA Exp№12; RA Exp№3; RA Exp№5.
[712] Borovikova 2021; RA Exp№6; RA Exp№12.
[713] Gezerdava 2022; RA Cit№1.
Several individuals have recently gone to court to contest the annulment decisions (RA Exp№12; RA Exp№13).
[714] ARUAA 2020.
[715] Belousova 2021; Kvarchelia 2014.
[716] Sharia 2021; Shamba as cited in Zavodskaya 2020.
[717] Sharia 2017; RA Exp№4.

Mingrelians, who are related to ethnic Georgians but have been assimilated into the Georgian ethnos.[718] A second group are the Murzakan Abkhaz, who were forcefully assimilated and forced to adopt Georgian names and change their ethnic identity.[719] Some sections of the Abkhazian population consider that steps should be taken to ensure historical justice and re-assimilate these people, particularly the Murzakan Abkhaz.

One proposition is that those willing should have the right to change their Georgianised family names, "restore the national identity of the native people" and reclaim their Abkhaz identity.[720] Doing so would then allow such individuals to be automatically entitled to citizenship based on their ethnic (Abkhaz) identity. However, the current law only allows Abkhazian citizens the right to change their names.[721] This results in a Catch-22 situation, where to be recognised as an Abkhaz, one must have an Abkhaz name, but to change one's family name, one should be an Abkhazian citizen.[722] Over the years, attempts have been made to amend this legislation, but any legislative changes that would allow ethnic Georgians to maintain dual citizenship have failed as it is seen as a demographic threat.[723] Some, like the veteran group ARUAA, oppose this initiative, arguing that this change will be used strategically to acquire rights in Abkhazia whilst continuing to identify as Georgian (citizens) and refusing to recognise Abkhazia's sovereignty. In other words, "[by] the fact that someone's ethnicity is recorded as Abkhaz in their passport, they will not become a worthy citizen of our country… if tens of thousands of supposed Abkhaz with Georgian self-consciousness and citizenship appear, it will be a deception and self-deception".[724]

[718] Matsuzato 2011: chaps. 815–820; RA Exp№4.
[719] Basaria 1990; RA Exp№4.
For a discussion of Abkhaz anthroponyms, see the work by Inal-Ipa (2002).
[720] Khajimba as cited in Civil Georgia 2017.
[721] Abkhazia 2007: chap. 8.
[722] RA Exp№12.
[723] Civil Georgia 2017; 2022; Sharia 2015; 2021; 2022a.
[724] ARUAA as cited in Sharia 2021.
The veteran group further refers to past opportunities that had allowed individuals to reclaim the Abkhaz identity but were not used as evince of a lack of Abkhaz(ian) identity amongst the population. First, during 2008-2014, when individuals did possess Abkhazian citizenship, they could have easily changed their names and reclaimed their Abkhaz identity. Secondly, since 2015, a special presidential commission was established to process requests to change names/ethnic identity. During 2016-2019 of the 4500 identified individuals, no more than 900 people had used this opportunity (Council of Murzakan Abkhaz as cited in Civil Georgia 2017; Council of Murzakan Abkhaz 2019). These individuals could re-acquire Abkhazian citizenship via a special Presidential degree (Gal TV 2017). This illustrates that only a small group of people may change their ethnic identity for identity and/or utilitarian reasons. While it is unclear if these individuals also possessed Georgian citizenship, it is likely that they were considered stateless. Given that it was President Khajimba (who came to power on a nationalist wave that contributed to the annulment of citizenship of persons Georgian citizenship), is unlikely to have granted them citizenship if it was known that they possessed Georgian citizenship. The policy to allow changing names and ethnic identity has been critiqued as "a new form of discrimination against Georgians – an attempt to forcefully change their ethnicity" (Abkhazian Supreme Council Tbilisi 2021).

The Abkhazian case illustrates how the desire for security results in the politicisation and securitisation of belonging. The Abkhazian opposition successfully securitised ethnic Georgians as a threat, resulting in the Parliament amending the citizenship law in 2013. Politics of belonging can also result in a discrepancy between laws (due to retroactive amendments) and between law and administrative practices. Even if the procedures and laws (be it the initial passportization or the subsequent annulment of citizenship) are deemed illegal or unconstitutional, the politics of belonging will continue to shape state practice. All in all, the Abkhazian state can be seen to engage in demographic engineering to ensure its ontological and physical security by excluding the undesired ethnic Georgians while concurrently providing a pathway for the Murzakan Abkhaz to reclaim their Abkhaz identity.[725]

In contrast, the situation in South Ossetia is significantly different. Despite ethnic Georgians being the second largest population in South Ossetia (3966; 7.4%), it is much smaller than in Abkhazia (43,621; 17.8%) both in absolute terms and as a percentage (see Appendix B2). Most ethnic Georgians live in the eastern Leningor district (2337), and according to the 2015 census, 57% of Leningor's population was stateless. Only 42 people in the whole republic had declared to have Georgian citizenship.[726] Over the years, the Leningor population has

[725] Despite the contentious status of ethnic Georgians, several interlocutors suggested that the state and citizens should integrate better with this part of the population. For example, by providing access to social services, it was hoped that individuals would have less of a functional need to interact with Georgia (RA Exp№5). Beyond this, people-to-people contact should be established, and ethnic Georgians should feel a sense of safety, comfort, and belonging as part of the Abkhazian society (RA Cit№7; RA Exp№14). Unfortunately, over the last 30 years, the Abkhazian state and society have done little to politically and socially integrate and interact with the ethnic (Georgians Matsuzato 2011: 817; Prelz Oltramonti 2016). For example, while some ethnic Georgians go on to study at the Abkhaz State University, most choose to go to Georgia (Piliya 2022). Furthermore, over the years, the ethno-nationalist segments of the society have taken steps to demonstrate their distrust and lack of acceptance of ethnic Georgians. It is not a simple task for both communities to consider ethnic Georgians equal members of the Abkhazian society. For this to happen, the status of ethnic Georgians in eastern Abkhazia must be de-politicised (RA Exp№14). Some interlocutors were convinced that if there were political will, it would be possible to regularise the status of ethnic Georgians, which could also include granting Abkhazian citizenship. According to estimates, several thousand (8000) ethnic Georgians are willing to renounce their Georgian citizenship in favour of the Abkhazian (RA Exp№6; RA Exp№8; RA Exp№12; RA Exp№13). However, Georgian authorities are unlikely to accept such requests. Interlocutors also put forward an interesting solution, such as creating a pathway for ethnic Georgians first to acquire Russian citizenship (using its higher functionality as an incentive), renounce Georgian citizenship, and then apply for Abkhazian citizenship (RA Exp№5; RA Exp№12; RA Exp№13). Also, as suggested in the failed 2009 amendment, the option could exist for ethnic Georgians to unilaterally renounce their Georgian citizenship in favour of the Abkhazian one, on the condition that if in the future the individual is found to have a Georgian passport it would result in the automatic annulment of the Abkhazian citizenship (RA Exp№12).

[726] South Ossetia Department of State Statistics 2016: 116.
While this group's legal status (under Georgian/International Law) was not discussed in Chapter 5, it is likely that their status is also contested. From the South Ossetia perspective, they are considered stateless,

also acquired South Ossetian citizenship, with 80% of the residents having South Ossetian passports in 2020.[727] Interlocutors stated that the status of ethnic Georgians is not politicised, nor is it seen as a security issue. One explanation for this has to do with the ethnodemographic balance. Unlike the Abkhaz, ethnic Ossetians make up the vast majority of their republic (90% in 2015), and thus ethnic Georgian residents pose less of a demographic threat, and their legal status is not securitised compared to those in Abkhazia.

In Transnistria, interlocutors did not identify the securitisation of a particular identity group (i.e. ethnic Moldovans) because, for the Transnistrians, the conflict with Moldova is political in nature. Furthermore, Transnistria is a heterogeneous and multi-ethnic society, and to this day, people-to-people contacts between the two sides of the Dniester are cordial, and people maintain family ties.[728] Furthermore, Transnistria has taken a very liberal approach by allowing dual citizenship with any state, including Moldova. Interlocutors argued that Transnistria is interested in maximising the rights of its citizens, which includes allowing dual citizenship even with Moldova.[729] That said, Moldovan identity has been politicised and used as an argument to preserve the true Moldovan (un-Romanianized) ethnicity, language, and culture, while concurrently Moldovans and Ukrainians being culturally assimilated into the *Russkiy-Mir*.[730] Though not mentioned by the interlocutors, the ethnic-Moldovan population who identify as Romanian speakers has been politicised, as observed by strong opposition to the eight Romanian language/script schools in Transnistria.[731] Though not linked to the issue of citizenship, the politicisation of what it means to be ethnically Moldovan can also be linked to the desire to preserve Transnistria's ontological security of being a multicultural republic in opposition to the pan-Romanian identity.

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but from the Georgian perspective, they would be recognised as Georgian citizens. These individuals may also have never declared their Georgian citizenship to the South Ossetian authorities.

[727] Ministry of Interior South Ossetia 2020; RSO Exp№1; RSO Exp№3.

[728] PMR Cit№4; PMR Exp№6.

Even the clash between different obligations when Moldovan-Transnistrian citizens work in Moldovan institutions (e.g. police, judicial system) was not seen as a security issue since, rather it was framed as a right of Transnistrian citizens to freely choose their employer (PMR Exp№3). Ultimately, Moldovan officials stressed the importance of the master nationality rule in determining the obligations of citizens (PMR Exp№5; PMR Exp№7).

[729] PMR Exp№4; PMR Exp№5; PMR Exp№8.

Another reason was Transnistria's interest in attracting foreigners and capital (PMR Exp№7). This is reflected in Transnistrian citizenship, which has several policies that can be regarded as "citizenship by investment" pathways (Transnistria 2017, Art. 14-2).

[730] Marandici 2020.

Russian is the dominant language and officially takes the form of the language of inter-ethnic communication.

[731] Comai & Venturi 2015; Marandici 2020: 75–76.

Of the three cases, ethnic Georgians in Abkhazia are the most politicised and securitised group. This securitisation is directly linked to their Georgian citizenship. In Transnistria, while a Moldovan identity has been politicised and affects a small portion of the population, there is no real securitisation of this, nor is this linked to Moldovan citizenship. Lastly, in South Ossetia, despite the tensions with Georgia, the ethnic Georgian minority (nor their Georgian citizenship) is seen as a threat in public discourse, potentially due to them being less of a demographic threat to South Ossetia.

Instrumentalising the Diaspora

An alternative to excluding undesired groups to guarantee ethnodemographic security is to adopt policies aimed at including desired groups, namely the diaspora. A diaspora is a "transnational community whose members (or their ancestors) emigrated or were dispersed from their original homeland but remain oriented to it and preserve a group identity".[732] As part of nation-building projects, governments pass laws granting simplified access to citizenship whilst allowing dual citizenship for their diaspora. Hungary, Israel, Italy, India, Portugal, Spain, and the Philippines have all adopted favourable diaspora engagement policies. Such policies often combine ideological (e.g. right of return, political belonging, nationalism) and instrumental (e.g. remittances) reasons[733] and are not unique to recognised states. Abkhazia, over the years, has also adopted diaspora engagement policies.

Abramson (2023: 2) defined the securitisation of diaspora as "employing a discourse that constitutes populations envisioned as 'diasporic' as objects of security," which can take three forms: labelling diasporas as threatening actors, as referent objects under threat, or as a security resource. In this chapter, instrumentalisation is a more appropriate term since it refers to the last form, which involves using the diaspora as a strategic resource in the form of repatriates (or remittances) or as para-diplomatic actors abroad. Aspirant states use citizenship to enhance diaspora engagement and strengthen the state's ethnodemographic security. In the case of the three aspirant states, the diaspora is either seen as a security resource (in Abkhazia and South Ossetia) or as a threatening actor (in South Ossetia).

Every Abkhaz living abroad is entitled to Abkhazian citizenship and can maintain dual

[732] J. Grossman 2019: 1267.
[733] Bauböck 2010a; Schiller 2005.

citizenship with any state.[734] Similarly, in South Ossetia, all individuals who have historical roots in South Ossetia are eligible for citizenship.[735] In practice, (evidence of) granting diaspora citizenship is more widespread in Abkhazia than in South Ossetia. In Transnistria, the concept of a Transnistrian diaspora is still in its infancy,[736] and the state lacks a coherent policy or engagement strategy.

In Abkhazia, respondents justified the policy by citing the need to preserve "ethnic uniqueness", the diaspora's right to return to their historical homeland after having been forced to flee in the 1860s, and to a lesser extent, a way to address the demographic threat to the Abkhaz nation.[737] Furthermore, repatriation is seen as an opportunity to attract human resources and capital to the republic.[738] Providing pathways for individuals to return to their homeland and acquire their rightful citizenship is crucial to achieving this goal. In Abkhazia, this takes the form of two distinct but related statuses: Abkhazian citizenship and the status of a repatriate. Those who choose to repatriate receive the status for five years, which grants them specific privileges such as access to housing, tuition reduction in universities, and deferral from military service.[739] The dominant narrative for granting citizenship to the diaspora is seen as a right and entitlement of these individuals and was done as an altruistic/righteous act by the state. However, the instrumental nature of granting citizenship (and allowing dual citizenship) to individuals (many of whom have never lived in or visited Abkhazia) must be acknowledged. Additionally, it must be acknowledged that if the aspirant state did not allow dual citizenship, it is unlikely that any diaspora member would be willing to give up their existing citizenship in favour of a citizenship with limited international recognition. Despite both the instrumental and normative arguments for granting citizenship, the uptake has been slow and has not significantly improved the ethnodemographic balance

[734] Abkhazia 2005, Arts. 5-6.
Legally, the Abkhaz can maintain Abkhazian and Georgian citizenship. However, morally and ethically, the Abkhazian state and the majority of Abkhaz would not voluntarily maintain Georgian citizenship and documents. A couple of interlocutors mentioned that some Abkhaz who live in Adjaria Georgia (and would have Georgian citizenship) had acquired Abkhazian citizenship (RA Exp№3; RA Exp№5). Further, between 2016-2019, 200 Abkhaz repatriates from Adjaria resettled in Abkhazia (State Committee of Abkhazia on Statistics 2017: 38; 2021: 30). Some of them may hold Georgian citizenship . However, given that the Abkhaz do not appear as a separate category in the 2014 Georgian census (due to its small size), the number of individuals who hold both passports (if true) would be very small.
[735] South Ossetia 2006, Art. 14-3.
[736] Ostavnaia 2017.
[737] RA Exp№1; RA Exp№9; RA Exp№11; RA Exp№12.
[738] Berg & Sarıoğlu 2021; Berg & Vits 2018; Dbar 2019; RA Cit№4.
[739] Abkhazia 1998; State Committee of Repatriation n.d..

in Abkhazia.[740]

In South Ossetia, the question of granting citizenship to the diaspora is increasingly politicised and, to an extent, even securitised. The Ossetian diaspora stands at around 700,000, including half a million living in Russia.[741] Some South Ossetians consider that all Ossetians should have a right to acquire the citizenship, while others see this as a threat. The fear lies in the political sphere since granting even a few thousand citizenships will significantly change the electoral base (currently less than 40,000).[742] According to unofficial data, a further 90,000 citizens live outside the republic (but are ineligible to run for Presidential/ Parliamentary elections).[743] The fear is that individuals not permanently residing in South Ossetia will have significant sway in electoral politics. During the 2022 presidential elections, evidence emerged that then-President Anatoly Bibilov distributed citizenships/passports in exchange for a promise to vote for him.[744] That is why the terminology used in South Ossetia is more restricted, and citizenship is only granted to diaspora members who can prove that their immediate family was born in South Ossetia after April 1922.[745]

Increasingly, however, there have been calls to liberalise the citizenship policy and provide access to citizenship to all Ossetian diaspora. The main aim is to increase the population of South Ossetian citizens and, by extension, ensure its security and survival. As articulated by former Prime Minister Oleg Teziev, "With a population of twenty thousand, it is unrealistic to ensure the security and defence of our state and create a normal economy. All those who are against the distribution of passports of the State of Alania to all our people and against the abolition of residence permits are the enemies of our state and our people. They do not want this land to become a strong and prosperous country of our people. They are for it to fall into disrepair and eventually become the land of Georgia."[746] Similarly, Kasibov, a

[740] According to official data, 772 individuals were repatriated (2016-2020), and at least 897 diaspora members acquired citizenship between 2018-2020 (See Appendix B1). Repatriation has been limited due to the low standard of living and difficulties in integrating, given the dominance of the Russian language (RA Exp№5). According to the State Committee for Repatriation, 11,000 individuals have repatriated over the years (Amichba 2018). Also see Abaza's (2016) ethnographic work on Syrian diaspora's experiences of becoming citizens.
[741] Rosstat - Federal State Statistics Service 2020.
[742] RSO Exp№1; RSO Exp№2.
[743] Gukemukhov 2023.
[744] Bitiev 2022; Puhaiti 2022.
[745] Embassy of South Ossetia 2016; RSO Cit№1; RSO Cit№2.
According to two interlocutors, there was a short window (2015-2018) that the policy was very liberal, and diaspora members from the EU, Ukraine, and Georgia, with no direct links to South Ossetia, were able to acquire Ossetian Citizenship via Presidential degree (RSO Cit№1; RSO Exp№3).
[746] As cited in Gukemukhov 2023.

former minister, stated that "every ethnic Ossetian should be able to get a passport from the State of Alania. This is the state that we got after so many centuries and to which we and our ancestors aspired for so many centuries."

Thus, this tension in South Ossetia can also be viewed through the lens of ontological security. On the one hand, providing citizenship is seen as an (ontological) security threat to the current sense of self and not bringing any additional benefits (since not many would be willing to resettle in or fight for South Ossetia in case of another armed conflict). On the other hand, it is seen as a resource since by increasing the citizenry, South Ossetia can ensure its survival and thus ensure its long-term ontological security. While the government has adopted no concrete policy, the debate surrounding who can access South Ossetian citizenship adds to the discussion of how small states can ensure their security and survival.

When looking at the motivations of the diaspora to acquire the aspirant state citizenship, unsurprisingly, the rights that the citizenship confers were of secondary importance. The dominant view of non-diaspora citizens was that the citizenship is important for the diaspora "in order to feel the connection with their historical homeland above all. For them, this is very important from an emotional point of view because when they receive our passports, they are the happiest people in the world."[747] According to a former civil servant "for them, this is not just a legal moment, but an emotional moment,"[748] which contributes to ontological security. Possessing a passport simply provides proof of their belonging, without which they still feel a sense of belonging.[749] Some diaspora members also stated that legal citizenship is not necessary to be a member of the community. The following quotes are illustrative of the diaspora members' attachment towards their kin state.

> I didn't need a passport. I would have found a job here without a passport. To be honest, this passport is not needed here. But I'm happy to have it. (RA Cit№3)

> It doesn't matter if I have a passport of South Ossetia in my pocket or not. Even when I did not have it, I considered myself a citizen of South Ossetia in the first place. (RSO Cit№2)

> What does it mean to be Ossetian? While growing up, my dad would always say that you are not [Middle Eastern]; you are Ossetian. He would tell us about our original Ossetian village... Since my ancestors left the Caucasus around 1860, my dad was the first one to visit. It was always this romantic view of the Caucasus. I have been there on a few occasions, and I really like it. But I'm not sure if I could ever live

[747] RSO Exp№1.
[748] RA Exp№11.
[749] RA Exp№9.

> there because, in the end, no matter how much ethnically Ossetian I might be, the mentality is different. I grew up in [Europe], where it is quite different from Russia, especially in regions such as the Caucasus and North Ossetia, so it needs some effort to adapt there. So what does it mean to be Ossetian? It is part of my identity. (RSO Cit№1)[750]

Fears of Russification

The last form of securitisation/instrumentalisation of citizenship was the least observed but could become a significant issue of contention. As discussed in Chapter 6, recognised citizenship is, first and foremost, strategic in nature, as it compensates for the limited (external) functionality of the aspirant state citizenship. For the residents of aspirant states like Abkhazia, it was the opening of a "humanitarian corridor" since, till then, they were "practically imprisoned in Abkhazia".[751] That said, an interesting nuance was that while Russia itself never forced citizenship on these people but merely facilitated easy acquisition, some interlocutors felt that "people have been *forced* [emphasis added] to simply take Russian citizenship in order to be able to move around the world".[752] The exclusion from the state system and the nonrecognition of the aspirant state citizenship compels it to allow its citizens to maintain dual citizenship.

Historically, before the widespread acceptance of dual citizenship, states were reluctant to allow it because they feared it would create a conflict of interest concerning individual obligations. Given Russia's imperialist and irredentist claims (as observed in Ukraine), I questioned whether the widespread acceptance of Russian citizenship by aspirant state citizens is not seen as a threat and would result in the hollowing of local citizenship and statehood. As discussed in the preceding chapter, external actors have critiqued the acquisition of Russian citizenship by aspirant state citizens. Russia securitised its citizens and co-ethnics abroad and used the argument that it was under threat and required saving as a justification for its (military) involvement in Georgia in 2008 (and Ukraine since 2014).[753]

In Abkhazia, some interlocutors acknowledged this threat, but argued that Abkhazia had been forced to choose the lesser evil (i.e. Russia instead of Georgia), while others did not

[750] In contrast, some diaspora members from Syria strategically acquired Abkhazian citizenship and resettled in Abkhazia following the beginning of the Syrian civil war (Abaza 2016). Thus, as argued by one interlocutor the Abkhazian citizenship can enhance human security (and provides migratory pathway) for those living in unstable regimes (RA Cit№8).
[751] Kirova 2012; RA Exp№4.
[752] RA Exp№11. This sentiment was echoed by PMR Exp№4, RA Exp№5, and RSO Exp№1.
[753] Burkhardt et al. 2022; Ganohariti 2021b; Kirova 2012: 16–18.

see this as a threat.[754] One NGO representative articulated the dilemma of Russian encroachment as follows:

> We have been dependent on Russia for literally everything for a very long time. We have electricity coming from Russia; we have gas coming from Russia. Everything comes from Russia. But there is a stratum of the population that says we will not join Russia, but at the same time, they want to receive all the resources of Russia but not give up their sovereignty. But Russia has been feeding us for 30 years already; it is impossible to always feed for nothing... Our sovereignty was conditional. Russia acknowledged us as an independent country and became our partner, but now all industries are occupied by Russia. (RA Cit№3)

On the other hand, there exists a fear that liberalisation of dual citizenship with Russia will open the door for Russian citizens, including ethnic Georgians, to be able to acquire Abkhazian citizenship, and thus (once again) leading to the Abkhaz becoming a minority.[755] This fear also links to property rights. As only citizens can own property, there is fear that if economically well-off Russians acquire Abkhazian citizenship, they will buy up valuable property *en masse*, thus Russifying the region.[756] This apprehension about the acquisition of citizenship by Russians is also evident in the 2022 Dual Citizenship Agreement, which highlights that simplified naturalisation only applies to Abkhazians acquiring Russian citizenship. Ultimately, the apprehension stems from the need to preserve the ethnodemographic balance and ensure that the proportion of Abkhaz does not reduce. This attitude towards Russian citizens is also part of the broader anxiety about Russian encroachment into Abkhazia. For example, the 2022 protests against the lease of the Pitsunda vacation complex to Russia was an act that was framed as being anti-constitutional (since foreigners cannot own land) and an encroachment on Abkhazia's territorial integrity.[757]

In contrast, South Ossetians do not see the acquisition of Russian citizenship by South Ossetians as reducing the stateness of South Ossetia. This is because the Ossetian nation is divided between North and South Ossetia, with most Ossetians in the north exclusively having Russian citizenship.[758] Thus, Russian citizenship becomes a conduit for reunifying the politically divided Ossetian ethnos. Unlike South Ossetia, which is not opposed to the eventual reunification with North Ossetia/Russia, Abkhazians are opposed to any discussion of giving up their earned sovereignty.[759] Interlocutors also argued that the acquisition of

[754] RA Exp№14 and RA Exp№4, respectively.
[755] RA Exp№5; RA Exp№6; RA Exp№10; RA Exp№12.
[756] Khashig 2023, RA Exp№6; RA Exp№8; RA Exp№14.
[757] Eurasianet 2022; OC Media 2022; Youksel 2022.
[758] Kolstø & Blakkisrud 2008; RSO Exp№1.
[759] Clogg 2008: 324.

Russian citizenship should be seen only in individualistic/utilitarian terms and not be interpreted as a tool for unification.[760] In contrast, one South Ossetian, similar to the Abkhazians, acknowledged the fear of increasing Russian influence, with would result in South Ossetia(ns) instead of being Georgianised to being Russified, and cited their fear that "if South Ossetia becomes part of Russia, then quite possibly the assimilation processes for South Ossetia will also accelerate".[761] Further, as discussed in the *Instrumentalising the Diaspora* section, some South Ossetians are apprehensive of the Ossetian diaspora (with Russian citizenship) acquiring citizenship, as it would disrupt the electoral balance.

In Transnistria, there was no fear or apprehension of Russification; instead, people strongly connected with Russia and Russian identity. Furthermore, similar to South Ossetia, in 2006, Transnistrians voted in favour of uniting with Russia;[762] thus, Russian citizenship can also be seen as laying the groundwork for reunification. Also, not a single Transnistrian mentioned any threat related to the acquisition of Transnistrian citizenship by Russian (Moldovan or Ukrainian) citizens. This is evidenced by, as earlier discussed, the strong attachment to the *Russkiy-Mir*. Thus, the three aspirant states displayed different levels of apprehension towards Russification and Russian citizens (not connected to the territory) from acquiring local citizenship, with Abkhazians and South Ossetians fearing that widespread citizenship acquisition would disrupt their demographic and electoral balance. The hesitance to grant citizenship to non-diaspora foreigners in Abkhazia is also reflected in the higher threshold for naturalisation (a process which confirms that an individual is no longer an "other"). Naturalising individuals must have resided for ten years and be fluent in Abkhaz. These requirements are more stringent than South Ossetia (five years residency, competence in Russian/Ossetian) or Transnistria (one-year residency, no language requirement).

In all three cases, (the acquisition of) Russian citizenship was seen as an asset which expanded individual rights. However, the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022 and the wave of military conscription has resulted in this citizenship becoming a liability. And while Russian citizens residing in the three aspirant states (unlike the annexed territories in Ukraine) have thus far been spared, future developments could be such that Russia's presence and involvement in the aspirant states may increase. Russia may go as far as pressuring the local

[760] RSO Exp№1; RSO Exp№2.
[761] RSO Cit№2.
[762] Kosienkowski 2021.

authorities to aid in its military campaign by allowing it to mobilise the population. The developments in this dimension of citizenship need to be closely followed and could be an area for future research.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that several factors affect the citizenship regimes of the post-Soviet aspirant states: history; the nation-building model; demographics; diaspora politics; the level of dependence on the patron state (and its citizenship); and the level of contestation with the base state. The analysis showed that Abkhazia and South Ossetia have ethnoculturally selective citizenship policies, while Transnistria has an expansive citizenship policy. From the three cases, Abkhazia has most heavily engaged in demographic engineering to preserve (and even enhance) the demographic balance in favour of the Abkhaz.

A broader observation relates to the development of the citizenry and the consolidation of citizenship regimes over the last 30 years. In the first decade, due to the effects of war and because legal regimes were still in development, the idea of a citizenry was in its infancy and was fluid. However, over the following two decades, it gradually solidified by clearly identifying who belongs and who does not. Though, given the influence of various domestic and international actors, it will never fully solidify and will continue to morph. The discussion also demonstrates that citizenship regimes are not static but can change based on domestic and external conditions. The fear of demographic changes in Abkhazia prompted the political opposition to take power (2013-2014) and restrict access to citizenship for ethnic Georgians. Similar fears have resulted in debates over whether the Ossetian diaspora should be automatically granted South Ossetian citizenship.

This chapter has illustrated how the desire for ontological and physical security can influence states to securitise/instrumentalise certain groups and adopt citizenship policies that exclude undesired groups (minority groups, diaspora, patron state citizens) and include desired groups (diaspora) to ensure ethnodemographic security of the body politic. This, in turn, becomes part of the nation-building process. Additionally, while initially, Russian citizenship was accepted as a blessing by aspirant state citizens, increasingly, it has become a liability.

What the securitisation of citizenship illustrates is that aspirant states reproduce the same forms of exclusion (i.e. exclusionary/discriminatory policies of the base state) that they strived to dismantle in the first place by declaring independence. Similarly, aspirant states can instrumentalise their diaspora and acknowledge the risks of over-reliance on one patron state. Aspirant states adopt similar repertoires and fear similar threats to those of recognised states since their core aim is to be recognised as sovereign states. Thus, a broader finding is that aspirant states reproduce existing ontological structures of citizenship as tools of population control and, more broadly, the international system itself.[763] Ultimately, these practices are not limited to citizenship policies but reflect the broader patterns of how aspirant states behave. This is what the final chapter will address: the normalisation discourse of aspirant states.

[763] Grzybowski 2017; 2019.

Chapter 8
Conclusion

This thesis has shed light on the complex and dynamic relationship between statehood, sovereignty, state recognition, citizenship regimes, and the politics of belonging. Using the lenses of multiplicity and human/state security, this thesis has added new empirical evidence and expanded the understanding of citizenship in post-Soviet aspirant states. The phenomenon of citizenship in aspirant states is not monolithic, but is constructed as a consequence of the entanglement of multiple legal, political, territorial, and social orders, which affects individuals' human security. Furthermore, the thesis demonstrated that nonrecognition does not affect all rights equally, and its impact on human security is more nuanced. Depending on diachronic changes (due to state recognition and changes in laws), the determination by administrative authorities of different states as to what legal status(es) an individual holds, and the individual's physical location, aspirant state citizens are affected by and possess a multiplicity of citizenship regimes, each with different degrees of recognition, functionality, and influence on the lived experiences. Meanwhile, from the state level, citizenship is used as a state- and nation-building tool to enhance ethnodemographic security. The desire for ontological and physical security influences aspirant states to securitise/instrumentalise certain groups by adopting policies that exclude undesired groups (minority groups, diaspora, patron state citizens) and include desired groups (diaspora).

To holistically understand the phenomenon of citizenship in aspirant states, it must be studied from the perspectives of law, administrative practices, and lived experiences. Ultimately, only by looking at the phenomenon from both the macro/state level and the individual level is it possible to explain the complexity of citizenship in aspirant states. This chapter synthesises the key findings and provides four conclusions.

The first section argues that to understand the phenomenon of citizenship in aspirant states, it is vital to follow a law in context approach by also looking at the functionality (rights and obligations), identity, and politics of belonging dimensions of citizenship. Secondly, the chapter draws attention to how aspirant state citizens discuss and address the limited functionality of the local citizenship. The section argues that the way they strengthen their human security through compensatory citizenship is akin to that of citizens of recognised states with weak nationalities. Next, the chapter notes that while the securitisation and

instrumentalisation of citizenship in aspirant states are influenced by state secession and nonrecognition, concerns over ethnodemographic insecurity and adopted citizenship policies mirror those of recognised states. The last finding acknowledges the normalisation discourse among (citizens of) aspirant states and the similarity between aspirant states and recognised states in relation to how they approach citizenship. The chapter concludes by outlining the areas for future empirical and theoretical research.

The Need for a Law In Context Approach

The first finding relates to the importance of moving away from a doctrinal (black letter law) position vis-à-vis the phenomena of citizenship/nationality and statelessness in the context of aspirant states. A doctrinal approach maintains that aspirant state nationality does not exist because the aspirant state is not a state. However, as demonstrated throughout the thesis, aspirant state citizenship confers rights and obligations and contributes to identity formation and state- and nation-building on par with citizenships of recognised states. Thus, International Law on nationality has limited utility in explaining the lived realities of aspirant state citizens. Further, the thesis argues that instead of a one-to-one relationship between state recognition and the functionality of citizenship, the consequences of state (non)recognition affect the dimensions of citizenship to different degrees. In other words, nonrecognition of statehood or citizenship does not automatically mean that their holders have no rights; neither does state recognition (e.g. Abkhazia, South Ossetia), nor possessing the citizenship of a recognised state (e.g. Russia) automatically expand the rights of individuals.

The thesis began its exploration of citizenship in aspirant states by discussing the multiplicity of legal statuses that citizens may come to possess or be ascribed to. It presented a Citizenship Constellation Model, which illustrated the entanglement of multiple legal regimes in the context of contested statehood. It becomes quickly clear that administrative authorities (i.e. states) make different determinations as to what legal status an individual possesses. While an Abkhazian with dual citizenship may be considered as such by Abkhazia and Russia, only the Russian citizenship is recognised internationally. However, even in this case, nonrecognition of Russia's passportization results in the individuals' Russian passports not being recognised by Georgian and EU authorities.

Table 17: Citizenship Constellations in Aspirant States

	Recognition of aspirant state citizenship	**Nonrecognition** of aspirant state citizenship
Type I	Aspirant State Citizen	*de jure* Stateless Person
		Base State Citizen
Type II	Dual Citizen (of Aspirant State and Patron State)	Base State Citizen
		Patron State Citizen
Type III	Dual Citizen	Citizen of Recognised State(s)

The model places aspirant state citizens into one of three types. In Type I, the individual may concurrently be a citizen of an aspirant state, be *de jure* stateless and/or possess the citizenship of the base state depending on the administrative authority. Individuals falling into Type II possess dual citizenship from the perspective of the aspirant state, while from a nonrecognition perspective, they may be recognised as citizens of the base state or the patron state. Under Type III, the individual has multiple citizenships, of which only the aspirant state citizenship is contested. The tensions within the constellations show that an individual may simultaneously possess (or be ascribed) a multiplicity of legal statuses depending on the administrative authority which engages in the (non)recognition of an individual's citizenship(s). Ultimately, determining what legal status(es) individuals linked to aspirant states possess results from the convergence of state recognition (status of the polity) and the number of legal statuses the individual possesses.

While these tensions exist and the citizenship(s) an individual holds may be contested, it is equally, if not more important, to understand the rights and obligations associated with each citizenship. Even though the definition of nationality as the legal bond between individuals and the state would hinder contested states from conferring a nationality,[764] in practice, individuals' legal status under foreign or International Law is of little relevance when discussing the rights enjoyed within the aspirant state. Simply determining whether an individual is a national of a recognised state (or is stateless) does not explain the individual's rights and obligations. For example, labelling a South Ossetian as stateless does not acknowledge that they possess rights traditionally associated with nationality, such as voting in elections or standing for office. In other words, individuals can exercise rights and possess obligations towards the aspirant state, despite its limited international recognition. It matters little whether external actors consider individuals as nationals of the aspirant state, nationals of the base state, nationals of the patron state, stateless, or a combination of the aforementioned. The diverging positions (tertiary rules) of external actors vis-à-vis the

[764] Atcho 2018; A. Grossman 2001; Manby 2020.

recognition of the aspirant state citizenship (as a nationality under International Law) only becomes crucial with effect to the external functionality of the citizenship since individuals are restricted in travelling on their local passports and engaging in activities outside the state (education, healthcare, international trade, or participating in international legal mechanisms).

Despite the limited international recognition, when located within the aspirant state, local citizenship "gives the same rights and obligations as other citizenships, such as Moldovan and Russian".[765] The citizenship provides benefits such as access to social services (e.g. pensions, education), preferential tariffs compared to foreigners (e.g. healthcare) and free access to tourist sites.[766] Nonrecognition of statehood has limited effect on the internal functionality of the citizenship, and "whether other states recognise our state or not isn't an indicator [of the formation of a state and a nationality]. In this territory, the existence of a nation or cultural community is already sufficient grounds for us to consider our citizenship as full-fledged".[767] This echoes the general sentiment among interlocutors that aspirant state citizenship is not liminal, is complete, and is comparable to citizenships of recognised states. The domestic impact of nonrecognition is limited and less directly observable. Citizens of aspirant states can exercise a range of political, civil, and social rights, in some cases even better than in recognised states. This confirms Grossman's (2001: 876) argument that "a political entity's nonrecognition as a State deprives the individual connected with it of some, but not all, the rights associated with its nationality". That said, nonrecognition of the aspirant state can have consequences on the quality of life inside the aspirant state since development is stalled due to limited foreign investment, risk of conflict relapse, or inability of local universities to internationalise.[768] 65% of survey respondents agreed that the contested political status of the aspirant state impedes their rights and quality of life.

To enjoy rights within the aspirant state, what matters most is that there is a social contract between the individual and the aspirant state.[769] The established legal bond (citizenship/nationality) is independent of international recognition, and the lack of international recognition does not make citizenship any less real. A citizen of an aspirant state will continue to have obligations towards that state; in turn, the state must guarantee

[765] PMR Cit№2.
[766] PMR Cit№4; PMR Cit№9; PMR Exp№1; PMR Exp№3; PMR Exp№4; PMR Exp№8; RA Cit№3.
[767] RSO Cit№2.
[768] Coppieters 2021; Waal & von Löwis 2020.
[769] PMR Cit№2; RA Exp№1; RA Exp№12; RA Exp№13; RSO Exp№2.

its citizens' physical and material security.[770] Since the aspirant state has developed and demonstrated the core attributes of statehood, its citizens have a right to consider themselves full-fledged citizens.[771]

The discussion on rights and obligations also highlights the tension between who exercises effective control and who (which actor) bears responsibility under International Law, for the security and well-being of individuals living in contested territories. The aspirant state positions itself as a provider of security to its citizens and acknowledges its duty (under International Law) to protect the rights of its citizens.[772] Similarly, conversations with interlocutors demonstrate that they feel protected and not hindered in exercising citizenship rights within the aspirant state. This is despite International Law placing primary responsibility on the base and patron states,[773] even if their ability to influence control over the (administration of) the aspirant state is limited. Furthermore, despite the base state's legal duty (under International Law) to protect the residents of the contested territory, its limited recognition of legal documents possessed by the aspirant state citizens hinders them from enjoying basic rights. From a normative position, I echo the sentiment of several interlocutors who argue that passport recognition is a humanitarian issue since, regardless of the political conflict, the rights of individuals (particularly mobility rights) must be guaranteed.[774] Thus, it is paramount to separate state recognition from recognition of legal identity documents by adopting mechanisms that reduce the isolation of these regions, such as including passport recognition in the broader "engagement without recognition" strategy.[775]

Further evidence for the absence of a one-to-one relationship between state recognition and the functionality of citizenship is the limited effect of the 2008 recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The recognition was essential to those who only had the aspirant state

[770] RA Exp№12; RSO Exp№2.
[771] RSO Cit№2.
[772] This is evidenced by aspirant states unilaterally signing up to various international conventions and acknowledging the effect of International Law (South Ossetia 2001, Art. 2; Transnistria 1996, Art. 10). For example, Abkhazia recognises and guarantees the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1967 Human Rights Covenants (Abkhazia 1994, Art. 11).
[773] Cullen & Wheatley 2013; Cwicinskaja 2018; Public Defender of Georgia 2017a.
Examples include Ilaşcu and Others v. Moldova and Russia (2004); Caldare and Others v. Moldova and Russia (2012); Dzhioyeva and Others v. Georgia (2019); Georgia v. Russia (2021); Mamasakhlisi and Others v. Georgia and Russia (2023). However, aspirant states are not exempt from the "duty to respect the rights of all inhabitants of the territory in question, as those rights would otherwise be respected by the authorities of the State of which the territory is a part [of]" (PACE 2018).
[774] RA Exp№1; RA Exp№5; RA Exp№6.
[775] Coppieters 2019b; Ker-Lindsay 2015.

citizenship since these individuals could now travel to Russia. In contrast, little changed for dual citizens as they would continue to rely on their Russian citizenship outside the aspirant state. Furthermore, the subsequent recognitions by Nauru, Nicaragua, Syria, and Venezuela had limited practical effects since these places are not popular destinations. Even then, most could have still used their Russian citizenship to travel to these locations. Meanwhile, those who had failed to acquire Russian citizenship via statelessness procedures were no longer eligible. Thus, in an unfortunate twist of fate, state recognition, which is valuable to state survival, negatively affected the mono-citizens since their access to Russian citizenship was now heavily restricted.

Furthermore, possessing, or being ascribed, multiple citizenships does not mean that individuals can enjoy all the rights associated with each citizenship. A form of semi-citizenship occurs when the citizenship of the base state is ascribed, or when the voluntarily acquired citizenship (of the patron state) lacks universal recognition. The former case occurs when Georgia claims that the residents of the "occupied territories" are its citizens. However, Abkhazians and South Ossetians refuse to be recognised as Georgians since they see the ascription as an infringement of their sovereignty. Moreover, while constitutionally, Georgian citizenship brings forth rights and obligations, these rights and obligations cannot be exercised on an individual level as long as individuals remain illegible to the Georgian state. As long as these "Georgian citizens" remain undocumented, they cannot enjoy rights conferred by the Georgian state, and the citizenship will be hollow.

The second instance of semi-citizenship occurs when the Russian citizenship acquired by Abkhazians and South Ossetians lacks universal recognition. Even though these individuals are Russian citizens under the operation of Russian law, the nonrecognition of Russian passports issued to residents of "occupied territories" by Georgia and its allies results in reduced functionality since the *zagran* passport is not a valid travel document to all 193 UN member states. Although this compensatory citizenship was acquired to expand the basket of rights, contestation over how the Russian citizenship was acquired limits the external functionality of this citizenship.

These findings demonstrate that while the determination and recognition of the legal status(es) of an individual is a useful "mechanism for allocating persons to states",[776] what

[776] Brubaker 1992a: 31.

is more important are social, economic, and political implications of (non)recognition of a particular citizenship and associated documents. The nonrecognition of the aspirant state citizenship as a nationality (or the citizenship of the patron state) by the international community does not invalidate the existence of this citizenship and associated rights and obligations. It does not really matter what legal status a third country considers a citizen of an aspirant state to have, provided individuals can exercise rights and maintain human security via the citizenship of the aspirant state. Even though this citizenship lacks widespread recognition, it still brings forth rights and obligations like the citizenship of any recognised state. Conversely, being regarded as a citizen of the base state does not mean much in terms of associated rights and obligations if individuals are unable or unwilling to realise them. Lastly, state recognition does not automatically improve citizens' quality of life. Even though formally, the recognitions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia improved the functionality of the citizenship, in practice, it only improved the quality of life of mono-citizens since dual citizens would continue to use their Russian citizenship outside the aspirant state.

Consequently, a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between the (non)recognition of citizenship and associated rights is needed. The first conclusion is that it is important to move away from the purely legal (black letter law) position which maintains that aspirant state nationality does not exist because the aspirant state is not a state, and instead follow a law in context approach. International Law on nationality has limited utility in explaining the lived realities of aspirant state citizens. Given that aspirant state citizenship confers rights and obligations on par with those conferred by recognised states, international recognition of the aspirant state and its attributes (e.g. passport) should not be seen as constitutive for establishing a nationality (which is the case under current International Law). Further, it is important to acknowledge that International Law, due to its state-centric nature, lacks the terminology that can be used to successfully discuss and describe the phenomenon of citizenship in/of aspirant states. Thus, two questions must always be asked when studying citizenship in aspirant states (and contested territories more broadly). What are the legal statuses the individual holds? How functional are these legal statuses?

Compensatory Nature of Citizenship

The second finding relates to the choices behind acquiring the citizenship of a recognised

state. The second citizenship, first and foremost, is compensatory and is used to expand individuals' rights, freedoms, and human security. Individuals using this envisage to freely travel abroad, gain a foreign education, engage in economic activities, and access social services provided by that state, whilst primarily relying on the local citizenship within the aspirant state. However, the second citizenship is not only utilitarian in nature.[777] Identity-related reasons for which citizenship one should acquire entered the discourse only when the individual has options. This is the case in Transnistria, where a significant proportion of individuals are eligible (and possess) multiple citizenships. For example, an ethnic Russian or Russian speaker may be more inclined to acquire Russian citizenship, and Russian speakers would most likely travel to Russia since it is easier to integrate there.[778] At the same time, others may refuse to acquire Moldovan citizenship for ideological reasons.[779] But, when Moldovan citizenship was the only option, individuals with no emotional connection to Moldova may still go on to acquire this citizenship.[780] Identity-related reasoning was less dominant in the other two republics, where Russian citizenship is the only option for many.

The thesis also highlighted the fact that not all compensatory citizenships expand rights in the same way. In Transnistria, those with Russian citizenship have lower travel freedoms than those with Moldovan citizenship, which provides visa-free access to the EU. Individuals with Transnistrian, Russian, and Romanian citizenship have an even greater level of travel and settlement freedom. Individuals will have qualitatively different (compounding of) rights depending on from which country the second citizenship is. Thus, even if one possesses a recognised citizenship, a hierarchy is created between citizens of each aspirant state since the compensatory citizenships have different levels of functionality.

Those with multiple citizenships will always use them strategically. The most obvious scenario is when living in the aspirant state, individuals rely on their local citizenship but use their other citizenship(s) for foreign travel. Particularly in Transnistria, where individuals had an array of options for their compensatory citizenship, various utilitarian choices determine compensatory citizenship acquisition, such as the desired migration path for employment or education.[781] Those with multiple citizenships may use them differently, such as one interlocutor with Russian and Moldovan citizenship who used his Moldovan

[777] 42.9% of respondents gave equal importance to both dimensions. This finding provides evidence that counters the expectation that compensatory citizenship serves an exclusively utilitarian function.
[778] Ostavnaia 2017; PMR Cit№9; PMR Exp№2; PMR Exp№3; PMR Exp№8.
[779] PMR Cit№4; PMR Cit№10.
[780] PMR Cit№4; PMR Cit№8; PMR Cit№10; PMR Exp№2; PMR Exp№6.
[781] PMR Cit№2; PMR Cit№7; PMR Exp№6; PMR Exp№8.

passport to travel by bus via Ukraine to Russia (after 2014) and then entered Russia as a Russian.[782] Similarly, with the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Transnistrians who held only Russian passports but were eligible for Moldovan ones quickly realised the benefits of having Moldovan documents given the now reduced external functionality of Russian citizenship.[783] This is a further example of diachronic changes in the functionality of citizenship. In some cases, it might also be that despite the individual legally being a citizen of multiple states, they will predominantly rely on one citizenship over another. This was the case among several Transnistrians permanently residing in the EU using their Moldovan passport whilst having an expired Russian passport.[784] Thus, the multiplicity of legal statuses does not mean that individuals will have an equal reliance on the rights arising from the citizenships. Depending on the situation, individuals will choose which citizenship they use to realise the necessary rights.

Lastly, even if an individual possesses a multiplicity of legal statuses, it does not always translate to a multiplicity of identities. While it is logical that aspirant state citizens have no sense of attachment to the citizenship that is forcefully ascribed, lack of attachment also occurs in relation to their compensatory citizenship(s). The level of attachment and pride is always stronger towards the aspirant state (despite its lower functionality). In Abkhazia and South Ossetia, citizens were prouder of their local citizenship, and their citizenship identity was more exclusive. On the other hand, a multiplicity of citizenship identities was observed among Transnistrians, but the effect of the local identity was still the strongest.[785]

While the contested status of an aspirant state may be a condition for needing compensatory citizenship (thereby resulting in a multiplicity of citizenship), the desire to improve individual well-being by citizenship acquisition is not unique to aspirant states. These findings echo the work of Yossi Harpaz (2019a: 11-13), who argues that dual citizenship is an asset that is used by individuals with weak nationalities to expand rights, starting with greater global mobility. Harpaz identified six pathways used to secure a compensatory citizenship, (i) ancestry-based citizenship acquisition, (ii) co-ethnic citizenship acquisition, (iii) strategic cross-border birth, (iv) migration and residence, (v) marriage, (vi) citizenship by investment.

[782] PMR Cit№2.
[783] Tabaranu 2022; Moldovan Exp№1.
[784] PMR Cit№3; PMR Cit№5.
[785] That said, 36.7% of respondents indicated equal levels of attachment, and 52.2% indicated equal levels of pride towards the two citizenships.

In aspirant states, the pathways are somewhat different from those identified by Harpaz. The first pathway is acquisition via statelessness claims (non-possession of a recognised citizenship), as was the case amongst Abkhazians, South Ossetians (and some Transnistrians). Individuals could claim Russian citizenship (until August 2008) because Russia considered itself the state continuator of the USSR and acknowledged its responsibility to grant citizenship to all those who had failed to acquire a new nationality. The second is based on territorial sovereignty claims. As Moldova and Georgia claim the contested territories, their residents are entitled to this citizenship. Many Transnistrians voluntarily acquire Moldovan citizenship and enjoy the associated rights. This is not the case in Georgia, where Abkhazians and South Ossetians refuse to be ascribed the citizenship or to claim any associated rights/benefits. Lastly, as observed amongst Transnistrians, the co-ethnic citizenship acquisition pathway is used to acquire Ukrainian, Romanian, or Bulgarian citizenship. Some ethnic Russians in the three aspirant states would also be able to acquire Russian citizenship via this pathway.

Thus, this brings us to the second finding: while the circumstances affecting aspirant states may be unique, the way individuals discuss and solve the issue of the limited functionality of citizenship and strengthen their human security is similar to that of citizens of recognised states with weak nationalities. That said, aspirant states citizens utilise pathways that are not observable in cases of citizenship acquisition by individuals from recognised states.

Preserving the State through Ethnodemographic Security

Citizenship creates a legal relationship and a social contract between the state and the individual, with the state guaranteeing human security. Citizenship also serves another function - guaranteeing the survival of the state. By exploring "citizenship from above," it is possible to explore how the state, through legislation and policy, defines its citizenry and attempts to create a collective national identity. Through *politics of belonging* (the final dimension of citizenship), the state can delineate between who belongs and who does not, thereby utilising citizenship regimes in the state- and nation-building process. The third finding of this thesis provides evidence of how aspirant states founded on ethno-nationalistic principles securitise and instrumentalise citizenship to achieve ethnodemographic security and, by extension, ontological and physical security.

Ethnodemographic security was a concern only in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are founded on an ethno-nationalistic principle, with a core aim being to preserve the respective titular group. Interlocutors acknowledged that the two Caucasian republics are the only states where the cultural and linguistic identity of the two titular groups is guaranteed.[786] In contrast, Transnistrian identity is more expansive, territorial, civic, and supra-ethnic in nature and was established with the creation of the Transnistrian state.[787] Transnistria has taken a liberal and expansive approach to citizenship which is not based on ethnic principles and provides easy access to citizenship.[788]

Adopted citizenship policies fall into three categories: excluding minority groups that threaten the demographic balance, granting citizenship to members of the titular group to change the demographic balance in its favour, or adopting a cautious approach towards (individuals possessing the) patron state citizenship.

In Abkhazia, the Abkhaz following the 1864 deportations have become minoritised and currently make up 51% of the population. Abkhazia is also home to ethnic Georgians, who comprise 18% of the population, many with Georgian citizenship. Given that these individuals belong to the titular group of an aggressor state and have its citizenship, the Abkhazian state has been very sensitive to Georgia potentially using this population as a "fifth column" to influence domestic politics.[789] Further, by maintaining Georgian citizenship, the individual acknowledges that Abkhazia is not a state, further threatening Abkhazia's ontological security.[790] As a result, the Abkhazian state has excluded them from the demos, as was evidenced by the annulment of over 20,000 citizenships in 2014. Meanwhile, in South Ossetia, the state is also sensitive to Georgian encroachment, but ethnic Georgians, most of whom are recorded as stateless, make-up only 7.4% of the population and thus are less of an ethnodemographic threat.

The state can also engage in granting citizenship to individuals belonging to the titular group. Firstly, Abkhazia has granted citizenship to the Murzakan Abkhaz**,** who are considered descendants of Abkhaz that were forcefully assimilated into the Georgian ethnos and forced to adopt Georgian names. Given that Abkhazia wants to increase its titular group, policies

[786] RA Cit№5; RSO Exp№1.
[787] Blakkisrud & Kolstø 2011; Chamberlain-Creangã 2006; PMR Exp№6; PMR Exp№8.
[788] Though not linked to citizenship, Moldovan identity has been politicised and used as an argument to preserve the true Moldovan (un-Romanianized) ethnicity, language, and culture.
[789] ARUAA 2022; Clogg 2008; Prelz Oltramonti 2016; Sharia 2021; Vartanyan 2013.
[790] Grzybowski 2022; Taniya 2021.

have been adopted for this group to change their names and ethnicity and acquire Abkhazian citizenship. The other group is the Abkhaz diaspora, predominantly living in West Asia. This population is automatically entitled to Abkhazian citizenship and is allowed to maintain dual citizenship with any state (unlike non-Abkhaz groups, who can maintain dual citizenship only with Russia).[791] Thus, the Abkhazian state engages in demographic engineering to ensure its ontological and physical security by excluding the undesired ethnic Georgians while concurrently providing a pathway for the Murzakan Abkhaz and the Abkhaz diaspora to reclaim their identity.

In South Ossetia, the question of granting citizenship to the diaspora, which stands at around 700,000, including half a million living in Russia, is increasingly politicised. Some South Ossetians consider that all Ossetians should have a right to acquire the citizenship, while others see this as a threat. The fear is that individuals not permanently residing in South Ossetia will have significant sway in the electoral politics. However, there have been calls to liberalise the citizenship policy and provide access to citizenship to all Ossetian diaspora. On the one hand, providing South Ossetian citizenship is seen as an (ontological) security threat to the current sense of self and not bringing any additional benefits (since few would be willing to settle in or fight for South Ossetia in case of another armed conflict). On the other hand, it is seen as a resource since by increasing the demos; South Ossetia can ensure its survival and thus ensure its long-term security and survival.

Lastly, Abkhazia and South Ossetia are increasingly cautious about (individuals possessing) Russian citizenship. Abkhazians fear that the liberalisation of dual citizenship will open the door for Russian citizens, including ethnic Georgians, to acquire citizenship, thus (once again) leading to the Abkhaz becoming a minority. Similarly, as discussed above, some South Ossetians are apprehensive of the Ossetian diaspora that possess Russian citizens from acquiring citizenship, thereby disrupting the electoral balance. The hesitance to grant citizenship to non-diaspora foreigners is also reflected in the threshold for naturalisation. Naturalising individuals in Abkhazia must have resided for ten years and be fluent in Abkhaz. These requirements are more stringent than South Ossetia (five years residency, competence in Russian/Ossetian) or Transnistria (one-year residency, no language requirement). In all three cases, Russian citizenship was seen as an asset that expanded individual rights. However, the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022 and the wave of conscription

[791] Furthermore, to be entitled for citizenship non-Abkhaz must have lived in Abkhazia between 1994-1999 or must go through the naturalisation process.

has resulted in this citizenship becoming a liability. While Russian citizens residing in the three aspirant states have thus far been spared, future developments could be such that Russia may press the local authorities to aid its military campaign by allowing it to mobilise the local population.

The third finding demonstrates that aspirant states are not only occupied with ensuring security in relation to external threats, but are also concerned about domestic threats, such as ethnodemographic insecurity. Despite the similarities between Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria, differences in their histories, nation-building models, demographic makeup, diaspora politics, the level of dependence on the patron state (and its citizenship), and the level of contestation with the base state contribute to the formation of different citizenship regimes that address specific issues of each aspirant state. Particularly, when a state is established after a titular group, but this titular group does not make up a supermajority, the state (and the titular group) will feel threatened and adopt citizenship policies in its favour. It must be noted that while the securitisation and instrumentalisation of citizenship in aspirant states is influenced by state secession and nonrecognition, the adopted policies mirror those of recognised states. This similarity to recognised states and the normalcy of adopted policies and citizens' attitudes towards citizenship is what the next section turns to.

Normalcy – From Aspirant State to State

Drawing from the previous two sections, the last finding relates to the normalcy of attitudes towards citizenship and citizenship regime construction in aspirant states. The last finding acknowledges the normalisation[792] discourse among (citizens of) aspirant states and the similarity between aspirant states and recognised states in relation to how they approach issues surrounding citizenship. This thesis echoes Comai's (2018) and Visoka's (2022) arguments on the importance of not defining/grouping aspirant states solely based on (non)recognition; instead, they should be compared with and studied alongside recognised states.[793]

[792] Visoka & Lemay-Hébert 2022.

[793] Comai conceptualised aspirant states as "small-dependent jurisdictions" (like Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau that are dependent on the US). In a similar light, Frear (2014) conceptualised Abkhazia as a "small state" comparable to states in the Pacific and the Caribbean. While being affected by nonrecognition, aspirant states and their citizens face socio-economic, internal political, and geopolitical issues and respond to them like (citizens of) small recognised states. For example, both Transnistria and Moldova have a low quality of life compared to Western Europe, and over the years, they have faced a population decline as people moved to Russia or the EU in search of better economic opportunities.

Discussions with citizens of aspirant states reflected this desire for normalcy, as they argued that aspirant states have developed citizenship regimes just like other recognised states. The normalisation discourse is evidence of a broader pattern amongst aspirant states, highlighting that their state- and nation-building projects are not so different from newly independent recognised states.[794] They had similar trajectories and debates related to nation-building, have strengthened state capacity over the years, and display similar attributes of statehood. Interlocuters did not present themselves or their state being in a state of exception. Instead, they referred to having determined their future status and having established a state and a citizenry on par with recognised states.[795]

As emphasised by an interlocutor, "the quality of citizenship depends only on the quality of the state... It depends on the prestige of the state, and it depends on the effectiveness of the political, economic, and legal institutions of the state… if the quality of these institutions in South Ossetia were higher, if we had independent courts, a normal environment, then the prestige of the South Ossetian state would be higher".[796] The quote would still stand if any other recognised state replaced South Ossetia. Nonrecognition becomes just one condition that results in the lower functionality of citizenship. The normalisation of aspirant states and the comparison to other states demonstrates that aspirant state citizenship should not be seen as something abnormal. In the eyes of aspirant state citizens, they are citizens of sovereign states, albeit with limited recognition.

Ultimately, despite the contestation by external actors over the aspirant state's legal existence, they display attributes of, and behave like, recognised states. In the attempt to show that they function just like recognised states, they engage in lawmaking and the production of legal identity documents.[797] Aspirant states also tend to replicate the dominant models of statehood, and in some cases, the diffusion of state institutions and laws is such that legislation is not just similar but is word-for-word identical to the legislations of their allies.[798]

The normalcy was also observed in relation to the different levels of functionality of

[794] Brubaker 1992b; Shevel 2009; 2017; Tabachnik 2019.
[795] PMR Cit№4; PMR Cit№8; PMR Cit№9; PMR Exp№3; PMR Exp№8; RA Cit№4; RA Cit№5; RA Exp№11; RSO Cit№1.
[796] RSO Exp№1.
[797] Klem et al. 2021; Navaro-Yashin 2007; Waters 2006.
[798] Gerrits & Bader 2016.

citizenship, the need for compensatory citizenship to overcome these limitations, and the securitisation and instrumentalisation of citizenship to preserve the ethnodemographic balance in favour of a particular group. The overall functionality of the aspirant state citizenship may be comparable to, or better than, recognised states. Citizens of many recognised states outside the "Global North" (e.g. Afghanistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Syria), despite having a recognised citizenship and travel document, are restricted in exercising their freedom of movement due to existing visa walls and passport apartheid.[799] Furthermore, aspirant states, in their attempt to reproduce the form of the state, end up perpetuating existing ontological structures of citizenship as tools of population control.[800] Although nonrecognition significantly reduces the external functionality of citizenship, these citizenships still fall on the same spectrum as other states. It just so happens that aspirant state citizens are at the furthest extreme of passport apartheid.

The future research agenda

As this thesis lies at the intersection of *de facto* state studies and citizenship studies, several areas for future empirical and theoretical research emerge. In citizenship studies, indexes such as the QNI and the CQI have measured the quality of citizenship. However, given that individuals are increasingly connected to multiple legal regimes (e.g. dual citizenship, permanent residency), there is a need to quantify the functionality of multiple (aggregating) legal regimes. This is especially important, given that different combinations of citizenships will result in different levels of functionality. By having a methodology for this, it would be possible to conduct large-n studies that include both aspirant and recognised states. Thus, future research could expand on existing indexes and theorise on how the aggregation of multiple legal statuses can be measured.

Another area for citizenship studies (in aspirant states) is to expand the work on identifying necessary and sufficient conditions that influence the inclusiveness/exclusiveness of citizenship regimes. This thesis identified nonrecognition and the need for ethnodemographic security as two conditions affecting citizenship. Further research could explore how other conditions (observed in recognised states) influence citizenship regime formation in aspirant states. Using Qualitative Comparative Analysis, it would be possible

[799] Kochenov 2020; Kochenov & Ganty 2023.
[800] Grzybowski 2017; 2019.

to identify conjunctural causations, equifinality, and asymmetric causation.[801] Furthermore, this thesis argued that nonrecognition is just one condition that results in the lower functionality of citizenship. Thus, future research on aspirant states needs to avoid automatically linking issues in aspirant states to (non)recognition. Instead, the study of aspirant states must go beyond investigating the effects of (non)recognition, and they should be compared with and studied alongside recognised states.

In addition to the above areas for empirical research, there is also a need to expand the conceptualisation of citizenship/nationality. This thesis identified the limitations of legal terminology in explaining the legal status of aspirant state citizens. While multiplicity and the effects of tertiary rules help explain the different legal statuses individuals in contested territories possess, there is room for further theorising. This research recommends legal scholars take on the challenge of further theorising the legal statuses conferred by non-state actors and states with limited international recognition. Through the Citizenship Constellation Model, this thesis highlighted that an individual might be concurrently labelled as a national of a state (aspirant, base, or patron state) or as stateless, depending on the administrative authority that engages in the citizenship determination procedure. This creates a puzzle within International Law since an individual cannot be concurrently a national and stateless. It also may be beneficial to compare the status (and rights) of aspirant states citizens to those of non-citizens of Estonia and Latvia, who are granted a *sui generis* status.[802]

Another area of research relates to the application of ontological security. Current literature has focused on applying the ontological security lens to explain how (aspirant) states respond to external threats (e.g. denial of recognition, military conquest by the base state, fear of derecognition), which leads to the state's sense of self being threatened. This thesis demonstrated that ontological security anxieties could also emerge from within the state. Anxieties around demographic insecurity and fears of the titular group being minoritised could be an area for researchers working on ontological security to explore further.

Lastly, from the outset, this research argued for the need to study aspirant state citizenship from the perspectives of law, administrative practices, and lived experiences. This thesis

[801] Oana et al. 2021; Ragin 2014; Schneider & Wagemann 2012.
[802] According to the Latvian authorities, "non-citizens' are excluded from the definition of a 'stateless person' as they are considered a separate legal category of persons who enjoy a significant set of rights" (Statelessness Index 2021).

challenged the dominant practice amongst *de facto* state scholars who primarily adopt the IR, legal, and political science approaches and study contested territories from the macro/state level. Instead, future research can benefit from embracing a sociological lens and studying issues from the bottom-up or the individual level. By doing this, the individual becomes the focus of the study, and thus research can distance itself from making determinations on the legality of the existence of aspirant states. Such an approach would allow for an objective assessment of the role of Human Rights mechanisms and International Organisations, which, due to their state-centric foundation, have thus far failed to successfully address human rights and human security issues faced by residents of aspirant states.

Appendices

Appendix A - Case Background

1. Maps

Figure 1: Maps of Abkhazia[803]

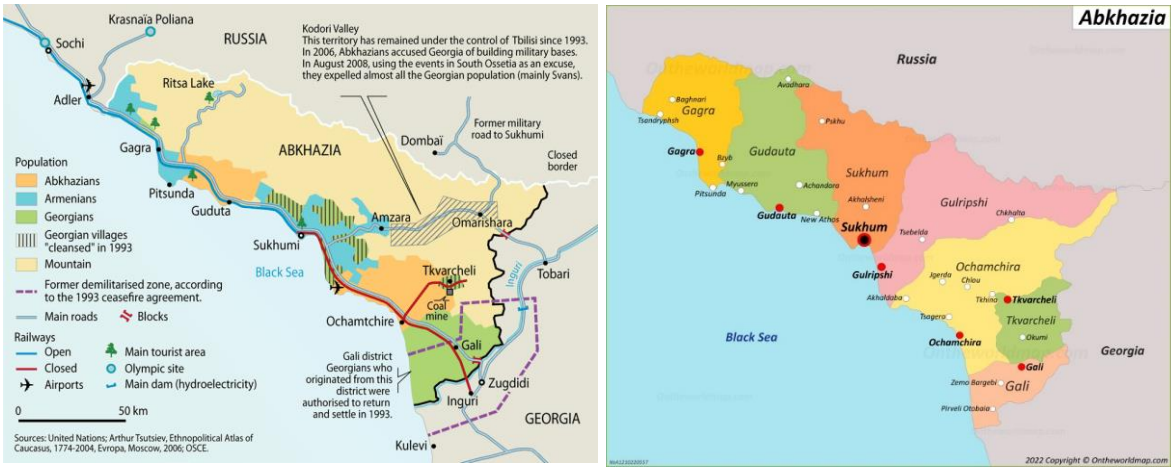
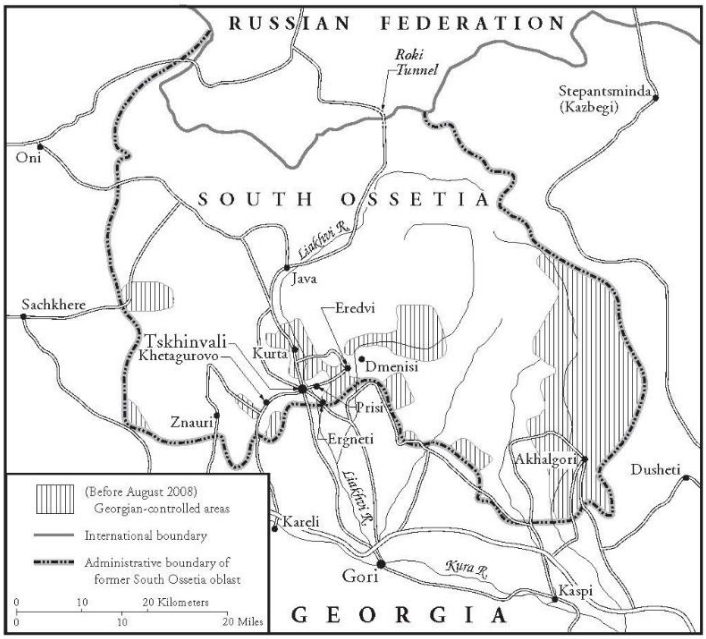
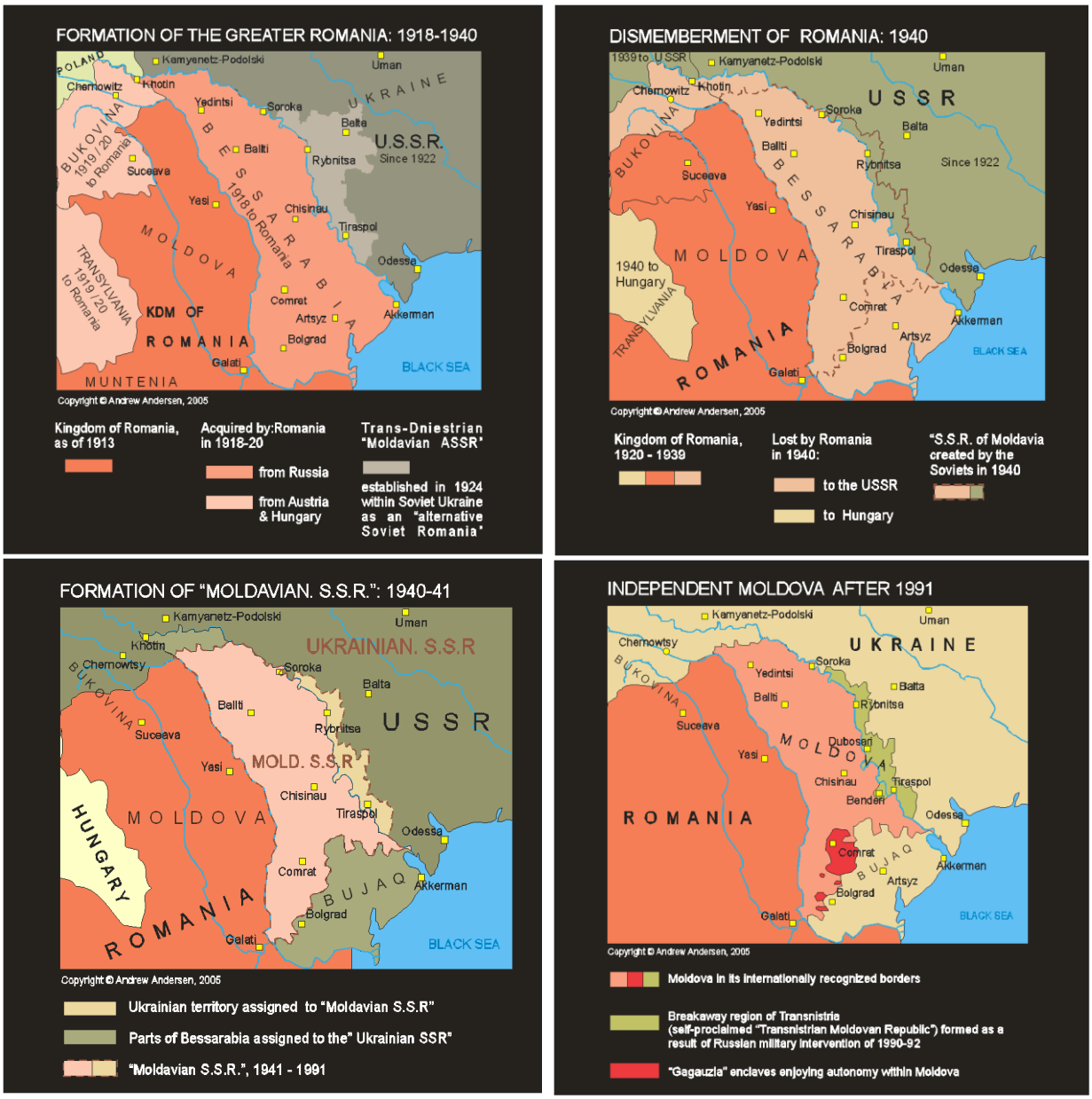


Figure 2: Map of South Ossetia[804]



[803] OnTheWorldMap n.d.; Rekacewicz 2009.
[804] Robinson as cited in Waal 2019.

Figure 3: Maps of Transnistria[805]



[805] Andersen n.d..

2. Evolution of Abkhazia's Political Status

The Republic of Abkhazia traces its origin to the Kingdom of Abkhazia in the 8th Century, though Abkhaz settlement in the region predates this by several centuries.[806] Later, Abkhazia entered a union with the Kingdom of Georgia between the 11th and 15th Centuries. It then maintained its status as an independent principality until 1810, when it became a part of the Russian Empire.[807] Abkhazia managed to maintain political autonomy as a principality until 1864, when a mass-scale uprising led the Russian Tzar to deport many Abkhaz (and Circassians) to the Ottoman Empire, where thousands of their descendants continue to reside.[808]

The 20th Century was also a turbulent time for the Abkhaz(ian) nation, with numerous political and legislative developments influencing the political status of Abkhazia. Through the study of constitutional documents, it is possible to trace the evolution of the struggle of the Abkhaz(ian) people for political self-determination. The following section traces this evolution by highlighting crucial legislative documents which shaped the political status of Abkhazia and, by extension, the status of the Abkhazian citizen.

During the collapse of the Russian Empire, and before Soviet Bolsheviks had taken control of the region, the Abkhaz People's Council (*Abkhazskiy Narodnyy Sovet*) was formed in November 1917, and declared itself to be a national-political organisation uniting and representing the Abkhaz nation.[809] The organisation's constitution had several goals, including protecting the people's national, cultural, economic interests and political rights and engaging in preparatory work for the self-determination of the Abkhaz people.[810] The exact character of Abkhazia's political status was to be discussed and achieved at the Constituent Assembly of all the peoples of Russia (*Vserossiyskoye Uchreditel'noye Sobraniye* 1917-1918). Concurrently, the Abkhazians joined the short-lived (1917-1921)

[806] G. Smith et al. 1998: 55–58.
While this work tries to provide an accurate historical description, it must be understood that alternative narratives exist, particularly pre-1917. It is beyond the scope of this work to investigate historical truths especially as contention over history is a contributing factor to the conflicts in the former Soviet space. While remaining as objective as possible, the evolution of the aspirant states is primarily presented from the perspective of aspirant state authorities and scholars. This work focuses on the evolution of the legal status of the aspirant state following the Russian revolution, as that is the most relevant to understanding the legal status of the people living in the aspirant states. According to the Georgian narrative, Abkhazians settled in the region in the 17th Century (Hewitt 1995: 57).
[807] Hewitt 1995: 56.
[808] Abkhaz Supreme Council 1990b; Hewitt 1995: 49–50.
[809] Chirikba 2015: 175–181.
[810] Basaria 1923: 86–90.

Mountainous Republic together with a number of North Caucasian peoples.[811] According to Shanava (2015), the declaration of the Abkhaz People's Council and its constitution can be considered the first formal documents where the political status and the right to self-determination were raised. This future political status was to be with the Russian Republic and had no relationship with Georgia. Despite the goals of the Abkhaz People's Council, they were never achieved due to the Russian revolution. In mid-1918, under the pretext of fighting Bolsheviks, the army of the (Menshevik) Georgian Democratic Republic occupied Abkhazia.[812]

In early March 1921, the Soviet Army gained control over the region. SSR Abkhazia was proclaimed on 31 March.[813] However, in December of the same year, SSR Abkhazia entered into a union treaty with the Georgian SSR and, by extension, the Transcaucasian SFSR,[814] resulting in the merger of several competencies, including military and finance, as well as the transfer of foreign relations to Georgia.[815] This federal arrangement was ratified by the Soviet Council of Abkhazia (*Sovet Abkhazii*) the following year, and the new relationship was reinforced in the 1922 Georgian Constitution. On 30 December 1922, the USSR was established, with the Transcaucasian SFSR becoming a constituent republic.

The political status of Abkhazia remained unchanged until 1925, when it adopted its first constitution in April.[816] Shanava (2015) pays special attention to Article 5, which highlights that, despite the relationships with Georgia, the Transcaucasian SSFR and the USSR, SSR Abkhazia remained a sovereign and independent state in a voluntary union with the Transcaucasian SFSR and the USSR (but subject to the limits specified in the constitutions of these unions), had no obligations to the Georgian SSR and had the freedom to independently choose its future status. The same article also highlights that Abkhazia's territory cannot be changed without its consent and that it has the right to freely secede from the Transcaucasian SFSR and the USSR. Despite these provisions, the 1925 Constitution primarily existed on paper since the Transcaucasian Regional Committee of the Politburo

[811] Hewitt 1995: 56; Osmanov et al. 2013; Shanava 2015: 7–9.
[812] Abkhaz Supreme Council 1990b; Ardzinba as cited in Volkhonskiy et al. 2008: 149.
[813] Dzidzariya 1967: 202–220; Shanava 2015: 9.
During this period (1918-1922) the Abkhaz Revkom (Military Revolutionary Committee) was created and functioned with the aim of establishing Soviet authority over the region (Tulumdzhyan et al. 1961).
[814] The Transcaucasian SFSR was established on 12 March 1922 and consisted of the Armenian SSR, the Azerbaijan SSR, and the Georgian SSR. It was dissolved on 5 December 1936 following the adoption of a new Soviet Constitution.
[815] Kuznetsov 2015a: 81; Shanava 2015: 9–12; Tulumdzhyan et al. 1961: 154–155.
Also, listen to Khibba (2021) and see the infographic on the evolution of the Abkhazian Constitution.
[816] Chirikba 2015: 33–50.

of the Communist Party rejected the constitution. Abkhazian authorities[817] were ordered to amend the constitution and clarify the relationship between Abkhazia and Georgia. In 1927 a new constitution was adopted by the Supreme Council of SSR Abkhazia.[818] This new constitution borrowed extensively from the Georgian SSR Constitution adopted the same year.[819] The Abkhazian authority's powers were significantly reduced (Chapter 2), and there was no mention of the sovereign and independent status of SSR Abkhazia, nor of its right to leave the Transcaucasian SFSR or the USSR. These new arrangements significantly weakened the political status of Abkhazia even though, on paper, it remained an SSR.

The next turning point was 1931, when Abkhazia was downgraded to an ASSR within the Georgian SSR. This was based on the argument that the 1921 agreement between Abkhazia and Georgia had lost effect, and in practice, SSR Abkhazia had already been dominated by authorities in Tbilisi.[820] These changes were subsequently reflected in the constitution of 1935, where all references to SSR Abkhazia were replaced by Abkhaz ASSR, along with the removal of Chapter 2 of the 1927 Constitution that outlined the treaty relationship between Abkhazia and Georgia.[821] The constitution was amended in August 1937 to reflect the new constitutional relationship between Abkhazia and Georgian SSR and the USSR following the adoption of new constitutions in December 1936 and February 1937, respectively.[822] The 1937 constitutional arrangements continued for four decades until the adoption of the new Soviet constitution in 1977, which subsequently required a new Abkhazian constitution to be adopted in June 1978.

Thus, since the formation of SSR Abkhazia in 1921, its powers were hollowed out, and it was subjugated to the powers of the Georgian SSR. The relationship was fraught with tensions between the authorities in Sukhum and Tbilisi. This also led to the reduction in the position and power of the Abkhaz, and demographic changes resulting in the Abkhaz becoming a minority in their own republic.[823] Over the years, Georgian and Soviet authorities were pressured, and Abkhazians held multiple protests. Abkhazians hoped that with the adoption of the 1978 constitution more devolution would be granted, including the right of the Abkhaz ASSR to leave the Georgian SSR and join the Russian SFSR. However,

[817] Namely the Tsentral'nyy Ispolnitel'nyy Komitet and the Sovet Narodnykh Komissarov.
[818] Chirikba 2015: 51–73.
[819] Kuznetsov 2015b: 217–227; Sagariya 2003: 76–77; Shanava 2015: 13–16.
[820] Shanava 2015: 16–17.
[821] Chirikba 2015: 74–94.
[822] Chirikba 2015: 93–112; Shanava 2015: 17–18.
[823] Ardzinba as cited in Volkhonskiy et al. 2008: 150–151; Zürcher 2005.

this was not to be, and the constitutional relationship between the Abkhaz ASSR, Georgian SSR, and the USSR remained unchanged.[824]

With the gradual dissolution of the Soviet Union, each Soviet Republic, including Georgia, took steps toward declaring sovereignty from the Soviet Union. This included the August 1989 decision to make Georgian the only official language, and the March and June 1990 declarations that all legal acts promulgated following the establishment of Soviet control in 1921 be null and void,[825] as well as the declaration of the restoration of independence in April 1991 and restoration of the 1921 Georgian Democratic Republic Constitution on 21 February 1992.[826] Such declarations were seen as a threat by the Abkhaz ASSR, whose ethnic composition differed from that of the constituent Republic. Furthermore, the notion that the ASSR was the titular homeland of the Abkhaz nation influenced their narrative and counter-mobilisation.[827] Abkhazian authorities feared their subjugation, and thus the first official response of the Supreme Council/Soviet of the Abkhaz ASSR was to declare state sovereignty as the Abkhaz SSR (within the USSR) on 25 August 1990.[828] Georgia promptly rejected this declaration.[829]

Abkhazian authorities bring forth several arguments that justify Abkhazia's right to separate from the Georgian SSR and independent Georgia. Firstly, Abkhazian authorities made use of the newly passed legislation on the Secession of a Soviet Republic from the USSR according to which residents of Autonomous Republics could decide independently of their base SSR whether they wanted to remain as part of the USSR or not.[830] The referendum on the future status of the Soviet Union was held on 17 March 1991, with the overwhelming majority of Abkhazian (and South Ossetian) residents voting to remain as part of the USSR,

[824] Chirikba 2015: 113–151; Shanava 2015: 18–20.
That said, in 1978 the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party adopted a decree that granted extensive economic and cultural rights, including the establishment of the Abkhazian State University and the right to establish media institutions that function in the Abkhaz language.
[825] Volkhonskiy et al. 2008: 21–24.
[826] Georgian SSR 1991; Papuashvili 2012.
Other legislative acts include the decrees of 9 March and 20 June 1990 on the protection of Georgia's state sovereignty (Volkhonskiy et al. 2008: 21–24).
[827] Peinhopf 2020.
[828] Abkhaz Supreme Council 1990a.
[829] Volkhonskiy et al. 2008: 24–25.
This was the culmination of previous developments, including demographic changes, claims for greater autonomy from the 1950s, fear of Georgian nationalism, the June 1998 request to Moscow to grant Abkhazia the right to separate from the Georgian SSR, and the March 1989 protests demanding an upgrade to Abkhazia's status (Abkhaz Supreme Council 1990b; Zürcher 2005: 106–111).
[830] Shanava 2015: 21–22; Supreme Soviet USSR 1990, Art. 3.

while the rest of Georgia did not take part.[831] Secondly, when Georgia restored the 1921 Constitution and declared all subsequent legal acts to be illegal, it broke off its relationship with Abkhazia because the December 1921 agreement between SSR Abkhazia and Georgian SSR had also become null and void.[832] Furthermore, the Abkhaz Supreme Council (1990b: Arts 1-2) declared several other (international) agreements signed in 1918-1921 to lack legal effect since they were signed whilst Abkhazia was under Georgian military occupation.

Following the dissolution of the USSR in December 1991 under the principle of *uti possidetis*, Abkhazia fell under the jurisdiction of Georgia. However, Abkhazia maintained its desire to break off its relationship with Georgia and develop as an independent state.[833] On 23 July 1992, the Abkhazian Supreme Council abolished the 1978 Constitution (under which Abkhazia had an inferior status to Georgia) and until the adoption of a new constitution temporarily reversed to the 1925 Constitution of Abkhazia, and renamed itself as the Republic of Abkhazia.[834] Concurrently, Abkhazian authorities attempted to establish a new arrangement concerning the relationship between Abkhazia and Georgia as equal legal subjects, but Georgian authorities did not respond positively.[835] On 14 August 1992, armed conflict between Abkhazian and Georgian forces ensued. Attempts were made to broker peace, but fighting continued for over 13 months. Abkhazian forces declared victory when they gained control of the capital Sukhum on 27 September 1993, and by 30 September, they had gained control over most of Abkhazia. A ceasefire agreement was signed a year later.[836] A new constitution was adopted by the Supreme Council on 26 November 1994, approved by popular vote on 3 October 1999, and re-adopted by the Parliament on 12 October 1999.[837]

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[831] Georgia declared independence from the USSR on 9 April 1991, after a majority of the population voted in favour at the 31 March referendum. The referendum was boycotted by the Abkhazian and South Ossetian populations.

[832] Abkhaz Supreme Council 1990b, Art. 3; Butba 2020: 42–43; Shanava 2015: 21–23; Ardzinba as cited in Volkhonskiy et al. 2008: 151–152.
In contrast, according to the Georgian narrative under Art. 107 of the 1921 Constitution Abkhazia (district of Soukhoum) was considered an integral part of Georgia with a certain level of autonomy (Papuashvili 2012: 25–26). Georgian authorities argued that "without alterations of the present borders and state-national arrangement (the current status of Ajara and Abkhasia) recognises the supremacy of international legal acts and 1921 Constitution of the Georgian Democratic Republic and resumption of its operation taking into account the current reality" (as cited in Papuashvili 2012: 14).

[833] Butba 2020: 44–46.

[834] Abkhaz Supreme Council 1992b; 1992a.

[835] Shanava 2015: 23.

[836] See Hewitt (1995: 61–69) and Zürcher (2005) for further discussion on the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict. List of peace agreements available on the UN Peace Agreements Database.

[837] Abkhazia 1994; Parliament of Abkhazia 1999.

3. Evolution of South Ossetia's Political Status

The history of the Ossetian people, an Iranic ethnolinguistic group indigenous to the Caucasus, just like the Abkhaz, is contentious. According to the dominant Ossetian narrative, Ossetians settled in the South Caucasus in the 13th Century and became part of the political and economic fabric of local society.[838] In 1774, South Ossetia, as part of "the single independent state of Ossetia (Alania), a confederative union of self-governed lands", entered into a voluntary union with Imperial Russia.[839] In 1801, the Kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti (roughly corresponding to the eastern part of modern-day Georgia) joined the Russian Empire, with the region corresponding to South Ossetia falling within the Tiflisi and Kutais Governorates, the former made up of the Gori and Dushet uezds and the latter the Rachinskii and Shorapanskii uezds.[840]

The 20th Century was an equally turbulent time for the Ossetians of the South Caucasus, with numerous political and legislative developments influencing South Ossetia's political status. Through the study of constitutional documents, it is possible to trace the evolution of the struggle of the South Ossetian people for political self-determination. The following section traces this evolution by highlighting crucial legislative documents that shaped the political status of the Republic of South Ossetia - Alania and, by extension, the status of the South Ossetian citizen.

With the collapse of the Russian Empire, various powers vied for control. This included the Menshevik faction that gained a foothold in Georgia in 1917.[841] Following the short-lived Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic, on 26 May 1918, Georgia declared independence. That said, the Georgian countryside was engulfed by peasant rebellions. The first Ossetian rebellion occurred in Kornisi (modern-day South Ossetia) in February 1918, aimed at reappropriating land and fell within the broader context of the Bolshevik revolution.[842] This and other Ossetian rebellions during 1918-1920 were suppressed by

[838] Kanukova 2019: 315–321; Togoshvili as cited in Saparov 2010: 100.
The dominant Georgian narrative states that Ossetians settled in modern-day South Ossetia only in the 17th Century (Topchishvili 2009). Also see Smith et al. (1998: 59–64) and Foltz (2022: chap. 6).
[839] Kanukova 2019: 485–492; South Ossetia 2021; Volkhonskiy et al. 2008: 199.
The boundaries of this region are different to that of modern-day South Ossetia. In one of the union agreements, South Ossetians were referred to as "Valagirs from the Georgian border areas" (Kanukova 2019: 492).
[840] Saparov 2010: 114; South Ossetia 2021.
[841] Tedeeva 2017: 156.
[842] Saparov 2010: 102–103.

Georgian troops.[843] Alongside these revolts, a political movement among Ossetians emerged. The Ossetian National Council held six congresses between December 1917 and May 1919. Its position towards South Ossetia's status evolved. By the sixth congress, which Bolsheviks now dominated, it declared its desire to establish an independent administrative-political unit, refused to participate in Georgian Constituent Assembly elections, and held its own elections.[844] South Ossetian authorities produced a memorandum that expressed the political course chosen by the South Ossetian people. It was addressed to the members of the Entente (France, Britain, Russia) in early 1919 and highlighted the desire of all Ossetians to be united as one entity either within Russia, or as part of the North Caucasian Republic.[845] The Georgian government refused the autonomy request, sent troops in May 1919, and disbanded the Bolshevik-dominated Ossetian National Council.[846] Later that year, the Bolsheviks established the South Ossetian District Committee in-exile in North Ossetia.

From April-June 1920, several developments occurred, starting with another Ossetian rebellion (in the Roki district) in response to Georgia's attempt to sever communication with North Ossetia.[847] On 20 May, the South Ossetian District Committee discussed the "Memorandum of the Workers of South Ossetia", which declared their alliance with the Bolsheviks and stated that South Ossetia was an integral part of Soviet Russia.[848] Over the next few weeks, Ossetians gained the upper hand, and on 8 June the District Committee declared Soviet authority over the region. Concurrently, by early 1920 the Soviet army had gained control of the North Caucasus, but rather than militarily advancing into the South, the Russian SFSR and Georgia entered a military alliance on 7 May 1920 aimed at defeating anti-communist forces. This eliminated the threat of a direct Bolshevik takeover, and in June 1920, Georgian forces were sent to suppress the rebellion, resulting in military aggression/genocide, including forced deportation, against the South Ossetians.[849]

Following the forced deportation of thousands of civilians, South Ossetian Bolsheviks fled to North Ossetia and once again established a government-in-exile (*Okruzhkom*/District Committee). On the eve of the Soviet invasion and the formation of the Georgian SSR on 25 February 1921, the South Ossetian officials-in-exile adopted a unilateral resolution "on

[843] Foltz 2022: 126; Tskhovrebov as cited in Saparov 2010: 102–104.
[844] Saparov 2010: 103.
[845] Ossetian National Council 1919.
[846] Saparov 2010: 103.
[847] Saparov 2010: 104.
[848] Tedeeva 2017: 157.
[849] Tskhovrebov as cited in Saparov 2010: 105; South Ossetia 2021; Tedeeva 2017: 157; Weiner 1992.

the self-determination of South-Ossetia" as an autonomous unit (attached to either Russia or Georgia).[850] Following the establishment of the Soviet administration, South Ossetian military units under the control of the government-in-exile moved in and by 5 March had captured the territory of South Ossetia. Saparov (2010) highlights the unclear political status of South Ossetia during the initial period of Soviet control, due to there being two *Revkoms* in the region, one dealing with issues concerning Georgians and the other South Ossetians, with the latter being unrecognised by the Georgian *Revkom*.

Throughout 1921 discussions took place between the South Ossetian *Revkom/Partkom*, the Georgian *Revkom*, and the Central Committee of the Communist Party in Georgia aimed at creating a South Ossetian administrative unit. However, the absence of a historically Ossetian political or administrative entity in the South Caucasus (except for the *Osetinskiy Okrug* of 1843-1859), the absence of clear frontiers, and heterogeneous ethnic composition reduced the claims for autonomy and complicated border demarcations.[851]

In September 1921, the South Ossetian *Revkom/Partkom* declared the formation of the South Ossetian SSR, which would exist in a voluntary union with the Georgian SSR.[852] However, the final decision on the status of South Ossetia was taken by the *Kavbiuro* on 31 October, where the decision was made to grant South Ossetia the status of an AO: a downgrade from the locally desired status. Discussion on border demarcation also continued, and finally, on 20 April 1922 the Central Executive Committee of the Georgian SSR (the highest political authority) approved the creation of the South Ossetian AO within the Georgian SSR (and, by extension, part of the Transcaucasian SFSR).[853] Furthermore, according to the first Georgian SSR constitution adopted in March 1922, the South Ossetian AO was included based on "voluntary self-determination".[854] According to Saparov (2010: 121), the final status of South Ossetia was a compromise adopted by the Bolsheviks to solve the ongoing civil conflict. However, in the long run, it was unsuccessful, as observed in the escalation of conflict at the fall of the Soviet Union. On 30 December 1922, the USSR was

[850] Saparov 2010: 110–111
[851] Saparov 2010: 100; Topchishvili 2009.
See Tskhovrebova's (2007) demographic study of the Ossetian population based on the Tiflisi Governorate (1830-1831) and the 1926 Georgian SSR census, which shows that Ossetians were spread beyond the territory of modern-day South Ossetia. See Saparov's (2010) and Tedeeva's (2017) discussion of how the boundaries of South Ossetia were drawn.
[852] Saparov 2010: 115–116; Tedeeva 2017: 157–158.
[853] Georgian SSR 1922; Saparov 2010: 116; South Ossetia 2021; Tedeeva 2017: 158.
[854] Kuznetsov 2015a: 81.
It is unclear as to whether/why South Ossetia was included in the constitution before its formal status was agreed upon.

established, with the Transcaucasian SFSR becoming a constituent republic. In the 1936 Soviet Constitution and the 1937 Georgian Constitution, the region was (re)named the South Ossetian AO.[855] That said, its status remained unchanged until the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, unlike Abkhazia, South Ossetia never had a constitution. Notwithstanding, its constitutional status can be inferred via the Georgian SSR and USSR Constitutions. In contrast, North Ossetia had a constitution and a higher legal status.[856]

During the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Georgian SSR took steps to regain its lost sovereignty, following the 1921 Sovietization. The first official step that concerned the South Ossetians (like the Abkhaz) was making Georgian the only official language. Other legislative steps included the March and June 1990 declarations that all legal acts promulgated following the establishment of Soviet control in 1921 were null and void,[857] as well as the declaration of the restoration of independence in 1991 and restoration of the 1921 Georgian Democratic Republic Constitution in 1992.[858] Similar to the Abkhazians, South Ossetian officials stated that it was the declaration on the annulment of Soviet legislation that directly resulted in the nullification of the 1922 agreement, which placed South Ossetia within the jurisdiction of the Georgian SSR.[859] These policies threatened the South Ossetians as they believed that the ultimate goal of the Georgians was to drive them away from the region.[860]

The developments from the Georgian side, and the memory of the atrocities committed by Georgians (1918-1920) pushed the South Ossetians towards seeking total independence. On 10 November 1989, the South Ossetian Supreme Soviet demanded that its status be upgraded from an AO to an ASSR.[861] On the same day, South Ossetian officials declared

[855] Kuznetsov 2015c: 267–278.
[856] Following the collapse of the Russian Empire and prior to the Soviet invasion, the region of modern-day North Ossetia fell within the Mountainous Republic of the Northern Caucasus. From 1921-1924, modern-day North Ossetia-Alania existed as a part of the Mountain ASSR within the Russian SFSR. Following the dissolution of the Mountain ASSR, the North Ossetian AO was established and existed until 1936. Following, the North Ossetian ASSR within the Russian SFSR was established in 5 December 1936 (following the adoption of a new Soviet Constitution) and its remained largely unchanged until 9 November 1993 when it became the Republic of North Ossetia, a federal subject of Russia (Kuznetsov 2015c: 16). North Ossetian ASSR adopted constitutions in 1937 and 1978, following the adoption of the 1936 and 1976 Soviet Constitutions, respectively (Kuznetsov 2015c: 135–143; 2015d: 191–206). That said, despite the legal differences between South and North Ossetia, they were largely nominal, and in practice, much was controlled by Moscow.
[857] Volkhonskiy et al. 2008: 21–24.
[858] Georgian SSR 1991; Papuashvili 2012.
[859] South Ossetia 2021.
[860] Birch 1999: 504–505.
[861] Volkhonskiy et al. 2008: 20–21, 167.

Ossetian as the official language of South Ossetia. Both acts were subsequently rejected by Tbilisi.[862] On 20 September 1990, South Ossetia claimed its sovereignty within the Soviet Union as a Soviet Democratic Republic within the USSR.[863] This declaration also envisaged the cultural and economic integration of South Ossetia with North Ossetia. Georgia rejected this declaration, stating that it went against constitutional and procedural norms as well as its integrity.[864] Despite the opposition, South Ossetia continued on its trajectory of separating from Georgia and called for elections which were held on 9 December 1990.[865] In response, on 11 December 1990, the Georgian parliament dissolved the South Ossetian AO.[866] Tensions escalated and resulted in the eventual armed conflict in January 1991, with thousands being displaced and continued until the Russian-brokered ceasefire, signed on 24 June 1992.[867]

South Ossetia's actions towards statehood culminated in the referendum held on 19 January 1992, with over 99% voting in favour of independence and unifying with Russia.[868] A new constitution was adopted on 2 November 1993 and was replaced on 8 April 2001 following a referendum.[869] Thus, according to the South Ossetian narrative, by 1992, when Georgia had been internationally recognised, South Ossetia had already placed itself on an independent trajectory towards becoming an independent state, and has continued to do so ever since.[870]

4. Evolution of Transnistria's Political Status

Transnistria's history is shorter compared to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The territory of modern-day Transnistria (Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic) fell under Russian control in 1792 following the (seventh) Russo-Turkish war. The part of Moldova that lies between the

[862] While this was the first official act, it was fuelled by previous developments, including the historical memory of the 1918-1921 Ossetian-Georgian conflict and the fear of Georgia's increasingly nationalist rhetoric (Zürcher 2005). Zürcher calls this phenomenon a "war of laws" where the conflicting sides use Soviet legislative procedures to establish sovereignty/authority of the contested territory.
[863] Council of People's Deputies of the South Ossetian AO 1990.
[864] Volkhonskiy et al. 2008: 25–28.
[865] Zürcher 2005: 114.
[866] Volkhonskiy et al. 2008: 28–29.
[867] See Lemay-Herbert (2008) and Zürcher (2005) for further discussion on the South Ossetian-Georgian conflict. For further discussion of the peace process see Birch (1999). Peace agreement available on the UN Peace Agreements Database.
[868] Volkhonskiy et al. 2008: 192–195.
South Ossetia has also declared several times its desire to be united with North Ossetia and Russia (see Volkhonskiy et al. 2008: sec. 3). This goal has been maintained even after the recognition of South Ossetia in 2008.
[869] Gagloyeva 2013; South Ossetia 2001.
[870] Pliev 2014; South Ossetia 2021.

Prut and Dniester rivers, and parts of modern-day Romania made up the Principality of Moldavia from the 14th Century to 1812. During this period, the Principality was aligned with the Ottoman Empire. However, in 1812 Imperial Russia gained control over the eastern part of the Principality, which became known as Bessarabia.[871] Parts of the territory changed hands several times in the 19th Century. Due to the turbulence of the Russian Revolution, the Moldovan Democratic Republic was proclaimed in December 1917 and in April 1918 entered a union with the Kingdom of Romania. Soviet authorities did not recognise this merger,[872] and in October 1924, established the Moldavian ASSR on the left bank of the Dniester river within Soviet Ukraine.[873] The Moldavian ASSR adopted its first constitution in May 1925 and a second constitution in January 1938.[874]

Following the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Bessarabia was annexed to the Soviet Union. On 2 August 1940, the Moldavian ASSR was dissolved, and the Moldavian SSR was proclaimed,[875] with its constitution being adopted in February 1941.[876] The Moldavian SSR comprised the central part of Bessarabia and the Western part of the Moldavian ASSR. However, due to the ongoing war, the Soviet Army only gained full control of the region in 1944.[877] The political status of the Moldavian SSR remained unchanged until the late 1980s. While part of the Soviet Union, the region went through intense Sovietization and Russification and became culturally isolated from Romania. This was particularly evident in the right bank (former Bessarabia). On the other hand, the left bank of the Moldavian SSR had already been under Russian influence for extended periods, had a multi-ethnic population, and had a much stronger Russian identity. These linguistic, ethnic, and historical differences, along with political and economic differences, would eventually lead to the conflict beginning in the late 1980s.[878]

With the *perestroika* in the late 1980s, a pro-Romanian nationalist movement called the Moldovan Popular Front emerged. It called for adopting Moldovan/Romanian written in Latin script as the official language and the reunification with Romania. In August 1989, the Moldavian SSR adopted Moldovan (written in the Latin script) as the official

[871] Ignatiev 2017: 35.
[872] Yakovlev 1993: 17.
[873] Ignatiev 2017: 8–9; OSCE 1994.
[874] Kuznetsov 2015b: 180–184; 2015c: 215–223.
[875] Ignatiev 2017: 10–11; Supreme Soviet USSR 1945: 22–23.
[876] Kuznetsov 2015c: 390–399.
[877] OSCE 1994.
[878] Blakkisrud & Kolstø 2011; Lynch 2004: 31–35.

language,[879] and in 1990 adopted the Romanian national anthem and flag as official state symbols.[880] In June 1990, Moldova declared sovereignty by asserting the supremacy of republican laws over Soviet laws and adopted a resolution recognising the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact to be null and void.[881] The non-ethnic Moldovan population resisted these developments and feared that if Moldova were to reunite with Romania, they would become a minority. Thus, populations on the left bank began organising themselves to counter Moldovan independence efforts and held several local referendums on autonomy (as the Pridnestrovian Moldavian ASSR).[882] The opposition to Chișinău culminated in the declaration on the formation of the Pridnestrovian Moldavian SSR issued by the Second Extraordinary Congress of the Peoples' Deputies of Transnistria based in Tiraspol on 2 September 1990.[883] Local elections were held in November, and the newly elected parliament declared the Pridnestrovian Moldavian SSR, a sovereign state within the Soviet Union. Moldova (and Russia) did not recognise the elections nor the declaration.

In 1991, the situation in the Soviet Union became unstable, particularly after the August Coup. Transnistria wished to remain independent in the likely collapse of the Soviet Union and declared itself independent on 25 August 1991.[884] Two days later, Moldova declared independence from the USSR and asserted that its incorporation into the Soviet Union in August 1940 lacked a legal basis and requested to end the occupation by Soviet troops.[885] Chișinău refused to recognise the declaration of independence issued by authorities in Tiraspol. The political contestation soon transformed into a military confrontation, with the first armed clash occurring on 2 November 1990. Full-scale war broke out in March 1992 and lasted until 21 July, when a ceasefire came into force following Russian intervention.[886] Since 1994 the OSCE has maintained a monitoring mission in the region.

Transnistrian authorities provided several justifications for the declaration of independence, including the right to self-determination (in line with the 1990 Soviet Law on secession), the uncompromising nature of Chișinău to create a federal republic, being a separate administrative and cultural entity until its merger with Bessarabia in 1940, and the

[879] Moldavian SSR 1989.
[880] OSCE 1994.
[881] Yakovlev 1993: 75–81.
[882] Ignatiev 2017: 34.
[883] Yakovlev 1993: 82–98, 111–115.
[884] Transnistria 1991.
[885] Moldova 1991b.
[886] OSCE 1994.
Peace agreement available on the UN Peace Agreements Database. Also see the OSCE website.

declaration by Chișinău on the nonrecognition of the formation of the Moldavian SSR in 1940, thereby removing Moldova's claim over territories on the left bank of the Dniester.[887] The path towards independence from Moldova was reconfirmed in referendums held in December 1991 and September 2006. The 2006 referendum also asked whether Transnistria should accede to Russia, with 98% voting in favour.[888] This policy continues to be maintained to this day.[889]

[887] Ignatiev 2017: 35–44; Transnistria 1991.
[888] Kosienkowski 2021.
[889] Krasnoselsky 2023.

Appendix B - Demographic Data

1. Demographic Data Abkhazia[890]

Table 18: Ethnic Distribution in Abkhazia[891]

	Census 1989		Census 1995		Census 2003		Census 2011		Data Jan 2021	
Abkhaz	17.76%	93267	29.10%	91162	44.20%	94597	50.76%	122175	51.33%	125726
Russian	14.27%	74914	16.46%	51573	10.94%	23420	9.17%	22064	9.15%	22400
Armenian	14.58%	76541	19.78%	61962	20.97%	44869	17.41%	41906	17.04%	41739
Georgian	45.68%	239872	28.70%	89928	18.90%	40443	17.97%	43248	17.81%	43621
Mingrelians					1.68%	3598	1.33%	3207	1.33%	3257
Ukrainian	2.22%	11655	2.61%	8177	0.84%	1797	0.72%	1743	0.72%	1766
Greek	2.79%	14664	1.13%	3535	0.69%	1486	0.57%	1381	0.55%	1355
Others	2.69%	14148	2.22%	6947	1.78%	3806	2.07%	4981	2.07%	5062
Total		525061		313284		214016		240705		244926

Dual Citizenship Data

While there are no official statistics, the proportion of Abkhazians with Russian citizenship rose from 20% in June 2002 to 70% in July 2002 to over 80% in January 2008.[892] The current estimate of the number of dual citizens ranges between 140,000 and 196,000.[893] In 2017 the number of mono-citizens was cited as 5000.[894] Triangulating this data, the number of dual citizens is likely closer to 200,000 rather than 140,000.

Table 19: Diaspora Repatriation Statistics[895]

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Turkey	12	15	9	113	7
Syria	27	20	18	54	16
Jordan	8	1	7	60	9
Russia	3	11	2		172
Georgia (Adjaria)	2		6	182	
Other	4	3		10	1
TOTAL	56	50	42	419	205
Total № of Repatriates receiving Abkhazian citizenship			543	150	204

[890] Note that the census data represent one version of reality, especially in cases where they may be manipulated for political and security reasons.
[891] Department of State Statistics of the Republic of Abkhazia 2005: 5; Ethno Kavkaz n.d.-a; Matsuzato 2011: 287; State Committee of Abkhazia on Statistics 2021: 23, 27
[892] Ganohariti 2021b; Nagashima 2019.
[893] Dvinyanin as cited in Chukunov 2020; Tarba 2022; Korenev as cited in Ulchenko 2018.
[894] S. Shamba as cited in Zavodskaya 2017.
[895] Dbar 2019; State Committee of Abkhazia on Statistics 2017: 38; 2021: 30.
In the period 2013-2018, approximately 700 individuals repatriated from Syria, and in the previous two decades, approximately 4500 individuals repatriated to Abkhazia (Bagatelia 2023).

2. Demographic Data South Ossetia

Table 20: Ethnic Distribution in South Ossetia[896]

	Census 1989		Census 2015	
Ossetians	66.2%	65232	89.94%	48146
Russian	2.2%	2128	1.14%	610
Armenian	1.0%	984	0.71%	378
Georgian	29.0%	28544	7.41%	3966
Others	1.7%	1639	0.81%	432
Total		98527		53532

The estimated population in January 2022 was 56,520.[897] According to unofficial data, about 90,000 people living outside the republic also have South Ossetian citizenship.[898]

Dual Citizenship Data

Table 21: Distribution of Citizenship in South Ossetia[899]

	Census 2015	
Ossetian Citizenship (of which 43950 (declared to) possess another citizenship)	89.92%	48138
Russian Citizenship	5.14%	2751
Georgian Citizenship	0.08%	42
Other Citizenship	0.09%	49
Stateless	4.59%	2456
Not declared	0.18%	96
Total		53532

The percentage of dual citizens rose from 55% (July 2003) to 95% (June 2004).[900] In 2007 the quoted percentage was 97%.[901] According to the 2015 census, 91% of South Ossetian citizens residing on the territory had Russian citizenship. In 2022 the quoted percentage was 95%.[902] In 2015, the majority of the ethnic Georgian (59%) and stateless (97%) populations resided in the Leningor district, over which South Ossetia gained effective control in 2008. Of the 4209 residents of the Leningor district, 55% are ethnic Georgian. It may be such that these individuals have Georgian citizenship but chose not to declare it. Over the years, the Leningor population has acquired South Ossetian citizenship, with 80% of the residents having South Ossetian passports in 2020.[903]

[896] Ethno Kavkaz n.d.-b; South Ossetia Department of State Statistics 2016: 98–103.
[897] Republic of South Ossetia Department of State Statistics 2022: 9.
[898] Gukemukhov 2023.
[899] South Ossetia Department of State Statistics 2016: 110–116.
[900] Ganohariti 2021b: 3; Nagashima 2019: 188.
[901] Kokoity 2007.
[902] Bibilov 2022.
[903] Ministry of Interior South Ossetia 2020.

3. Demographic Data Transnistria

Table 22: Ethnic Distribution in Transnistria[904]

	Census 1989		Census 2004		Census 2015		Data December 2020	
Moldovans	33.48%	227084	31.94%	177382	33.07%	157100	33.00%	153700
Russians	30.55%	207219	30.37%	168678	33.80%	160600	34.01%	158400
Ukrainians	28.32%	192078	28.82%	160069	26.71%	126900	26.71%	124400
Bulgarians	2.15%	14616	2.50%	13858	2.69%	12800	2.79%	13000
Others	5.50%	37284	3.27%	18161	3.73%	17700	3.50%	16300
Undeclared			3.10%	17199				
Total		678281		555347		475100		465800

Table 23: Naturalisation Data (1994-2022) of Transnistria[905]

Year	Total No of Naturalizations	Moldova	Russia	Ukraine	Stateless	Other
1994	12	0	0	4	4	4
1995	23	3	0	2	12	6
1996	36	5	6	4	7	14
1997	66	17	13	16	7	13
1998	49	21	4	11	7	6
1999	113	42	16	25	19	11
2000	106	43	10	18	27	8
2001	102	39	19	20	9	15
2002	221	87	33	46	37	18
2003	550	213	84	106	127	20
2004	1017	540	141	178	124	34
2005	1444	892	144	227	151	30
2006	1304	860	128	180	111	25
2007	1002	650	140	125	67	20
2008	1174	796	134	141	76	27
2009	1158	842	129	94	71	22
2010	1571	1239	120	109	76	27
2011	1858	1508	145	116	70	19
2012	1505	1258	108	89	38	12
2013	1724	1374	131	117	80	22
2014	235	182	13	27	9	4
2015	934	754	68	64	37	11
2016	1390	1028	148	129	50	35
2017	599	478	46	38	22	15
2018	101	35	52	9	4	1
2019	59	21	23	5	0	10
2020	60	20	28	9	0	3
2021	52	19	15	11	0	7
2022	73	29	26	11	2	5
TOTAL	**18538**	**12995**	**1924**	**1931**	**1244**	**444**

[904] Bespyatov & Pantea 2004; Transnistria - State Statistics Service 2021: 28.
[905] MoJ Transnistria n.d.; Office of the President of Transnistria n.d..

Dual Citizenship Data

According to Moldovan authorities, in January 2022, 347,251 residents of Transnistria were registered in the state population register. Of them, 338,008 hold Moldovan citizenship, with 313,006 holding Moldovan passports and 281,498 holding Moldovan identity cards.[906] By January 2023, this number increased to 360,938 residents. Of them, 351,892 held Moldovan citizenship, with 328,625 holding Moldovan passports and 293,305 holding Moldovan identity cards.[907]

In mid-2021, in the whole of Moldova (including Transnistria), 5255 Ukrainian nationals and 3834 Russian nationals were documented.[908] At the end of 2021, 1909 stateless people and 1434 people with undetermined nationality were documented by Moldovan authorities.[909] During 1992-2021, 510,000 citizens of Moldova (living on both banks of the Dniester) obtained Russian citizenship.[910]

Meanwhile, according to Transnistria's President Krasnoselsky (2019), approximately 220,000 hold Russian citizenship, 200,000 have Moldovan citizenship, and 100,000 have Ukrainian citizenship. This means that many have at least three citizenships. In 2005, of the 550,000 residents, approximately 270,000 had Moldovan citizenship, 80,000 had Russian citizenship, and 80,000 had Ukrainian citizenship.[911]

[906] Government of the Republic of Moldova 2022a.
[907] Government of the Republic of Moldova 2023.
[908] Bureau for Migration and Asylum n.d.-b.
[909] European Network on Statelessness 2021.
[910] Pahomii 2021: 119.
[911] Călugăreanu 2005; Zhluktenko 2005.

Appendix C - Methodological Information

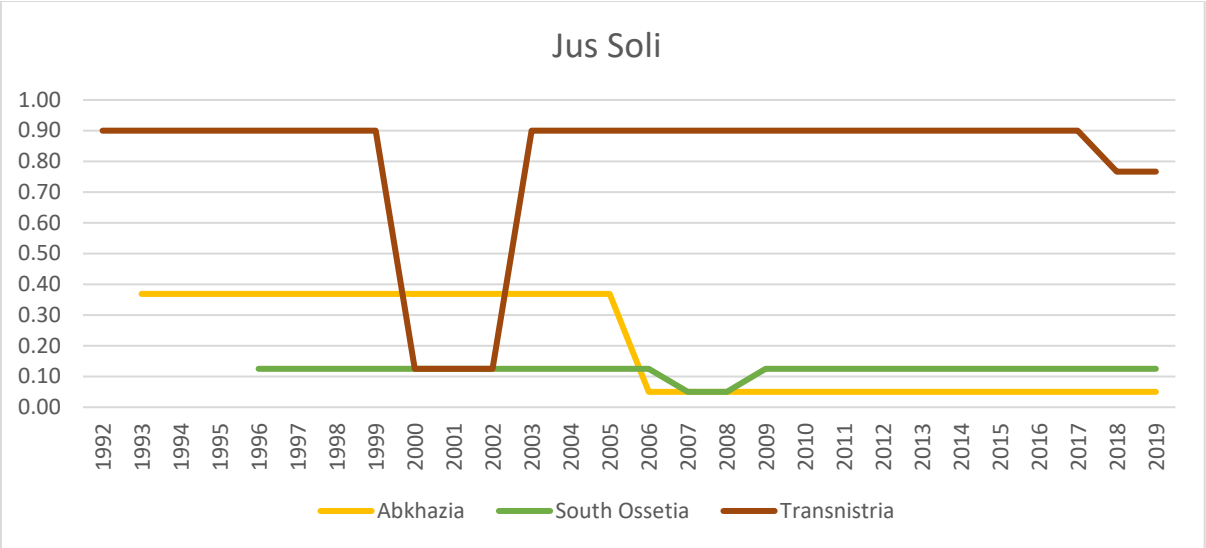
1. Research Stages

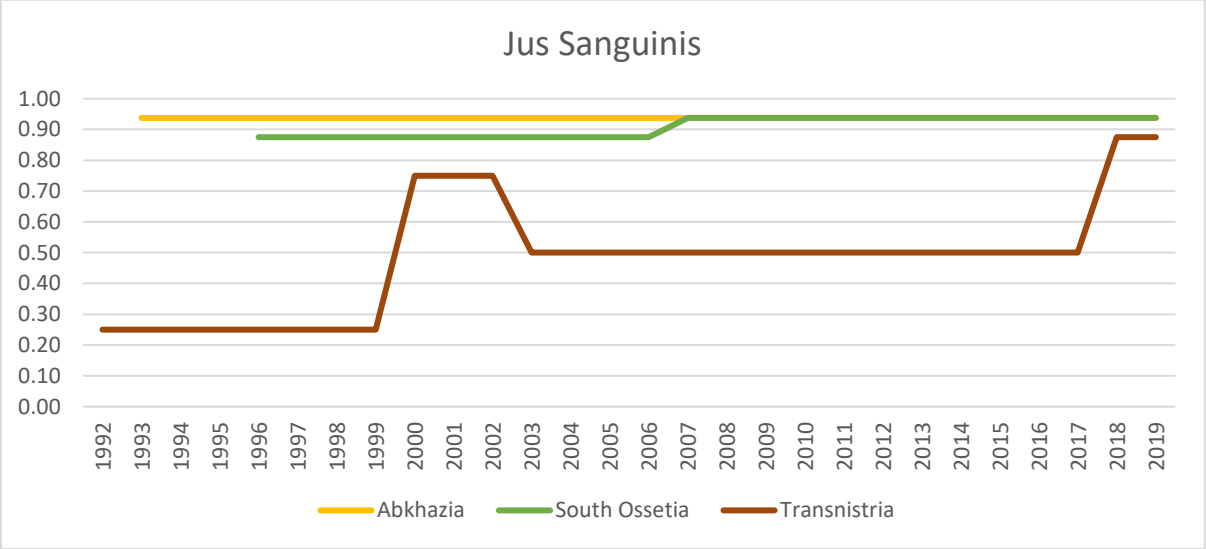
This research was conducted in several stages. Stages One and Two investigated how and why citizenship in aspirant states is constructed from a legal point of view, and these findings were compared with the results of Stage Three. Through fieldwork, data was gathered to make sense of how individuals (including government representatives) living in aspirant states deal with being subjects of contested citizenship. In Stage Four, the legislations were re-analysed to see if new insights materialised following the information gained during fieldwork. During all stages, gathered and analysed information was linked to and tested against existing theoretical knowledge.

Figure 4: Timeline of Research Stages

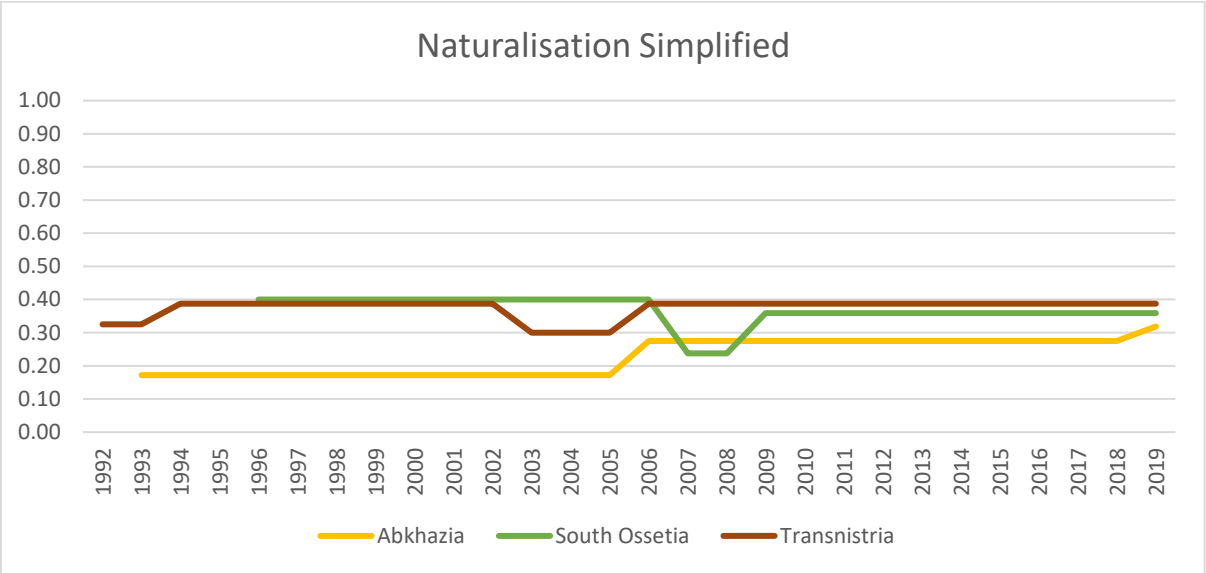
	STAGE 1 BACKGROUND	STAGE 2 ANALYSIS	STAGE 3 COLLECTION	STATE 4 ANALYSIS
Desk Research (Lit Review, Conceptual Framework)	✈	✈	✈	✈
Content Analysis		✈		✈
Expert Interviews Citizen Interviews			✈	✈
Surveys			✈	✈

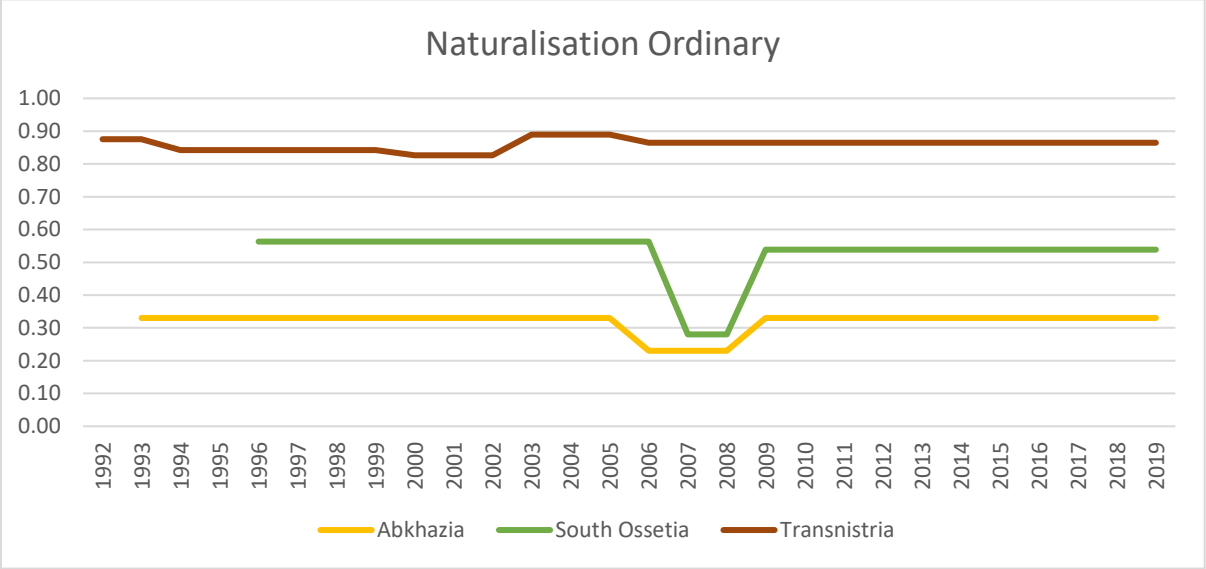
2. Visualisation of Citizenship Acquisition Policies[912]





[912] The citizenship laws were coded and quantified by following the 2017 CITLAW Index (Baaren & Vink 2021; Jeffers et al. 2017). Higher the value, the stronger the policy.





3. Interview Data

While it was initially envisaged that the interviews would be conducted in person due to the COVID pandemic and regional instability due to the war in Ukraine, the field visits were cancelled. As a result, though far from ideal, interviews were conducted via online platforms such as Zoom.[913] In total, 46 interviews were conducted with citizens of aspirant states: 22 were from Abkhazia, 5 from South Ossetia, and 19 were from Transnistria. The South Ossetian population was the most difficult to access. As a result, to gather more information, particularly on South Ossetia, online sources were analysed to fill any information gaps. In addition, interviews with two Moldovan experts and one Georgian expert were conducted.

[913] Bryman 2016: 490–492; Hermanowicz 2002: 497.

	Background	Gender
RA Cit№1 (2021)	Dual Citizen / Academic	M
RA Cit№2 (2021)	Mono-Citizen	F
RA Cit№3 (2021)	Dual Citizen	F
RA Cit№4 (2022)	Dual Citizen	F
RA Cit№5 (2022)	Dual Citizen	M
RA Cit№6 (2022)	Dual Citizen	M
RA Cit№7 (2022)	Dual Citizen	F
RA Cit№8 (2022)	Diaspora member / Academic	F
RA Exp№1 (2021)	Legal Expert	M
RA Exp№2 (2021)	Civil Society Leader	F
RA Exp№3 (2021)	Civil Society Leader	F
RA Exp№4 (2021)	Former Civil Servant	M
RA Exp№5 (2021)	Civil Society Leader	F
RA Exp№6 (2021)	Civil Servant	M
RA Exp№7 (2021)	Legal Expert	M
RA Exp№8 (2021)	Academic	F
RA Exp№9 (2021)	Civil Servant	M
RA Exp№10 (2021)	Civil Society Leader	F
RA Exp№11 (2022)	Former Civil Servant / Civil Society Leader	M
RA Exp№12 (2022)	Human Rights Expert	F
RA Exp№13 (2022)	Former Civil Servant	M
RA Exp№14 (2022)	Human Rights Expert	M
RSO Cit№1 (2021)	Diaspora member / Academic	F
RSO Cit№2 (2022)	Diaspora member	M
RSO Exp№1 (2022)	Civil Servant	M
RSO Exp№2 (2022)	Former Civil Servant / Academic	M
RSO Exp№3 (2022)	Human Rights Expert	M
PMR Cit№1 (2021)	Dual Citizen	F
PMR Cit№2 (2021)	Individual with three citizenships	M
PMR Cit№3 (2021)	Individual with three citizenships	F
PMR Cit№4 (2021)	Dual Citizen	F
PMR Cit№5 (2021)	Individual with three citizenships	M
PMR Cit№6 (2021)	Individual with three citizenships	M
PMR Cit№7 (2021)	Dual Citizen	M
PMR Cit№8 (2022)	Dual Citizen	M
PMR Cit№9 (2022)	Dual Citizen	M
PMR Cit№10 (2022)	Dual Citizen	M
PMR Exp№1 (2021)	Academic	F
PMR Exp№2 (2021)	Academic	M
PMR Exp№3 (2021)	Civil Servant	M
PMR Exp№4 (2021)	Academic	M
PMR Exp№5 (2021)	Civil Servant	M
PMR Exp№6 (2021)	Academic	F
PMR Exp№7 (2021)	Civil Servant	F
PMR Exp№8 (2022)	Academic	F
PMR Exp№9 (2022)	Civil Servant	F
Georgian Exp (2022)	Former Civil Servant	M
Moldovan Exp№1 (2022)	Former Civil Servant	M
Moldovan Exp№2 (2022)	Human Rights Expert	M

ATLAS.ti Data (Interview Coding)

Code	*Description*
Key Concepts	Key Concepts related to the Conceptual Framework
Compensatory Citizenship	Discussion on Dual citizenship - framed such that the 2nd citizenship is acquired to compensate for the lack of functionality afforded by the aspirant state citizenship.
Liminality	Liminality of the aspirant state citizenship (see Krasniqi 2019). Liminality of Base state citizenship = semi-citizenship
Multiplicity of Citizenship	Refers to discussion/awareness (by the respondent) that depending on time, place, and authority, individuals will use OR be considered to possess a different legal status (than that of the aspirant state). Also, related to situations of "conflict of laws". Fluidity - using their citizenship based on convenience.
Semi-citizenship	Refers to a citizenship being labelled as an incomplete citizenship due to the lack of rights provided to the holder. Semi-citizenship = lack of (internal/external) functionality of the recognised citizenship. E.g. nonrecognition of Russian passport. Semi-citizenship of aspirant state = Liminality of the aspirant citizenship. To see semi-citizenship of base state - then combine with ascribed citizenship code. Otherwise, semi-citizenship code refers to limitations of RU citizenship.
Securitisation	Securitisation (and politicisation) of issues related to citizenship/minority groups.
Human Security: State Obligations & Consular Diplomacy	Discussion of state obligations of the aspirant state towards their citizens. E.g. Consular diplomacy/assistance, including being able to represent the aspirant state in the international arena (Geneva discussion, 5+2).
Sovereignty & Recognition (Contested)	Discussion of sovereignty (stateness/statehood) and recognition of the aspirant state (and potential impact on citizenship). Impact of (non)recognition.
Statehood + Citizens	Discussion that it is the people/citizens that constitute the state. The citizens create the sovereign state. Discussion on the creation of citizenship. Includes discussion on the impact of state recognition on state (identity) formation.
Discourse	
(Ethnic) Discrimination	Points related to Ethnic Discrimination and the opposite - the guarantee of equality of nationality.
(Ethnic) Identity	Discussion of ethnic identity (beyond the question of "feeling of citizenship").
1990s War & effects	
2008 War	
Feeling Citizenship	Refers to the comments related to feelings of being a citizen of a particular state (identity)
Key Groups	
Diaspora	Reference to the diaspora of the aspirant state. Diaspora does not have to have the citizenship of the aspirant state. For points related to the policy of passportization of diaspora, see diaspora + aspirant state policy/Attribution Automatic
Foreigners & minorities	Discussion on (the rights of foreigners) and non-titular/dominant ethnic groups.
Georgian minority	References to Georgian minority or population in Aspirant State
Integration of minorities	Refers to the integration of minorities (e.g. ethnic Georgians in Abkhazia). Includes discussion of ways to integrate this population.
Legal citizenship	
Base state citizenship	Discussion of citizenship/passports of Moldova/Georgia.
Other citizenship	Citizenship outside of the base state and patron state. In most cases, these are ethnic minority groups who have access to the citizenship of their kin state.
Russian citizenship	
Dual citizenship	Comment in relation to the legal status. e.g. whether dual citizenship is allowed or not.

Mono-citizenship	Refers to individuals who only have citizenship of the aspirant state.
Statelessness	Referring to conceptualisations of the legal status of aspirant state citizens as stateless persons.
Passports	
Aspirant state passport	
Legal Identity Docs/Status	Statement related to legal identity documents (excluding passport, e.g. permanent residency documents, birth certificates)
Neutral Passport	
Soviet passport & citizenship	Refers to using Soviet passports as identity documents (with inserts) after the dissolution of the USSR & until the introduction of internal passports in the aspirant state. Also refers to Soviet citizenship as a reason for acquiring a particular citizenship.
Legislation	
Bi-lateral Agreement	Agreement/negotiation on dual citizenship / legal Identity documents between the aspirant state and another state.
Foreign/International Laws & Norms	Discussion of international law or legislation of another country and how it affects the aspirant state. Including law shopping. Norm diffusion.
Laws of Aspirant State	Refers to the citizenship legislation of the aspirant state. (Citizenship Law / Nationality Law). Including references to the constitution.
Acquisition of Citizenship - Attribution Automatic jus sanguinis	Refers to automatic acquisition of citizenship either by birth (*jus sanguinis*/*jus soli*) OR "new state model". For diaspora, see Diaspora + Attribution Automatic
Acquisition of Citizenship - Naturalisation Ordinary	Discussions related to A06 in the GLOBALCIT Citizenship Law Dataset.
Acquisition of Citizenship - Naturalisation Simplified	Discussions related to A07-A27 in the GLOBALCIT Citizenship Law Dataset.
Liberal/Territorial Citizenship	Discussion of citizenship polity being Civil/Liberal/Territorial citizenship. jus soli
Loss of Citizenship -	Renunciation/Withdrawal Discussions related to L01-L15 in the GLOBALCIT Citizenship Law Dataset.
Policy & Process	
Abkhazian Policy - mass-scale denationalisation	Abkhazian Policy/Discourse related to Mass scale withdrawal of citizenship from a certain group (e.g. Ethnic Georgian Minority in Abkhazia).
Ascribed Citizenship	Refers to the situation where the citizenship of the base state is forcefully ascribed to the individual. Refers to automatic acquisition of citizenship of the base state either by birth OR "new state model" - can be forced.
Base state policy	Georgian/Moldovan policies towards citizenship or Abkhazia/SO/PMR in general (e.g. law of occupied territories).
Aspirant state policy	Discussion of policies made by the aspirant state.
EU / West policy	EU/West policy towards the aspirant state (citizens). Particularly related to the nonrecognition of citizenship (either aspirant state OR Russia).
Passportization (2nd citizenship)	Refers to *en masse* conferral of citizenship (extraterritorial naturalisation) conducted by a recognised state in the de facto state. Includes comments on the process of this passportization. In this study, the passportizing state is Russia.
Passportization/Documentation (domestic)	Refers to the passportization / passport distribution process conducted by the de facto state authorities within their territory. (e.g. Distribution and renewal of Abkhazian passports in 2016)
Recognition of IDs	Refers to statements on (not) recognising the aspirant state passport/ID documents as a travel/legal identity document (e.g. the Taiwanese passport). Primarily to achieve mobility rights.

Rights & Obligations	Affects the functionality of citizenship.
Functionality External	External functionality of aspirant state citizenship/passport. Mobility rights brought forth by the aspirant state citizenship.
Functionality Internal	Internal functionality of aspirant state citizenship/passport
Border Crossings	
Duties & Obligations of Citizens	Refers to duties/obligations of citizens.
Economics (Rights)	Including rights to have a business, own property, professional/career development. Social Rights.
Education (Rights)	
Healthcare (Rights)	
Mobility Rights	Mobility rights gained via secondary citizenship. Includes comments related to interacting with the external world and points related to migration.
Political Rights	Political rights are provided by either the aspirant state citizenship OR the 2nd citizenship.
Rights & Freedoms (General)	Relates to the general provisions in relation to the rights and freedoms of nationals. (Particularly related to the Georgian minority).
Social Welfare	Including Pensions.

4. Survey Research

Due to the difficulty of accessing the local population and the general reluctance of individuals to respond to random surveys, convenience and snowball sampling was the most practical since people are likely to participate in the survey if they are encouraged to do so by someone with whom they are already acquainted.[914] As a result, personal contacts (including interviewees), local universities, and research centres were requested to circulate the survey. This approach did not lead to many responses; thus, the survey was shared on Twitter and posted on 35 Facebook and 17 Vkontakte groups related to aspirant states (found via searching the name of the aspirant state on the social media platform). In total, there were 400 responses (Abkhazia 154, South Ossetia 80, Transnistria 166).[915]

The survey was designed vis the Survey Monkey platform. Some questions were adapted from the International Social Survey Program and the European Values Study,[916] while most of the questions were developed based on the literature review and understanding of contested citizenship in aspirant states. As there are different types of respondents (e.g. those

[914] Small 2009: 14.
[915] The initial aim was to gather at least 150 responses from each aspirant state (based on a 95% Confidence Interval and an 8% margin of error).
[916] See Citizenship and National Identity variables in https://www.gesis.org/issp/modules/issp-modules-by-topic
See National Identity variables in https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/GDESC2.asp?no=0009&DB=E

with dual citizenship and those with one citizenship) and since each aspirant state may have unique circumstances, skip-logics were used to streamline the survey. To ensure consistency and comparability across the cases, the survey was designed in Russian and English (with most responses being to the Russian survey).[917] While there can be a portion of the population that is not competent in Russian, Russian remains the most accessible language and would ensure that a wide section of the population can be targeted. Additionally, since, unlike interviews, surveys are difficult to amend once distributed, the survey was piloted among three Russian speakers and three experts working on aspirant states or citizenship studies. However, the completion rate was low once the data collection began, potentially due to the survey length. To ensure a higher retention rate, the section asking about citizens' knowledge of their citizenship law was removed, as it was the least important.

Demographic Data of Survey Respondents

	Male	**Female**	**Total**[918]
Abkhazia	83	71	154
South Ossetia	45	33	78
Transnistria	94	72	166

	Abkhaz	**Ossetian**	**Moldovan**	**Georgian**	**Russian**	**Ukrainian**	**Other**
Abkhazia	133	-	-	3	11	4	12
South Ossetia	-	78	-	2	2	-	3
Transnistria	-	-	38	-	71	67	18

Ethnicities are not mutually exclusive. The total is greater than the number of survey responses.

	Local Citizenship	No compensatory citizenship	Russian citizenship	Moldovan Citizenship	Ukrainian Citizenship	Other
Abkhazia	154	22	102	-	1	5
South Ossetia	80	9	58	-	-	3
Transnistria	166	9	70	93	22	3

Citizenships are not mutually exclusive. Individuals may possess multiple citizenships.

[917] The Russian version is available upon request.
[918] Not all respondents may have filled every question. Thus thetotals for each variable may not add upto the total number of responces.

5. Survey Questions

Citizenship in the Post-Soviet Space

Research Background

This survey is part of a PhD research that explores the phenomenon of citizenship in Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Pridnestrovie (Transnistria). The research investigates the legal status of these citizens (including former/future citizens) and explores how they experience citizenship.

This survey involves answering questions pertaining to your citizenship and how it impacts you. Responses will be anonymised and kept confidential, and the results will only be presented in a summarised manner. Your participation in this research will aid in adding knowledge to the field of citizenship studies.

This research is conducted by PhD Researcher Ramesh Ganohariti based at Dublin City University (DCU), Ireland. This research has been approved by the DCU Research Ethics Committee and is funded by the Irish Research Council. Email comments or questions to ramesh.premaratneganohariti2@mail.dcu.ie.

I appreciate your willingness to participate in this survey. It will take approximately 7-9 minutes to complete.

* 1. I declare that I am voluntarily taking part in this survey and that I am older than 18.

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

2. Gender

- ◯ Female
- ◯ Male

* 3. Year of Birth

* 4. Place of Birth

- ◯ USSR
- ◯ Abkhazia
- ◯ South Ossetia
- ◯ Pridnestrovie
- ◯ Georgia
- ◯ Moldova
- ◯ Russia
- ◯ Ukraine
- ◯ Other (please specify)

* 5. Where do you currently live?

- ◯ Abkhazia
- ◯ South Ossetia
- ◯ Pridnestrovie
- ◯ Russia
- ◯ Other (please specify)
- ◯ Georgia
- ◯ Moldova
- ◯ Ukraine

6. Highest level of education

- ◯ School Diploma
- ◯ Vocational Diploma or University (Bachelor's Degree)
- ◯ Professional or University Degree (Master's, PhD)
- ◯ Other

7. Current employment status

- ◯ employed
- ◯ unemployed
- ◯ student
- ◯ pensioner
- ◯ other

8. What languages are you fluent in?

- ☐ Abkhaz
- ☐ Armenian
- ☐ Ossetian
- ☐ Georgian / Mingrelian
- ☐ Moldovan / Romanian
- ☐ Russian
- ☐ Ukrainian
- ☐ English
- ☐ Other

* 9. To which ethnic group(s) do you belong?

(You may choose more than one option.)

- ☐ Abkhaz
- ☐ Armenian
- ☐ Georgian
- ☐ Moldovan
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ Ossetian
- ☐ Russian
- ☐ Ukrainian

* 10. I am a citizen of...

- ◯ Abkhazia
- ◯ South Ossetia
- ◯ Pridnestrovie
- ◯ None of the above

* 11. The possession of citizenship provides several rights. How important are the following citizenship rights to you?

	Not important	Slightly important	Important	Very important	Difficult to answer
Political participation (e.g. voting)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Social security (e.g. pension)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Access to education	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Access to healthcare	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Right to work	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Right to own property	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ability to travel internationally	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

12. Did you know that ethnic Abkhaz can have dual citizenship with **any** country, but other ethnic groups in Abkhazia can have dual citizenship **only** with Russia?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

13. Should the citizenship law be changed to allow dual citizenship with **any country** (excluding Georgia)?

Disagree	Agree	Difficult to answer
◯	◯	◯

14. To what extent does the restriction to hold citizenship **only** with Russia **negatively affect** your quality of life?

Not at all	A little	A lot	Difficult to answer
◯	◯	◯	◯

15. Did you know that in South Ossetia dual citizenship is **only** allowed with Russia?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

16. Should the citizenship law be changed to allow dual citizenship with **any country** (excluding Georgia)?

Disagree	Agree	Difficult to answer
◯	◯	◯

17. To what extent does the restriction to hold citizenship **only** with Russia **negatively affect** your quality of life?

Not at all	A little	A lot	Difficult to answer
◯	◯	◯	◯

* 18. How did you acquire the citizenship of {{ Q10 }}?

- ◯ By birth
- ◯ I was a citizen of the USSR
- ◯ I applied for citizenship (naturalisation)
- ◯ I am a member of the diaspora
- ◯ Other (please specify)
- ◯ I don't know

* 19. When did you acquire the citizenship of {{ Q10 }}?

20. Why did you choose to acquire the citizenship of {{Q10}}?

* 21. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
{{ Q10 }}n citizenship is important to me because it gives the right to live, study, and work in {{ Q10 }} without legal restriction	◯	◯	◯	◯
{{ Q10 }}n citizenship is important to me because it is part of my identity	◯	◯	◯	◯

22. Why is {{ Q10 }}n citizenship important to you?

* 23.

A 50.0% Do you agree that the disputed political status of {{ Q10 }} impedes your rights?

B 50.0% Do you agree that the disputed political status of {{ Q10 }} negatively affects my quality of life?

Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Difficult to Answer
◯	◯	◯	◯

24. Do you feel discriminated against based on your ethnicity in...

	Not a all	Sometimes	Often	Difficult to Answer
in {{Q10}}	◯	◯	◯	◯
outside of {{Q10}}	◯	◯	◯	◯

* 25. How has your {{Q10}}n citizenship affected your...

	Negatively Affected	Positively Affected	Has not Affected	Difficult to answer
economic status	◯	◯	◯	◯
education goals	◯	◯	◯	◯
freedom of movement	◯	◯	◯	◯
rights in {{Q10}}	◯	◯	◯	◯
rights outside of {{Q10}}	◯	◯	◯	◯

How else has this citizenship affected you?

26. Besides citizenship, what else affects your rights and quality of life?

* 27. How often have you travelled outside of {{ Q10 }} after 1991?

Never	A few times	Frequently	Not Applicable
◯	◯	◯	◯

* 28. Besides {{ Q10 }}n citizenship, do you have any other citizenships?

- ☐ Russia
- ☐ Moldova
- ☐ Ukraine
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ I don't have any other citizenship
- ☐ Romania
- ☐ Turkey

29. Do you have a Russian domestic passport?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

* 30. To what extent did you find it difficult to access your **non-{{Q10}}n** citizenship?

Not at all	Difficult	Very difficult	Difficult to answer
◯	◯	◯	◯

* 31. How did you acquire the citizenship of

	By birth	Naturalization	Other	I don't know
Russia	◯	◯	◯	◯
Moldova	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ukraine	◯	◯	◯	◯
Romania	◯	◯	◯	◯
Turkey	◯	◯	◯	◯
[Insert text from Other]	◯	◯	◯	◯

If you acquired the above citizenship **by naturalization**, when did you acquire it and why?

32. Which passport do you primarily use when travelling internationally?

* 33. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Citizenship of {{Q28}} has expanded my quality of life in {{ Q10 }}	◯	◯	◯	◯
Citizenship of {{Q28}} has expanded my travel freedom	◯	◯	◯	◯
Citizenship of {{Q28}} has strengthened my economic status	◯	◯	◯	◯
Citizenship of {{Q28}} has aided in achieving my education goals	◯	◯	◯	◯
Overall, my **other** citizenship compensates the limitations of my {{ Q10 }}n citizenship	◯	◯	◯	◯

* 34. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Citizenship of {{Q28}} is important to me because it has given me the right to live, work, and study outside of {{ Q10 }} without legal restrictions	◯	◯	◯	◯
Citizenship of {{Q28}} is important to me because it is part of my identity	◯	◯	◯	◯

35. Besides {{ Q10 }}n citizenship, my **other** citizenship is important to me because...

* 36. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Difficult to answer
I feel proud to be a citizen of {{ Q10 }}	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel proud of my other citizenship(s)	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel European	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel that I belong to the "*Ruskii-mir*"	◯	◯	◯	◯

* 37. To what extent do you feel yourself to be a citizen of...

	Not at all	A little	A lot
{{Q10}}	◯	◯	◯
Russia	◯	◯	◯
Moldova	◯	◯	◯
Ukraine	◯	◯	◯
Romania	◯	◯	◯
Turkey	◯	◯	◯
[Insert text from Other]	◯	◯	◯

Please provide any additional comments

* 38. To what extent do you agree that the lack of a second citizenship has **negatively** affected your...

	Disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Difficult to answer
economic status	◯	◯	◯	◯
education goals	◯	◯	◯	◯
freedom of movement	◯	◯	◯	◯
rights in {{Q10}}	◯	◯	◯	◯
rights outside of {{Q10}}	◯	◯	◯	◯

How else has the lack of a second citizenship affected your rights and quality of life?

39. Do you plan to apply for another citizenship?

- ◯ No
- ◯ Yes (please explain why)

* 40. What citizenship(s) do you have?

- ☐ Russia
- ☐ Moldova
- ☐ Ukraine
- ☐ Other (please specify)
- ☐ I am stateless
- ☐ Romania
- ☐ Turkey

* 41. How did you acquire the citizenship of

	By birth	Naturalization	Other	I don't know
Russia	◯	◯	◯	◯
Moldova	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ukraine	◯	◯	◯	◯
Romania	◯	◯	◯	◯
Turkey	◯	◯	◯	◯
[Insert text from Other]	◯	◯	◯	◯

If you acquired the above citizenship by **naturalization**, when and why did you acquire it?

* 42. Did you previously have one of the following citizenships?

- ◯ Abkhazia
- ◯ South Ossetia
- ◯ Pridnestrovie
- ◯ None of the above

43. Why do you no longer have the citizenship of {{ Q42 }}?

* 44. To what extent does no longer having {{ Q42 }}n citizenship impede your rights or negatively affect your quality of life?

Not at all	A little	A lot	Difficult to answer
◯	◯	◯	◯

Please elaborate

* 45. Do you plan on (re)acquiring one of the following citizenships?

- ◯ Abkhazia
- ◯ South Ossetia
- ◯ Transnistria
- ◯ I am not planning to acquire any of the above

46. Why do you wish you acquire the citizenship of {{ Q45 }}?

* 47. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Difficult to answer
I feel proud of my current citizenship	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel European	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel that I belong to the "*Ruskii-mir*"	◯	◯	◯	◯

* 48. Would you be interested in being contacted to...

- ☐ take part in a follow-up interview
- ☐ receive the outcomes of this research
- ☐ I don't want to be contacted

49. Provide your contact information

First Name

Email Address or phone number

Appendix D - Russian Summary of Dissertation

Гражданство и оспариваемая государственность: сравнительный анализ Абхазии, Южной Осетии и Приднестровья

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Вступление[919]

Оспариваемый характер государств с ограниченным международным признанием (де-факто государство, оспариваемое государство) [920] приводит к переплетению множества правовых, политических, территориальных и социальных порядков, что влияет на человеческую и государственную безопасность. В этой диссертации исследуются правовые и социально-политические последствия дублирования режимов гражданства в Абхазии, Южной Осетии и Приднестровье. Основное внимание уделяется сложному взаимодействию между государственностью, суверенитетом, государственным признанием, режимами гражданства и политикой принадлежности. Оспаривание также создает двусмысленность в отношении статуса гражданства их жителей, негативно влияя на качество их жизни и безопасность. Между тем государства с ограниченным международным признанием могут реагировать на угрозы безопасности, переопределяя и воспроизводя своё воображаемое сообщество (imagined community) посредством режимов гражданства. Изучая, как гражданство действует в различных измерениях, а именно в правовом статусе, правах и обязанностях, идентичности и политике принадлежности, это исследование высвечивает проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются граждане де-факто государств, запутавшиеся в нескольких режимах гражданства. [921] Следовательно, диссертация использует призмы множественности (multiplicity) и безопасности человека/государства, чтобы объяснить сложности гражданства в государствах с ограниченным международным признанием и продемонстрировать, что оспариваемый суверенитет и непризнание не влияют на все аспекты гражданства в равной степени. Эта диссертация ставит под сомнение предположение о том, что оспоренный суверенитет приводит к тому, что их граждане живут в правовой “черной дыре”[922] и лишены гражданских прав, или что эти республики представляют собой исключительные пространства. На самом деле, в определенных аспектах эти государства и их граждане ведут себя очень схоже на признанные государства - члены ООН и их граждане.

[919] Это резюме главным образом основано на главах «Вступление» и «Заключение» докторской диссертации автора.
[920] Следует признать, что собирательный термин, используемый для обозначения Абхазии, Косово и Палестины и т.д., является политически спорным. Для целей настоящего резюме автор выбрал термины “государства с ограниченным международным признанием” и “де-факто государства” (Markedonov 2018).
[921] Bloemraad et al. 2008; Howard 2006; Joppke 2007; 2010; Kochenov 2019; Orgad 2017.
[922] King 2001.

Абхазия, Южная Осетия и Приднестровье, в попытке продемонстрировать государственный суверенитет и заполнить правовой вакуум, образовавшийся после распада СССР, занялись законотворчеством и изготовили ряд документов удостоверяющих личность.[923] Хотя эти государства могут обладать внутренней легитимностью и суверенитетом, они остаются политически спорными и обладают ограниченной внешней легитимностью и международно-правовым суверенитетом.[924] Это означает, что большинство, если не все, их правовых режимов, включая и касающиеся гражданства, имеют ограниченное международное признание. Таким образом, если эти государства непризнаны с юридической точки зрения, могут ли они предоставлять гражданство своим жителям? Если да, то как они решают, кто является их гражданами? Если нет, то гражданами какого государства они являются или являются лицами без гражданства? Кроме того, возникают и другие внеправовые вопросы. Например, какие документы они используют для выезда за границу? На какие другие права и обязанности влияет непризнание? Как эти люди относятся к тому, что у них есть гражданство оспариваемого государства?

Ограниченное исследование гражданства в государствах с ограниченным международным признанием в значительной степени основывалось на доктринальном и государственно-ориентированном подходе к определению того, к какому правовому режиму принадлежит гражданин.[925] В большинстве случаев анализ проводился с точки зрения и роли внешних субъектов, например, на политику Российской паспортизации.[926] В зависимости от позиции внешних субъектов по отношению к непризнанию де-факто государства граждане могут рассматриваться как лица без гражданства, как граждане бывшего базового государства (Грузия/Молдова) или как граждане де-факто государства. Кроме того, учитывая ограниченное признание гражданства, отдельные лица предпринимают шаги для приобретения гражданства государства - члена ООН. Однако внешние субъекты также могут оспорить получение второго гражданства (как в случае с российским гражданством). Это иллюстрирует, как граждане де-факто государства могут одновременно иметь несколько (противоречивых) юридических статусов, что приводит к неясному правовому положению

[923] Klem et al. 2021; Navaro-Yashin 2007; Waters 2006.
[924] Berg & Kuusk 2010; Krasner 1999.
[925] Atcho 2018; Ganohariti 2020a; A. Grossman 2001; Krasniqi 2018.
[926] Artman 2013; Burkhardt et al. 2022; Ganohariti 2021b; Littlefield 2009; Nagashima 2019.

гражданина (liminal citizenship). [927] Однако такие аргументы основаны преимущественно на правовой позиции внешних субъектов и редко учитывают позиции этих республик и их граждан.

При рассмотрении феномена гражданства с местной точки зрения возникают различные позиции. На вопрос, каковы последствия непризнания для граждан и означает ли это, что по международному праву их гражданства “не существует”, один житель Абхазии сказал, что “…Но это всё сс международной точки зрения… когда мы говорим о гражданстве - это взаимосвязь государства с гражданином... Здесь в Абхазии нельзя сказать, что нет гражданства. Но говорить о том, что у них нет гражданства или есть гражданство - это не мое взаимоотношение с внешним миром”. Другой собеседник сказал, что “…мы такие же граждане, и как бы кто на это не смотрел, как бы кто-то не оценивал правомерность, законность, мы живем в легитимным государстве [Приднестровье]. Мы ходим на выборы, у нас есть свой президент, свое правительство, свои деньги, своё законодательство”.

Чтобы целостно понять феномен гражданства на территориях, находящихся под оспариваемым суверенитетом, его необходимо изучать с точки зрения права, административной практики и жизненного опыта. В конечном счете, только рассматривая это явление как на государственном уровне, так и на индивидуальном уровне, можно объяснить сложность гражданства в государствах с ограниченным международным признанием. Эта диссертация демонстрирует важность выхода за рамки доктринального анализа и изучения гражданства во всех его аспектах: правового статуса, прав и обязанностей, идентичности и политики принадлежности, чтобы целостно понять, как устроен феномен гражданства в постсоветских государствах с ограниченным международным признанием.

Чтобы понять, как взаимодействуют гражданство и оспариваемая государственность, эта диссертация отвечает на следующие вопросы: Каков правовой статус лиц, проживающих в государствах с ограниченным международным признанием? Как оспариваемое гражданство влияет на права и обязанности лиц, проживающих в государствах с ограниченным международным признанием? Какова функциональность местного гражданства? Как эти граждане выражают своё

[927] Krasniqi 2019.

гражданство и как они справляются в жизненных реалиях со своим оспариваемым гражданством (гражданствами)? Как эти оспариваемые государства определяют своих граждан и используют режимы гражданства в процессе государственного и национального строительства?

Исследование гражданства в государствах с ограниченным международным признанием

Поскольку эта диссертация посвящена вопросам государственности, суверенитета и самоопределения, естественно начать с изучения законов о гражданстве, затрагивающих де-факто государство. Однако такой подход рисует лишь частичную картину, и не менее важно понимать влияние этих оспариваемых режимов гражданства на права, обязанности и идентичность их граждан. Государство и граждане не существуют в разных сферах; скорее, они совместно конструируют значение гражданства и определяют политику принадлежности. Таким образом, в диссертации также исследуется, каким образом опыт государства и его граждан, их понимание истории, нации и стремление к безопасности формируют построение режимов гражданства. Из этого следует, что взгляд “сверху вниз” и “снизу вверх” имеет первостепенное значение для понимания феномена гражданства.

В этом исследовании используется конструктивистско-интерпретативистское понимание исследований и производства знаний. Этот подход признает, что реальность постоянно совместно конструируется, согласовывается и интерпретируется государственными субъектами и отдельными лицами, включая исследователя, посредством социальных взаимодействий с окружающим миром.[928] В нём признается, что может существовать множество точек зрения на один и тот же вопрос и что гражданство - это социальная конструкция, целью которой является создание воображаемого сообщества.[929] Законодательство отражает специфическую социальную (правовую) реальность и понимание принадлежности. В то же время этот подход признаёт, что позиция государства и его политика могут по-разному интерпретироваться лицами, которых они затрагивают, и, таким образом, разные группы будут по-разному формулировать свой опыт в зависимости от их позиции и отношений с различными режимами гражданства, к которым они принадлежат.

[928] Schwandt 1994; Stake 1995.
[929] B. Anderson 2006.

Диссертация свидетельствует в пользу сравнительного кейс-стади для изучения конкретных случаев. Такой подход приводит к обширному диалогу между идеями исследователя (подкрепленными теорией) и эмпирическими данными.[930] Подход к сравнительному изучению конкретных случаев позволяет провести углубленный и многомерный анализ такого сложного явления, как гражданство. В настоящее время в исследуемом регионе насчитывается четыре государства с ограниченным международным признанием, обладающие общим советским наследием, не являющиеся членами ООН и получающие помощь от государства-покровителя. Несмотря на сходство, их режимы гражданства неодинаковы.[931] Выбирая Абхазию, Южную Осетию и Приднестровье (вместо Нагорного Карабаха), можно учесть одно и то же государство-покровитель (Россия), влияние непризнания государством (диахронически и между кейсами) и последствия наличия разных бывших базовых государств (Грузия/Молдова).

Поскольку целью данной диссертации является понимание взаимосвязи между оспариваемой государственностью и феноменом гражданства с точки зрения права, административной практики и жизненного опыта, используется подход, основанный на смешанных методах. Исследование начинается на уровне государства и изучает режимы гражданства де-факто государств, государства-покровителя, бывших базовых государств, а также международно-правовую доктрину о гражданстве, чтобы создать Модель Констелляции Гражданства. Для сбора информации об административной практике и жизненном опыте граждан было проведено 49 интервью с экспертами (правительственными чиновниками, юристами, учеными) и лицами с гражданствами Абхазии, Южной Осетии и Приднестровья. Одновременно был проведен опрос 400 человек, чтобы выяснить отношение граждан к оспариваемому гражданству. Путем триангуляции результатов удалось получить целостное представление о феномене гражданства в трех республиках.

Основные выводы

Необходимость применения подхода закона в контексте

Оспариваемый характер государств с ограниченным международным признанием

[930] Ragin 2014.
[931] Ganohariti 2020a; Krasniqi 2018.

приводит к тому, что их граждане подпадают под действие множественных конкурирующих режимов гражданства, тем самым обладая оспариваемым правовым статусом и, таким образом, сталкиваясь с проблемами физической, материальной и онтологической безопасности. Диссертация показывает, что в зависимости от диахронических изменений (таких как государственное признание и изменения в законодательстве), от определения административными органами различных государств относительно того, какой правовой статус (статусы) имеет лицо, и от физического местонахождения человека, граждане де-факто государства подвержены влиянию и обладают множеством гражданств, каждое из которых имеет разную степень признания, функциональности и влияния на жизненный опыт. Таким образом, первый вывод касается важности отхода от доктринальной позиции в отношении феномена гражданства и безгражданства в контексте государств с ограниченным международным признанием. Доктринальный подход утверждает, что государственной национальности де-факто государств не существует, потому что само де-факто государство не является государством. Однако, это гражданство наделяет правами и обязанностями и способствует формированию идентичности и государственному и национальному строительству наравне с гражданствами признанных государств - членов ООН. Таким образом, международное право о гражданстве имеет ограниченную полезность в объяснении реалий жизни граждан де-факто государств. Кроме того, в диссертации утверждается, что вместо однозначной взаимосвязи между государственным признанием и функциональностью гражданства последствия непризнания государства в разной степени влияют на аспекты гражданства. Иными словами, непризнание государственности или гражданства не означает автоматически, что их носители не имеют никаких прав; ни государственное признание (например, Абхазии, Южной Осетии), ни наличие гражданства признанного государства (например, России) автоматически не расширяют права.

Исследование гражданства в государствах с ограниченным международным признанием началось с обсуждения многообразия правовых статусов, которыми граждане могут обладать или которые могут быть им присвоены. В нем была представлена Модель Констелляции Гражданства, которая иллюстрирует переплетение нескольких правовых режимов в контексте оспариваемой государственности. Становится ясно, что административные органы государства по-разному определяют правовой статус того или иного лица. В то время как Абхазия и

Россия могут рассматривать жителя Абхазии с двойным гражданством как такового, только российское гражданство имеет широкое международное признание. Однако даже в этом случае непризнание российской «паспортизации» приводит к тому, что российские паспорта не признаются властями Грузии и ЕС.

	Признание гражданства де-факто государства	Непризнание гражданства де-факто государства
Тип I	Гражданин Де-Факто Государства	Лицо без Гражданства
		Гражданин Бывшего Базового Государства
Тип II	Двойное Гражданство (Де-Факто Государства и Государства-Покровителя)	Гражданин Бывшего Базового Государства
		Гражданин Государства-Покровителя
Тип III	Двойное Гражданство	Гражданин Признанного Государства (государств)

Модель относит граждан де-факто государства к одному из трех типов. В случае первого Типа физическое лицо может одновременно быть гражданином де-факто государства (Абхазия/Южная Осетия/Приднестровья), быть лицом без гражданства и/или иметь гражданство бывшего базового государства (Грузия/Молдова) в зависимости от административного органа. Лица, относящиеся ко второму типу, обладают двойным гражданством с точки зрения де-факто государства, в то время как с точки зрения непризнания они могут быть признаны гражданами бывшего базового государства (Грузия) или государства-покровителя (Россия)**.** В соответствии с Типом III физическое лицо имеет несколько гражданств, из которых оспаривается только гражданство де-факто государства. Напряженность внутри констелляции показывает, что человек может одновременно обладать множеством правовых статусов (или быть приписанным к ним) в зависимости от административной власти, которая занимается (не)признанием гражданства (гражданств) человека. В конечном счете, определение того, каким правовым статусом (статусами) обладают лица, связанные с государствами с ограниченным международным признанием, является результатом сближения государственного признания (статуса государства) и количества правовых статусов, которыми обладает физическое лицо.

Несмотря на то, что эта напряжённость существует и гражданство (гражданства), которым обладает человек, может быть оспорено, в равной степени, если не более важно, понимать права и обязанности, связанные с каждым гражданством. Даже несмотря на то, что определение гражданства (согласно международному праву) как юридической связи между отдельными лицами и признанным и суверенным

государством поставило бы под сомнение компетенцию оспариваемых государств предоставлять гражданство,[932] на практике правовой статус отдельных лиц по внешнему или международному праву не имеет большого значения при обсуждении прав, которыми пользуются в де-факто государстве. Простое определение того, является ли физическое лицо гражданином признанного государства (или является лицом без гражданства), не объясняет его прав и обязанностей. Например, отнесение жителя Южной Осетии к лицам без гражданства не означает признания того, что они обладают правами, традиционно связанными с гражданством, такими как право голосовать на выборах или баллотироваться на должность. Другими словами, люди могут осуществлять права и нести обязательства по отношению к де-факто государству, несмотря на его ограниченное международное признание. Не имеет большого значения, считают ли внешние субъекты отдельных лиц гражданами де-факто государства, гражданами бывшего базового государства, гражданами государства-покровителя, лицами без гражданства или сочетанием вышеперечисленного.

Расходящиеся позиции внешних субъектов в отношении признания гражданства де-факто государства (как гражданства в соответствии с международным правом) становятся решающими только с точки зрения внешней функциональности гражданства. Ограниченное признание гражданства Абхазии, Южной Осетии и Приднестровья и связанных с ним атрибутов (например, документов, удостоверяющих личность) негативно сказывается на внешнем функционировании гражданства, влияют на безопасность человека. Из-за ограниченного признания документов, выданных этими государствами, граждане ограничены в своих правах на передвижение и других второстепенных правах, таких как доступ к иностранному образованию или здравоохранению. Это вынуждает отдельных лиц получать “компенсационное гражданство”, [933] которое может быть использовано для осуществления прав за границей.

Несмотря на ограниченное международное признание, при нахождении в пределах де-факто государства местное гражданство “дает такой же набор прав и обязанностей,

[932] Atcho 2018; A. Grossman 2001; Manby 2020.
[933] Компенсационное или стратегическое гражданство в основном получают граждане стран среднего уровня, которые имеют возможность и стимулы для получения второго гражданства из стран Запада / ЕС. Это гражданство действует как страховой полис, усилитель возможностей и мобильности и даже символ статуса (Harpaz 2019a; 2019b; Harpaz & Mateos 2019).

как и другие гражданства, как то же молдавское и российское".[934] Граждане могут свободно въезжать, выезжать и проживать в де-факто государстве , получать доступ к социальным услугам (например, пенсиям, образованию), получать льготные тарифы по сравнению с иностранцами (например, здравоохранение, доступ к туристическим объектам) и участвовать в политической системе. Непризнание государственности оказывает ограниченное влияние на внутреннюю функциональность гражданства, и "…это не является показателем [образования государства и национальности]… Сам факт существования на этой территории национальной или культурной общности уже является достаточным основанием для того, чтобы нам самим считать наше гражданство полновесным". [935] Это перекликается с общим мнением собеседников о том, что гражданство де-факто государства не является ограничительным, а является полным и сравнимым с гражданством признанных государств. Внутреннее воздействие непризнания ограничено и менее заметно. Граждане этих государств могут осуществлять целый ряд политических, гражданских и социальных прав, в некоторых случаях даже лучше, чем в признанных государствах. Это подтверждает аргумент Гроссмана (2001) о том, что "непризнание политического образования в качестве государства лишает связанного с ним индивида некоторых, но не всех, прав, связанных с его гражданством". Таким образом, они могут рассматриваться как полноправные граждане на местном уровне. Тем не менее, непризнание государства может иметь последствия для качества жизни, поскольку развитие застопорилось из-за ограниченных иностранных инвестиций, риска рецидива конфликта или неспособности местных университетов выйти на международный уровень.[936] 65% респондентов опроса согласились с тем, что оспариваемый политический статус государства ущемляет их права и качество жизни. Поэтому последствия непризнания ощущаются по-разному, в зависимости от того, где находится человек. Если они проживают в пределах своей республики, последствия непризнания ограничены, поскольку их государство работает над обеспечением безопасности и благополучия своих граждан и конституционно гарантирует их права. И это несмотря на непризнание их правового статуса как гражданства в соответствии с международным правом.

[934] Гражданин ПМР.
[935] Гражданин РЮО.
[936] Coppieters 2021; Waal & von Löwis 2020.

Для того чтобы пользоваться правами в де-факто государстве, самое важное - это наличие общественного договора между индивидом и де-факто государством. Установленная правовая связь через гражданство не зависит от международного признания, и отсутствие международного признания не делает гражданство менее реальным. Гражданин будет по-прежнему иметь обязательства перед де-факто государством; в свою очередь, оно должно гарантировать физическую и материальную безопасность своих граждан. Поскольку де-факто государство развило и продемонстрировало основные атрибуты государственности, его граждане имеют право считать себя полноправными гражданами.

Обсуждение прав и обязанностей также подчеркивает напряженность между тем, кто осуществляет эффективный контроль, и тем, кто (какой субъект) несет ответственность по международному праву за безопасность и благополучие людей, проживающих в спорных территориях. Де-факто государство позиционирует себя обеспечением безопасности для своих граждан и признает свою обязанность (в соответствии с международным правом) защищать права своих граждан. [937] Аналогичным образом, интервью с собеседниками демонстрируют, что они чувствуют себя защищенными и не встречают препятствий в осуществлении гражданских прав. И это несмотря на то, что международное право возлагает основную ответственность на бывшие базовые государства и государства-покровители, даже если их способность влиять на контроль над администрацией оспариваемой территории ограничена. [938] Более того, несмотря на юридическую обязанность бывшего базового государства (согласно международному праву) защищать жителей оспариваемой территории, ограниченное признание им юридических документов (паспортов) препятствует им/жителям реализовать свои права. С нормативной позиции я разделяю мнение нескольких собеседников, которые утверждают, что признание паспортов является гуманитарной проблемой, поскольку, независимо от политического конфликта, права отдельных лиц (особенно права на

[937] Об этом свидетельствуют государства с ограниченным международным признанием, которые в одностороннем порядке присоединяются к различным международным конвенциям и признают действие международного права (SouthOssetia 2001, Art. 2; Transnistria 1996, Art. 10).
[938] Cullen & Wheatley 2013; Cwicinskaja 2018; Public Defender of Georgia 2017a.
Примерами могут служить дела Ilaşcu and Others v. Moldova and Russia (2004); Caldare and Others v. Moldova and Russia (2012); Dzhioyeva v. Georgia (2019); Georgia v. Russia (2021). Однако государства с ограниченным международным признанием не освобождаются от “обязанности уважать права всех жителей соответствующей территории, поскольку в противном случае эти права соблюдались бы властями государства, частью которого является данная территория” (PACE 2018).

передвижение) должны быть гарантированы. Таким образом, крайне важно отделить государственное признание от признания документов, удостоверяющих личность, путем принятия механизмов, снижающих изоляцию этих регионов.[939]

Еще одним свидетельством отсутствия однозначной взаимосвязи между государственным признанием и функциональностью гражданства является ограниченный эффект признания Абхазии и Южной Осетии в 2008 году. Признание было необходимо для тех, кто имел гражданство только Абхазии и Южной Осетии, поскольку теперь эти люди могли выезжать в Россию. Напротив, для лиц с двойным гражданством мало что изменилось, поскольку они по-прежнему будут полагаться на свое российское гражданство на международном уровне. Кроме того, последующие признания Науру, Никарагуа, Сирии и Венесуэлы имели ограниченный эффект, поскольку эти места не являются популярными направлениями. Даже тогда большинство из них все равно могли бы воспользоваться своим российским гражданством для поездок в эти места. Между тем, те, кто не смогли получить российское гражданство в рамках процедуры безгражданства, больше не имели на это путь/ возможности.[940] Таким образом, по злой иронии судьбы государственное признание, которое ценно для выживания государства, негативно сказалось на гражданах, имеющих гражданства только Абхазии или Южной Осетии, поскольку их доступ к российскому гражданству теперь был сильно ограничен.

Кроме того, обладание множественным гражданством или присвоение статуса лица с множественным гражданством не означает, что отдельные лица могут пользоваться всеми правами, связанными с каждым гражданством. Форма полугражданства (semi-citizenship) возникает, когда бывшее базовое государство (т.е. Грузия) утверждает, что жители “оккупированных территорий” являются его гражданами. Однако граждане Абхазии и Южной Осетии отказываются быть признанными грузинами, поскольку рассматривают это как посягательство на свой суверенитет. Более того, хотя по конституции гражданство Грузии влечет за собой права и обязанности, эти права и обязанности не могут осуществляться на индивидуальном уровне до тех пор, пока отдельные лица остаются “невидимыми” для грузинского государства. До тех пор, пока эти “граждане Грузии” остаются без документов, они не могут пользоваться правами, предоставляемыми грузинским государством, и гражданство будет

[939] Coppieters 2019b; Ker-Lindsay 2015.
[940] Russia 2002, Art. 14.

недействительным. Между тем, в Приднестровье, учитывая, что более 350 000 приднестровцев имеют молдавское гражданство, [941] вероятность феномена полугражданства невелика. Есть два случая, когда это может произойти. Во-первых, лица, имеющие право на получение молдавского гражданства, но решившие не приобретать никаких документов (по идеологическим причинам), могут столкнуться с трудностями при взаимодействии с молдавскими властями. Вторая категория - это лица, которым ещё предстоит активировать свое молдавское гражданство с помощью относительно простой административной процедуры. Так обстоит дело с молодежью, которой ещё предстоит активировать свое молдавское гражданство.

Другой пример полугражданства имеет место, когда российское гражданство, полученное жителями Абхазии и Южной Осетии, не имеет всеобщего признания. Несмотря на то, что эти лица являются гражданами России в соответствии с российским законодательством, непризнание Грузией и ее союзниками российских паспортов, выданных жителям “оккупированных территорий”, приводит к снижению функциональности, поскольку загранпаспорт не является действительным проездным документом во все 193 государства - члена ООН. Хотя это компенсационное гражданство было приобретено для расширения набора прав, споры о том, как было приобретено российское гражданство, ограничивают внешнюю функциональность этого гражданства.

Эти результаты демонстрируют, что хотя определение и признание правового статуса (статусов) физического лица является полезным “механизмом отнесения лиц к государствам”, [942] более важными являются социальные, экономические и политические последствия непризнания конкретного гражданства и связанных с ним документов. Непризнание международным сообществом гражданства де-факто государства в качестве национальности (или гражданства государства-покровителя) не лишает законной силы существование этого гражданства и связанных с ним прав и обязанностей. На самом деле не имеет значения, какой правовой статус, по мнению третьей страны, имеет гражданин де-факто государства, при условии, что отдельные лица могут осуществлять права и поддерживать их безопасность посредством гражданства де-факто государства. Несмотря на то, что это гражданство не получило широкого признания, оно по-прежнему влечет за собой права и обязанности,

[941] Government of the Republic of Moldova 2023.
[942] Brubaker 1992a: 31.

подобные гражданству любого другого государства. И наоборот, статус гражданина Грузии (или Молдовы) мало что значит с точки зрения связанных с ним прав и обязанностей, если отдельные лица не могут или не желают их реализовать. Наконец, государственное признание автоматически не улучшает качество жизни граждан. Несмотря на то, что формально признание Абхазии и Южной Осетии улучшило функциональность гражданства, на практике это только улучшило качество жизни монограждан (лиц без двойного гражданства), поскольку лица с двойным гражданством продолжали использовать свое российское гражданство на международном уровне. Вышеизложенное показывает, что наличие или присвоение множественного гражданства не означает, что люди могут пользоваться всеми правами, связанными с каждым гражданством, и непризнание юридического статуса третьими странами отдельного лица и пользование связанными с ним правами необязательно должны коррелировать.

Следовательно, необходимо более детальное понимание взаимосвязи между непризнанием гражданства и связанными с ним правами. Первый вывод заключается в том, что важно отойти от чисто юридической позиции, которая утверждает, что гражданства де-факто государства не существует, потому что оно не является государством с международной точки зрения, и вместо этого следовать подходу "закон в контексте". Международное право о гражданстве имеет ограниченную полезность для объяснения жизненных реалий граждан. Учитывая, что гражданство де-факто государства предоставляет права и обязанности наравне с теми, которые предоставляются признанными государствами, международное признание де-факто государства и его атрибутов (например, паспорта) не следует рассматривать как основополагающее для установления гражданства (что имеет место в соответствии с действующим международным правом). Кроме того, важно признать, что в международном праве, в силу его государственно-ориентированного характера, отсутствует терминология, которую можно было бы использовать для успешного обсуждения и описания феномена гражданства в государствах с ограниченным международным признанием. Таким образом, при изучении гражданства в таких государствах (и спорных территориях в более широком смысле) всегда необходимо задавать два вопроса. Каков правовой статус физического лица? Насколько функциональны эти правовые статусы?

Компенсационный характер гражданства

Второй вывод касается выбора, связанного с приобретением гражданства признанного государства. Функциональность или качество гражданства де-факто государства затрагивается прежде всего в его внешнем измерении. За границей физические лица могут использовать свои местные паспорта только для поездок в государства, которые предоставили признание. Граждане Абхазии и Южной Осетии могут выезжать в Россию, Науру, Никарагуа, Сирию и Венесуэлу, но въезд в любое другое признанное государство по местному загранпаспорту невозможен. Между тем, приднестровские паспорта не имеют никакого международного признания. В результате отдельные лица вынуждены приобретать компенсационное гражданство государства - члена ООН. [943] Второе гражданство, в первую очередь, носит компенсационный характер и используется для расширения прав, свобод и безопасности человека. Лица, пользующиеся этим правом, могут свободно выезжать за границу, получать иностранное образование, заниматься экономической деятельностью и получать доступ к социальным услугам, предоставляемым этим государством, в то же время в первую очередь полагаясь на местное гражданство в де-факто государстве. Однако второе гражданство носит не только утилитарный характер.[944] Причины, связанные с идентичностью**,** по которым следует приобрести гражданство, вступают в дискуссию, когда у человека есть выбор. Это имеет место в Приднестровье, где значительная часть лиц имеет право на получение множественного гражданства (и обладает им). Например, этнический русский или русскоговорящий человек может быть более склонен к получению российского гражданства, а русскоязычные, скорее всего, поедут в Россию, поскольку там легче интегрироваться. Напротив, другие могут отказаться от получения молдавского гражданства по идеологическим соображениям. Но когда молдавское гражданство было единственным вариантом, лица, не имеющие эмоциональной связи с Молдовой, все равно могли получить это гражданство. Рассуждения, связанные с идентичностью, были менее доминирующими в двух других республиках, где российское гражданство является единственным вариантом для многих.

[943] Причины приобретения гражданства, связанные с идентичностью, имеют второстепенное значение.
[944] 42,9% респондентов придали равное значение обоим измерениям. Этот вывод служит свидетельством, противоречащим ожиданию того, что компенсационное гражданство выполняет исключительно утилитарную функцию.

В диссертации также подчёркивается тот факт, что не все компенсационные гражданства расширяют права одинаковым образом. В Приднестровье лица с российским гражданством имеют меньшую свободу передвижения, чем лица с молдавским гражданством, которое обеспечивает безвизовый доступ в ЕС. Лица с приднестровским, российским и румынским гражданством имеют еще больший уровень свободы передвижения. Кроме того, функциональность компенсационного гражданства может быть снижена из-за того, что оно также оспаривается (т.е. российские паспорта жителей Абхазии и Южной Осетии). Отдельные лица будут обладать качественно различными правами (совокупностью прав) в зависимости от того, из какой страны второе гражданство/второе гражданство какой страны они имеют. Таким образом, даже если человек обладает признанным гражданством, между гражданами каждого де-факто государства создается иерархия, поскольку компенсационные гражданства имеют разные уровни функциональности.

Те, у кого есть несколько гражданств, всегда будут использовать их стратегически. Наиболее очевидным сценарием является ситуация, когда лица, проживающие в де-факто государстве, полагаются на свое местное гражданство, но используют свое другое гражданство (гражданства) для поездок за границу. Особенно в Приднестровье различные утилитарные решения определяют получение компенсационного гражданства, такие как желаемый путь миграции для трудоустройства или получения образования. Лица с множественным гражданством могут использовать их по-разному, например, один собеседник с российским и молдавским гражданством воспользовался своим молдавским паспортом для поездки автобусом через Украину в Россию (после 2014 года), а затем въехал в Россию как россиянин. Аналогичным образом, с началом войны в Украине приднестровцы, у которых были только российские паспорта, но которые имели право на получение молдавских, быстро осознали преимущества наличия молдавских документов, учитывая ныне ограниченную внешнюю функциональность российского гражданства. Это еще один пример диахронических изменений в функциональности гражданства. В некоторых случаях также может произойти, что, несмотря на то, что физическое лицо юридически является гражданином нескольких государств, оно будет преимущественно полагаться на одно гражданство, а не на другое. Это имело место среди нескольких приднестровцев, постоянно проживающих в ЕС по молдавскому паспорту, в то время как у них был просроченный российский паспорт. Таким образом, множественность правовых статусов не означает, что отдельные лица

будут в равной степени полагаться на права, вытекающие из гражданства. В зависимости от ситуации отдельные лица будут выбирать, какое гражданство они будут использовать для реализации необходимых прав.

Наконец, даже если физическое лицо обладает множеством правовых статусов, это не всегда означает множественность идентичностей. Хотя логично, что граждане не испытывают чувства привязанности к гражданству, которое им насильственно приписывается, отсутствие привязанности также имеет место в отношении их компенсационного гражданства. Уровень привязанности и гордости всегда выше по отношению к де-факто государству (несмотря на его меньшую функциональность). В Абхазии и Южной Осетии граждане больше гордились своим местным гражданством, и их гражданская идентичность была более исключительной. С другой стороны, среди приднестровцев наблюдалось многообразие гражданских идентичностей, но влияние местной идентичности по-прежнему было самым сильным.[945]

В то время как оспариваемый статус государства может быть условием для получения компенсационного гражданства (что приводит к множественности гражданств), стремление улучшить индивидуальное благосостояние путем приобретения гражданства характерно не только для государств с ограниченным международным признанием. Эти выводы перекликаются с работой Харпаза (2019), который утверждает, что двойное гражданство является преимуществом, которое используется лицами со слабыми гражданствами/паспортами для расширения прав, начиная с увеличение свободы передвижения. Он определил шесть путей, используемых для получения компенсационного гражданства: (i) получение гражданства на основе происхождения, (ii)приобретение гражданства по этническому признаку, (iii) стратегическое трансграничное рождение, (iv) миграция и проживание, (v) брак, (vi) гражданство через инвестиции.

В государствах с ограниченным международным признанием эти пути несколько отличаются от тех, которые были определены Харпазом. Первый путь - это получение гражданства посредством заявлений о безгражданстве (отсутствие признанного гражданства), как это было в случае с абхазами, южными осетинами (и некоторыми приднестровцами). Физические лица могли претендовать на российское гражданство

[945] При этом 36,7% респондентов указали на одинаковый уровень привязанности, а 52,2% указали на одинаковый уровень гордости по отношению к двум гражданствам.

(до 2008 года), поскольку Россия считала себя государством-продолжателем СССР и признавала свою ответственность за предоставление гражданства всем тем, кто не смог получить новое гражданство. Второй путь основан на притязаниях на территориальный суверенитет. Поскольку Молдова и Грузия претендуют на эти территории, их жители имеют право на это гражданство. Многие приднестровцы добровольно приобретают молдавское гражданство и пользуются связанными с ним правами. В отличие от этого, абхазы и южные осетины отказываются получать гражданство Грузии или претендовать на какие-либо связанные с этим права/привилегии. Наконец, как наблюдается среди приднестровцев, путь приобретения гражданства по национальности используется для получения украинского, румынского или болгарского гражданства. Некоторые этнические русские в трех республиках также могли бы получить российское гражданство по этому пути.

Таким образом, это подводит нас ко второму выводу: хотя обстоятельства, влияющие на государства с ограниченным международным признанием, могут быть уникальными, способ, которым люди обсуждают и решают проблему ограниченной функциональности гражданства и укрепляют свою человеческую безопасность, подобен способу граждан признанных государств со слабыми гражданствами/паспортами. При этом их граждане используют пути, которые не наблюдаются в случаях приобретения гражданства лицами из признанных государств.

Сохранение государства через этнодемографическую безопасность

Гражданство создает правовые отношения и общественный договор между государством и физическим лицом, при этом государство гарантирует безопасность человека. Гражданство выполняет и другую функцию – гарантирование выживания государства. Исследуя с государственного уровня, можно увидеть, как государство с помощью законодательства и политики определяет своих граждан (т.е. осуществляет демографический контроль) [946] и пытается создать коллективную национальную идентичность. Посредством политики принадлежности государство может проводить различие между теми, кто принадлежит к демосу, а кто нет, тем самым используя режимы гражданства в процессе государственного и национального строительства.

[946] Bloemraad et al. 2008; Ignatieff 1987; Kochenov 2019; Stiks 2015; Vink 2017.

Стремление де-факто государства к физической и онтологической безопасности выходит за рамки внешних угроз (например, вмешательство Грузии/Молдовы). Де-факто государства в равной степени обеспокоены внутренними угрозами, такими как изменения в их этнодемографическом балансе.[947] Эта диссертация свидетельствует о том, как де-факто государства, основанные на этнонационалистических принципах, секьюритизируют и инструментализируют гражданство для достижения этнодемографической безопасности и, как следствие, в более широком смысле, онтологической и физической безопасности.

Этнодемографическая безопасность вызывала озабоченность только в Абхазии и Южной Осетии, которые основаны на этнонационалистическом принципе, главной целью которого является сохранение соответствующей титульной группы (абхазы/осетины). Собеседники признали, что республики являются единственными государствами, где гарантирована культурная и языковая идентичность этих двух групп. Приднестровская идентичность носит более экспансивный, территориальный, гражданский и надэтнический характер и утвердилась с созданием Приднестровского государства. [948] Приднестровье придерживается либерального и экспансивного подхода к гражданству, который не основан на этнических принципах и обеспечивает легкий доступ к гражданству.

Принятая политика в области гражданства делится на три категории: исключение групп меньшинств, которые угрожают демографическому балансу, предоставление гражданства членам титульной группы (диаспоры) для изменения демографического баланса в ее пользу или принятие осторожного подхода к лицам, обладающим гражданством государства-покровителя.

В Абхазии после депортаций 1864 года абхазы стали меньшинством и в настоящее время составляют 51% населения. В Абхазии также проживают этнические грузины, которые составляют 18% населения, многие из которых имеют грузинское гражданство. [949] Учитывая, что эти лица принадлежат к титульной группе государства-агрессора и имеют его гражданство, абхазское государство очень чувствительно относится к тому, что Грузия потенциально использует это население

[947] O'Loughlin et al. 2011.
[948] Blakkisrud & Kolstø 2011; Chamberlain-Creangã 2006.
[949] Department of State Statistics of the Republic of Abkhazia 2005; Matsuzato 2011; State Committee of Abkhazia on Statistics 2021.

в качестве “пятой колонны” для влияния на внутреннюю политику.[950] Кроме того, сохраняя грузинское гражданство, человек признает, что Абхазия не является государством, что еще больше угрожает онтологической безопасности Абхазии.[951] В результате абхазское государство исключило их из демоса, о чем свидетельствует аннулирование более 20 000 гражданств в 2014 году. Между тем, в Южной Осетии государство также чувствительно к грузинскому вторжению, но этнические грузины, большинство из которых зарегистрированы как лица без гражданства, составляют лишь 7,4% населения и, таким образом, представляют меньшую этнодемографическую угрозу.[952]

Государство также может участвовать в предоставлении гражданства лицам, принадлежащим к титульной группе. Абхазия предоставила гражданство мурзаканским абхазам, которые считаются потомками абхазов, насильственно ассимилированных в грузинский этнос и вынужденных принять грузинские имена. Учитывая, что Абхазия хочет увеличить свою титульную группу, для этой группы была принята политика изменения их имен и этнической принадлежности и приобретения абхазского гражданства. Другая группа - абхазская диаспора, проживающая преимущественно в Западной Азии. Это население имеет право на абхазское гражданство и может сохранять двойное гражданство с любым государством (в отличие от неабхазских групп, которые могут сохранять двойное гражданство только с Россией).[953] Таким образом, абхазское государство занимается демографическим проектированием, чтобы обеспечить свою онтологическую и физическую безопасность, исключая нежелательных этнических грузин, одновременно предоставляя мурзаканским абхазам и абхазской диаспоре путь к восстановлению своей идентичности.

В Южной Осетии вопрос о предоставлении гражданства диаспоре численностью 700 000 человек, включая полмиллиона, проживающих в России, становится всё более политизированным. Некоторые южноосетинцы считают, что все осетины должны иметь право на получение гражданства, в то время как другие видят в этом угрозу. Существует опасение, что лица, не постоянно проживающие в Южной Осетии,

[950] ARUAA 2022; Clogg 2008; Prelz Oltramonti 2016; Sharia 2021.
[951] Grzybowski 2022; Taniya 2021.
[952] South Ossetia Department of State Statistics 2016.
[953] Кроме того, чтобы иметь право на получение гражданства, жители неабхазкой номинальности должен был проживать в Абхазии в период 1994-1999 годов или пройти процесс натурализации.

окажут существенное влияние на избирательную политику. Однако прозвучали призывы либерализовать политику гражданства и предоставить доступ к гражданству всей осетинской диаспоре. С одной стороны, предоставление гражданства Южной Осетии рассматривается как угроза онтологической безопасности нынешнему самоощущению и не приносит никаких дополнительных выгод (поскольку мало кто захотел бы поселиться в Южной Осетии или сражаться за нее в случае очередного вооруженного конфликта). С другой стороны, это рассматривается как ресурс, поскольку, увеличивая численность населения, Южная Осетия может обеспечить свое выживание и, таким образом, обеспечить свою долгосрочную безопасность и выживаемость.

Наконец, Абхазия и Южная Осетия все с большей осторожностью относятся к лицам, имеющим российское гражданство. Абхазы опасаются, что либерализация двойного гражданства откроет двери для получения гражданства Абхазии гражданами России, включая этнических грузин, что в очередной раз приведет к тому, что абхазы станут меньшинством. Аналогичным образом, как обсуждалось выше, некоторые жители Южной Осетии опасаются, что осетинская диаспора с гражданством России нарушит электоральный баланс. Нерешительность в предоставлении гражданства иностранцам, не входящим в диаспору, также отражается на пороге натурализации. Лица, получающие натурализацию в Абхазии, должны проживать там в течение десяти лет и свободно владеть абхазским языком. Эти требования более жесткие, чем в Южной Осетии (пятилетнее проживание, владение русским/осетинским языками) или Приднестровье (однолетнее проживание, отсутствие языковых требований). Во всех трех случаях российское гражданство рассматривалось как преимущество, расширяющее права личности. Однако российско-украинская война в 2022 году и волна призыва на военную службу привели к тому, что это гражданство России стало обузой. Хотя российские граждане, проживающие в трех республиках, до сих пор не пострадали, будущие события могут сложиться таким образом, что Россия может оказать давление на местные власти, чтобы они помогли ее военной кампании, позволив ей мобилизовать местное население.

Третий вывод демонстрирует, что государства с ограниченным международным признанием не только заняты обеспечением безопасности в отношении внешних угроз, но и обеспокоены внутренними угрозами, такими как этногеографическая незащищенность. Несмотря на сходство между Абхазией, Южной Осетией и

Приднестровьем, различия в их истории, моделях государственного строительства, демографическом составе, политике диаспоры, уровне зависимости от государства-покровителя (и его гражданства) и уровне соперничества с бывшим базовым государством способствуют формированию различных режимов гражданства, которые касаются конкретных проблем каждого государства. В частности, когда государство создается в честь титульной группы, но эта группа не составляет подавляющего большинства, государство и титульная группа почувствуют угрозу и примут политику гражданства в свою пользу. Следует отметить, что в то время как секьюритизация и инструментализация гражданства в государствах с ограниченным международным признанием находятся под влиянием сецессии и непризнания государства, принятая политика отражает политику признанных государств.

Нормализация – от де-факто государства к государству

Исходя из двух предыдущих разделов, последний вывод касается нормального отношения к гражданству и построению режима гражданства в государствах с ограниченным международным признанием. Последний вывод подтверждает дискурс среди граждан о нормализации[954] этих государств и сходство между ними и признанными государствами - членами ООН в том, как они подходят к вопросам, связанным с гражданством. Данная диссертация перекликается с аргументами Комаи (2018) и Високи (2022) о важности отказа от определения/группирования государств исключительно на основе непризнания; вместо этого их следует сравнивать и изучать наряду с признанными государствами.[955]

Обсуждения с гражданами отражали это стремление к нормальной жизни, поскольку они утверждали, что в их государстве разработаны режимы гражданства точно так же, как и в государствах - членах ООН. Дискурс о нормализации свидетельствует о более широкой модели, подчеркивая, что их проекты государственного и национального

[954] Visoka & Lemay-Hébert 2022.
[955] Комаи концептуализировал государства с ограниченным международным признанием как “небольшие зависимые юрисдикции” (такие как Микронезия, Маршалловы Острова и Палау, которые зависят от США). В аналогичном свете Фрер (2014) концептуализировал Абхазию как “маленькое государство”, сравнимое с государствами Тихого океана и Карибского бассейна. Страдая от непризнания, эти государства и их граждане сталкиваются с социально-экономическими, внутриполитическими и геополитическими проблемами и реагируют на них как (граждане) небольших признанных государств. Например, и Приднестровье, и Молдова имеют низкое качество жизни по сравнению с Западной Европой, и на протяжении многих лет они сталкивались с сокращением численности населения, поскольку люди переезжали в Россию или ЕС в поисках лучших экономических возможностей.

строительства не так уж сильно отличаются от проектов новых независимых государств - членов ООН.[956] У них были схожие траектории и дебаты, связанные с национальным строительством, за эти годы они укрепили государственный потенциал и демонстрируют схожие атрибуты государственности. Собеседники не представляли себя или свое государство в состоянии исключения или чрезвычайного положения. Вместо этого они ссылались на то, что определили свой будущий статус и создали государство и гражданство наравне с признанными государствами.

Как подчеркнул один из собеседников, “качество гражданства зависит только от качества государства...Оно зависит от престижа государства, и оно зависит от эффективности политических, экономических и правовых институтов государства…если бы качество этих институтов в Южной Осетии было бы выше, если бы у нас там были независимые суды, нормальная среда, более-менее нормальная, то престиж Южноосетинского государства был бы намного выше”. Цитата осталась бы в силе, если бы Южную Осетию заменило какое-либо другое признанное государство. Непризнание становится лишь одним из условий, которое приводит к снижению функциональности гражданства. Нормализация положения государств с ограниченным международным признанием и сравнение с другими государствами демонстрирует, что их гражданство не следует рассматривать как нечто ненормальное. В глазах граждан они являются гражданами суверенных государств, хотя и с ограниченным признанием.

В конечном счете, несмотря на оспаривание внешними субъектами законного существования де-факто государств, они демонстрируют атрибуты признанных государств - членов ООН и ведут себя как таковые. В попытке показать, что они функционируют точно так же, как и признанные государства, они занимаются законотворчеством и изготовлением документов, удостоверяющих личность.[957] Они также склонны копировать доминирующие модели государственности, и в некоторых случаях распространение государственных институтов и законов таково, что законодательство не просто похоже, но дословно идентично законодательству их союзников.[958]

[956] Brubaker 1992b; Shevel 2009; 2017; Tabachnik 2019.
[957] Klem et al. 2021; Navaro-Yashin 2007; Waters 2006.
[958] Gerrits & Bader 2016.

Нормальность также наблюдалась в отношении различных уровней функциональности гражданства, необходимости компенсационного гражданства для преодоления этих ограничений, а также секьюритизации и инструментализации гражданства для сохранения этнодемографического баланса в пользу определенной группы. Общая функциональность гражданства де-факто государства может быть сопоставима или даже лучше, чем у государств - членов ООН. Граждане многих признанных государств за пределами "Глобального Севера" (например, Афганистана, Сомали, Шри-Ланки, Сирии), несмотря на наличие признанного гражданства и проездного документа, ограничены в осуществлении своей свободы передвижения из-за существующих визовых барьеров и паспортного апартеида.[959] Более того, государства с ограниченным международным признанием в своих попытках воспроизвести форму государства/государственности, в конечном итоге увековечивают существующие онтологические структуры гражданства в качестве инструментов контроля над населением.[960] Хотя непризнание значительно снижает внешнюю функциональность гражданства, эти гражданства по-прежнему относятся к тому же спектру, что и другие государства. Так уж получилось, что граждане де-факто государств находятся на самой крайней стадии паспортного апартеида.

[959] Kochenov 2020; Kochenov & Ganty 2023.
[960] Grzybowski 2017; 2019.

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