



SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSION OF ETHNIC MINORITIES

Social and Economic Exclusion of Ethnic Minorities

Social Justice Center
Tbilisi, 2022



The research is prepared with the financial support of the Open Society -Georgia Foundation. The opinion expressed in the research may not reflect the position of the Foundation. Accordingly, the Foundation is not responsible for the content of the material.

Research Supervisor: Tamta Mikeladze

Researchers: Teona Piranishvili, Zaza Barbaqadze

Cover design: Salome Latsabidze

It is forbidden to reprint, copy or disseminate given materials for commercial purposes without written consent of the oorganisation

Citation: Social Justice Center, Teona Piranishvili, Zaza Barbaqadze, ,Social and Economic Exclusion of Ethnic Minorities', 2022

© Social Justice Center

Address: 12B I. Abashidze st.

Tbilisi, Georgia

Tel.: +995 032 2 23 37 06

<https://socialjustice.org.ge/>

info@socialjustice.org.ge

<https://www.facebook.com/socialjustice.org.ge>

Social and economic exclusion of ethnic minority groups

1. Social exclusion of minorities in Georgia – problem description

Ethnic minorities are among the most socially and economically vulnerable groups in Georgia, caused by the systemic practice of marginalization and neglect. No government has made positive steps to improve the social and economic state of minorities, and never institutional and legal mechanisms have been devised for eradicating the reasons for their social exclusion. Despite the fact that social and economic integration of minorities is one of the strategic priorities of the state, which is also described in the state integration strategy and action plan, exclusion remains one of the main problems, and quantitative research data attests to the same.

1.1. Social markers that show the state of social exclusion and vulnerability of ethnic minorities

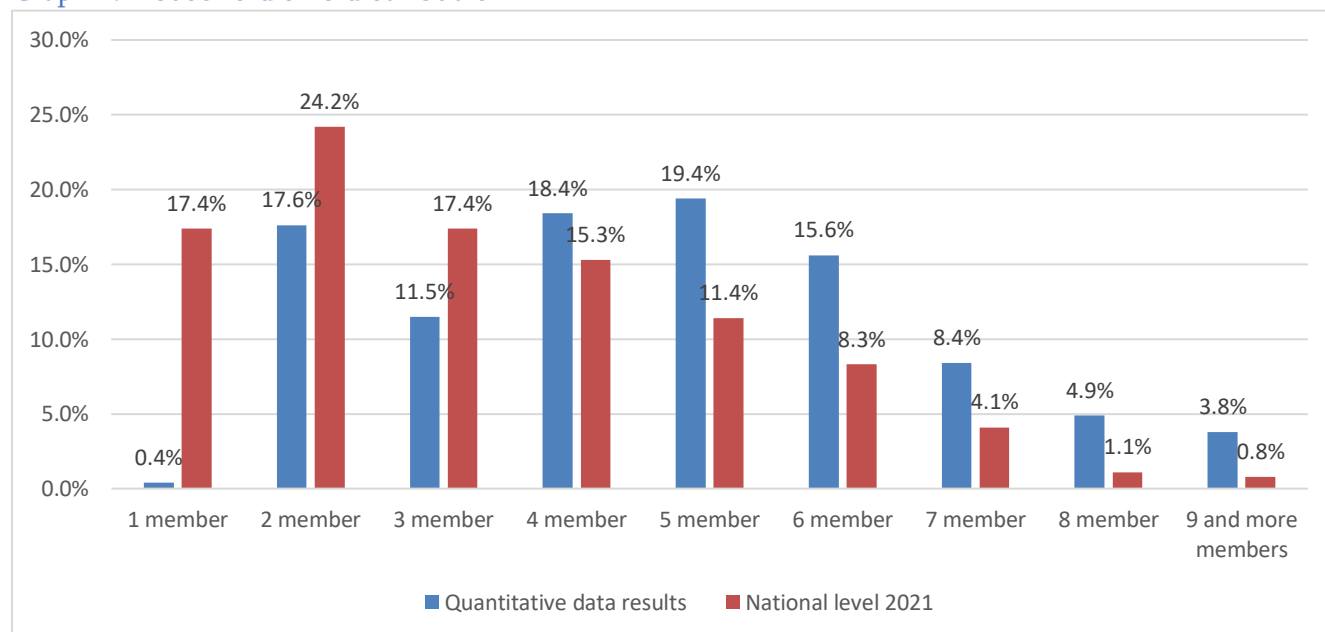
1.1.1. Comparable social and economic data

The proposed sub-chapter presents general socioeconomic characteristics of ethnic minorities living in Georgia, which was included in the quantitative research of Institute of Social Studies and Analysis (ISSA) and is now compared to the same data for overall population of Georgia.¹ The following researches were used for the comparison with ISSA researcher results: 1. integrated household survey, prepared by the National Statistics Office of Georgia; 2. Labour force survey, also prepared by the National Statistics Office of Georgia. Both of these researches depict 2021 data.

a) Household structure analysis

At the initial stage of the socioeconomic analysis, household structure assessment is important.

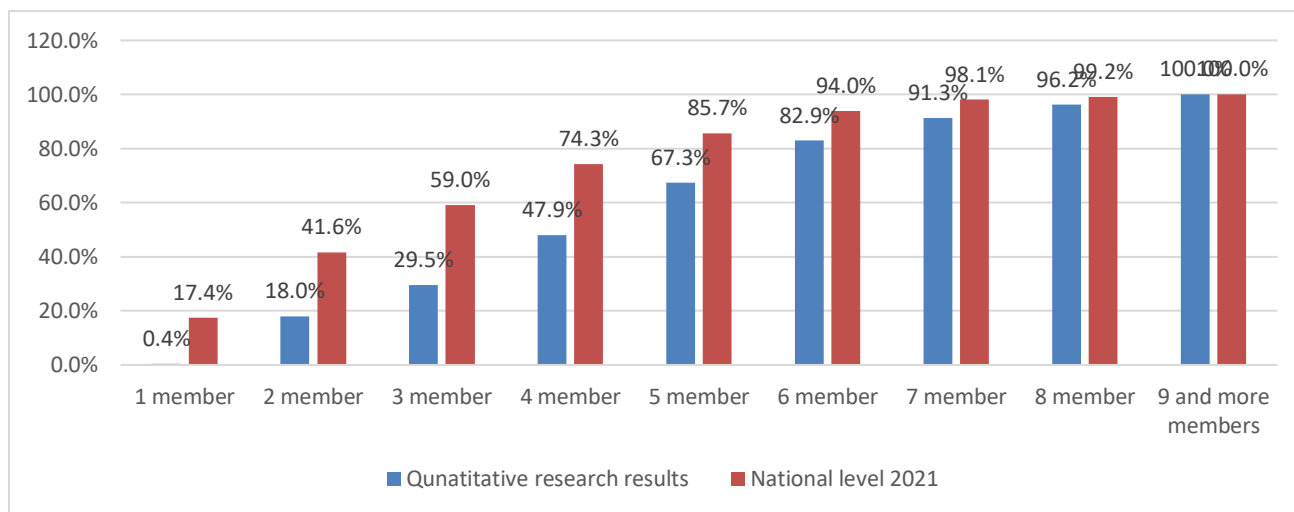
Graph 1: Household size distribution



¹ Note: when the population of Georgia or households are mentioned, these mean both ethnic Georgians and minorities.

As Graph 1 demonstrates, the average household size of ethnic minority representatives is substantially different from the identical number across the whole country. One member households comprise 17.4% of the overall number of households nationwide. This number is much lower in ethnic minorities. As demonstrated by the data, only 0.4% of households are one-member households. Besides, the number of 2 and 3 member households is high nationwide, in comparison to ethnic minorities. As of 4 and more-member households, in each of this category the portion in the ethnic minority supercedes the national levels. For example, 18.4% of the households surveyed by ISSA are 4 member households, and on national level this rate is 3.1% percentage point lower (15.3%). This difference is maintained for relatively bigger households too (families with more than 4 members). The above described data underscores the fact that ethnic minority households are relatively big in size as compared to the overall population rates in Georgia.

Graph 2: Distribution of the cumulative number of permanent household members



It is interesting how statistically reliable is the existing difference in the average size of the families, revealed by the analysis of ethnic minorities and the overall country population. For this, let's take a look at the Table below.

Comparison between the average data (T-test) – the average size of a family

	Sample size	Average age	T test
Ethnic minority	1,395	4.7	2.479 * 10 ⁻¹¹³ < 0.05
Population of Georgia	13,621	3.3	

As Table 1 shows, the average size of a family in the ethnic minority is 4.7, while this number is 30% lower nationally and equals 3.3. The Table also shows that the difference between the average data is statistically reliable, as T-test is lower than 5% probability. Therefore, there is 95% certainty that the difference between the average size of households is statistically reliable².

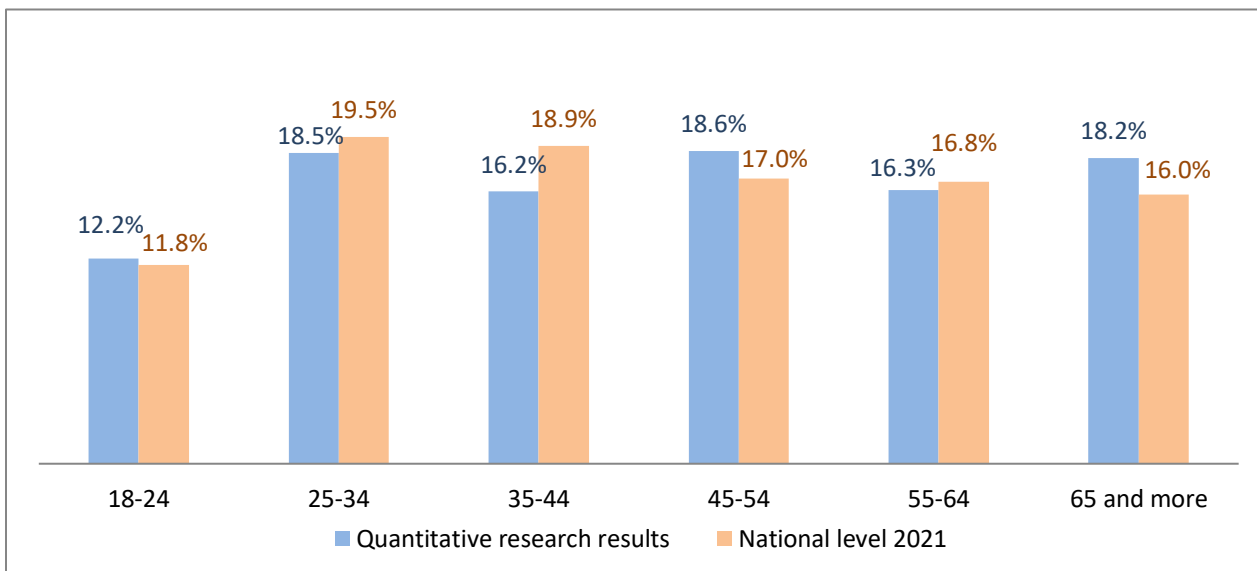
² In reality, we can also have 99.9% statistical reliability, nonetheless, here and elsewhere, the document estimates the 95% reliability.

Therefore the results of the quantitative research (integrated household survey and the ethnic minority research) demonstrated a significant difference between the average sizes of households. A typical ethnic minority family is comprised of 4.7 people, while in case of the whole population of Georgia this identical data equals to 3.3. Difference between the averages is statistically reliable.

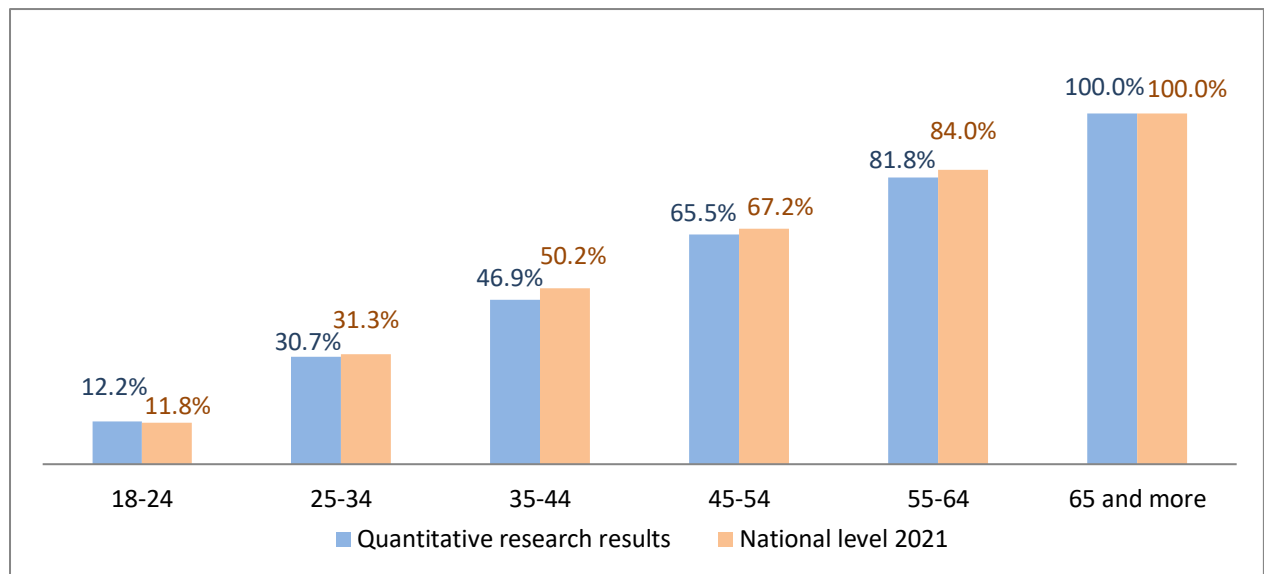
b) Analysis of the population age

Let's look at Graphs 3 and 4 to compare the age distribution among the quantitative research respondents and the whole population.

Graph 3: Population distribution according to age



Graph 4: Cumulative distribution of the population according to their age



Graph 3 represents the results of the surveyed ethnic minorities and the whole country's population according to their age in 2021. As the data show, the distribution is more or less similar for the age of the respondents. For a thorough analysis of the results depicted in Graph 5, we can use the cumulative distribution function presented in Graph 6. In the given Graph, the cumulative distribution function is shown for both the ethnic minorities and the whole population. We can notice that above the 18-24 age cohort, the national data for cumulative distribution is always higher in each age group than in ethnic minorities. According to the data, the share of persons under 34 comprised 30.7% among the quantitative research participants and 31.3% nationwide. Similarly, the share of persons under 44 years was 50.2% in the quantitative research and 46.9% nationwide. The same goes for the higher age groups too. This demonstrates that the average age of the overall population exceeds that of ethnic minorities.

We can use a statistical analysis tool to prove the opinions mentioned in the paragraph above.

Table 2: Comparison of averages (T-test) – the average age of household members of age

	Sample size	Average age	T-test
Ethnic minority	1,510	46	$3.41 * 10^{-7} < 0.05$
Population of Georgia	58,316	50	

The information presented in Table 2 allows us to prove the statistical reliability of the difference between the averages of the two distributions. As the Table shows, the average age of surveyed ethnic minority representatives is 46 years, while the average age in the overall population is 50³. As Table 1 shows, the probability estimated by the T-test is very close to 0 ($3.41 * 10^{-7} < 0.05$). Hence, the possibility of the difference between average ages being statistically unreliable is very low. Therefore, the difference between the averages of 2 samples, as counted by a 95% probability rate, is statistically reliable.

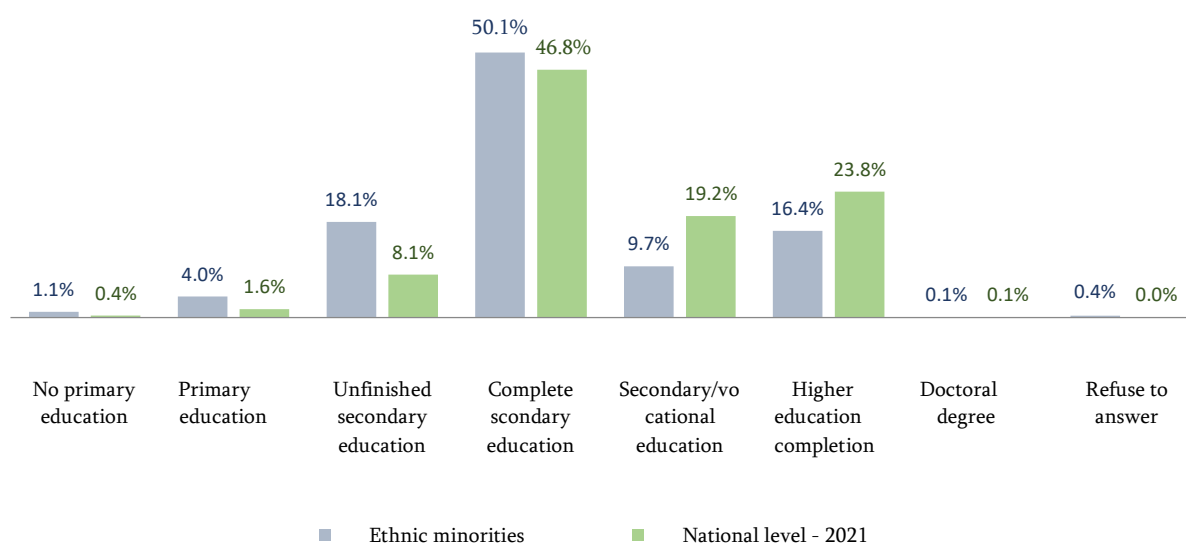
³ Please note that in both cases, we talk about the average age of the adult sample.

Therefore, the average age of ethnic minorities (46 years) is rather small, compared to the average age of the overall population of Georgia (50 years).

c) Indicators related to education

The next part of the comparative analysis of demographic data concerns the analysis of the education level of ethnic minorities and the overall population in Georgia. Please see Graph 5.

Graph 5: Distribution of adult population according to education levels



According to the data shown in Graph 5, it is characteristic of ethnic minorities to have only completed lower level education compared to the population countrywide. In reality, in the case of the overall population of Georgia, 43.1% have reached secondary or higher education level; in the case of ethnic minorities, it is 26.2%. Additionally, the proportion of those ethnic minority representatives is high who haven't completed secondary education. The percentage of ethnic minorities who have not completed secondary education is 23.2%, while this is 10.1% for the overall population.

Let's discuss the information per region/settlement in the Table below.

Adult population distribution according to the level of education – per region/settlement

	Kakheti	Pankisi	Samtskhe-Javakheti	Kvemo Kartli	Ethnic minorities
No primary education	3.6%	0.0%	0.3%	0.6%	1.1%
Primary education	13.2%	0.8%	0.3%	1.6%	4.0%
Unfinished secondary education	37.2%	10.7%	8.8%	15.5%	18.1%
Complete secondary education	32.9%	52.8%	57.5%	56.9%	50.1%
Secondary/vocational education	7.1%	11.7%	14.0%	6.2%	9.7%
Higher education completion	5.1%	23.6%	18.4%	18.9%	16.4%

Doctoral degree	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%
Refuse to answer	0.7%	0.2%	0.8%	0.0%	0.4%

According to the table data, those without completed secondary education are significantly more among Azerbaijanis in Kakheti (54% of the respondents). This number is relatively small in other targeted survey regions/settlements: Kvemo Kartli – 17.7%, Pankisi – 11.5%, and Samtskhe-Javakheti, the % of people who have completed secondary education is 9.4%.

At the same time, the number of those households in the Kakheti region who have reached higher than secondary education level is relatively low (12.2% of respondents). The given rate is relatively high in other regions/settlements: Pankisi – 35.5%, Samtskhe-Javakheti – 32.4%, and Kvemo Kartli – 25.3%.

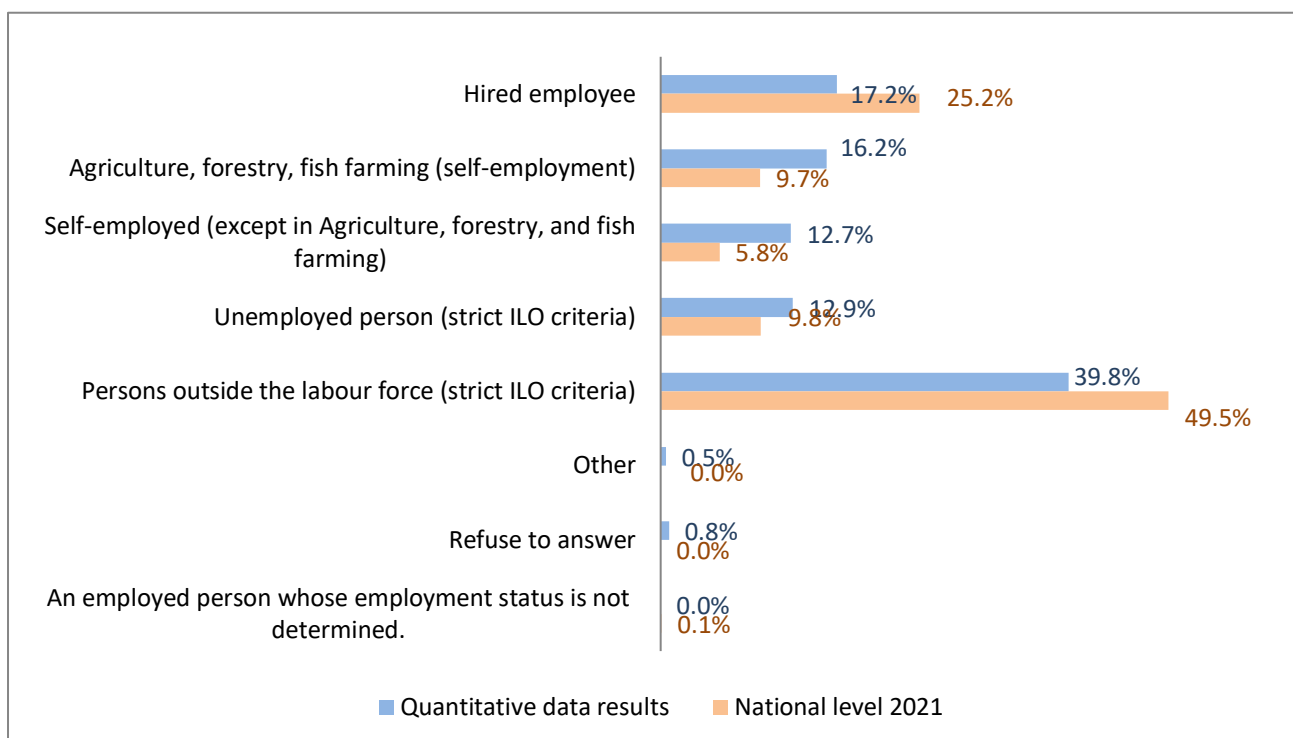
To conclude, in case of ethnic minorities, the number of those people who haven't completed secondary education is 23.2%. In case of the whole population of Georgia the same number is 10.1%. At the same time, the number of those who have completed vocational and higher education is low among ethnic minorities. If this number amounts to 43.1% in the whole population of Georgia, it is only 26.6% among ethnic minorities. The levels of education is critically low and unfair among ethnic Azerbaijanis in Kakheti region. The proportion of people in this region who have not completed secondary education is 54%. At the same time, in the very same community, the proportion of those who have reached education levels that are higher than secondary education, is low (only 12.2%).

d) Work and labour market

Let's start discussing the economic situation by analyzing the employment status among the working-age population. Let's discuss Graph 6, which displays the employment status information about the ethnic minorities and the whole population of Georgia (the working age).

Graph 6: Employment status as of 2021⁴

⁴ Please note that in Graph and in its caption, the unemployment rate is calculated from the pool of respondents and not from the economically active population, as it is usually done. This method of evaluating employment and unemployment together, is handy. Besides, it is not a barrier to achieve the main goal of this paper – to make a comparative analysis between the data on overall population and ethnic minority.



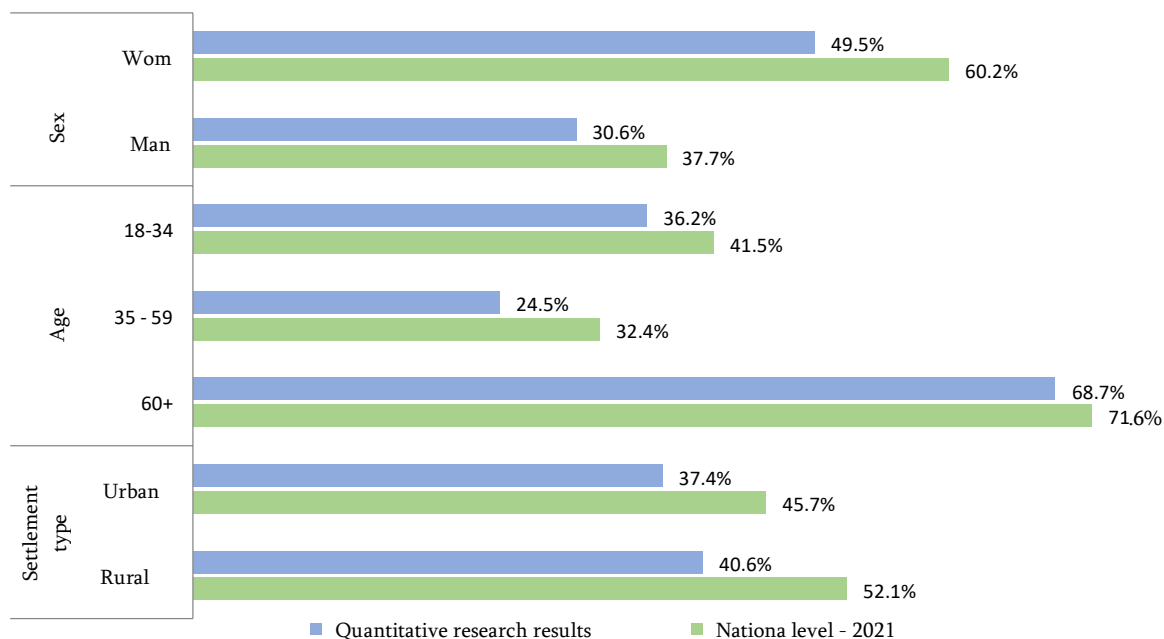
As Graph 6 shows, in the case of ethnic minorities, 12.9% of the respondents are unemployed. Nationally the share of unemployed people among the working-age population is 9.8% (3.1 percentage points less unemployment). In the case of both the ethnic minorities and the overall population of the country, strict ILO criteria are used to identify unemployment. According to this criteria, a person is unemployed if s/he doesn't have a paid job and has been looking for it for the past 4 weeks.

Compared to nationwide statistics, the labour force participation rate is high among ethnic minorities. This includes those people who are either employed or can be described as unemployed. People outside the labour force are those who neither work nor actively search for employment for different subjective or objective reasons. Graph 8 shows that the portion of the population outside the labour force nationally is 49.5%, while in ethnic minorities, it is 39.8%. This automatically means that the proportion of people participating in the labour force is 50.5% nationwide and 60.2% among ethnic minorities. This shows that on average, the ethnic minority representatives are economically more active. This means there are more (in percentages) ethnic minority representatives who are either employed or don't work but are actively looking for employment opportunities. Notably, the portion of ethnic minorities outside the labour force is highest in Kakheti (49.3% of respondents). In other regions/settlements, the share of the population outside the labour force is Kvemo Kartli – 45.6%, Samtskhe-Javakheti - 33.2%, and Pankisi - 30.9%.

As for the employment and the distribution of the employed population according to different types of employment: 46.1% of ethnic minority representatives surveyed are employed. 17.2% have an employer, 16.2% are employed in agriculture and 12.7% are self-employed.

Compared to the results of ethnic minorities, the proportion of the employed population is low in the whole population. This number is 40.7%, which on its hand, is 5.4% less than the ethnic minority employment level. Among those employed, the biggest portion comes from hired employees, 25.2%, 9.7% is involved in agriculture, while 5.8% pertains to the self-employed category.

Graph 7 shows information about the sex, age and settlement type of the population outside the labour force. The data is for 2021.



In 2021 both in the case of ethnic minorities and the whole population, the share of women surpassed the share of men in the labour force. Indeed, the percentage of economically inactive⁵ women is 49.5% among ethnic minorities and 60.2% in the population. As for men, the situation is as follows: 30.6% of ethnic minority men and 37.7% of the men from the entire population are economically inactive.

Let's discuss the distribution of people outside the labour force according to their ages. Distribution is shown for three different age categories:

1. The youth - 18-34 age group,
2. Middle-aged population - 35-59,
3. People close to and in pension age/60+ population

Graph 7 shows that the share of the economically inactive population is exceptionally high among the people of 60 and above. Please note that the above-mentioned is valid for either of the ethnic minorities (68.7% of the respondents) or the whole population (71.6% of the respondents). Additionally, the proportion of youth outside the labour force is also high. 36.2% of ethnic minorities between 18-34 is outside the labour force, and the same number for the whole population stands at 41.5%. As for the middle-aged population, people outside the labour force are relatively less. As Graph 7 shows, only 24.5% of the middle-aged ethnic minorities and 32.4% of the population is outside the labour force.

The last section of Graph 7 shows economic activity data distribution according to the settlement type (rural, urban). According to the presented data, 37.4% of ethnic minorities living in urban areas are economically inactive. The same value is relatively high for the urban population on the national level and amounts to 45.7%. As for the rural areas, in general, rural areas are characterized by lower economic activity levels (otherwise, high levels of inactivity). Indeed, 40.6% of ethnic minorities living in rural areas and 52.1% of the overall rural population is economically inactive.

⁵ The term 'outside the labour force' and 'economically inactive (passive)' are synonyms in the text. Similarly, terms such as 'a person belonging to labour force' and 'economically active' are synonyms.

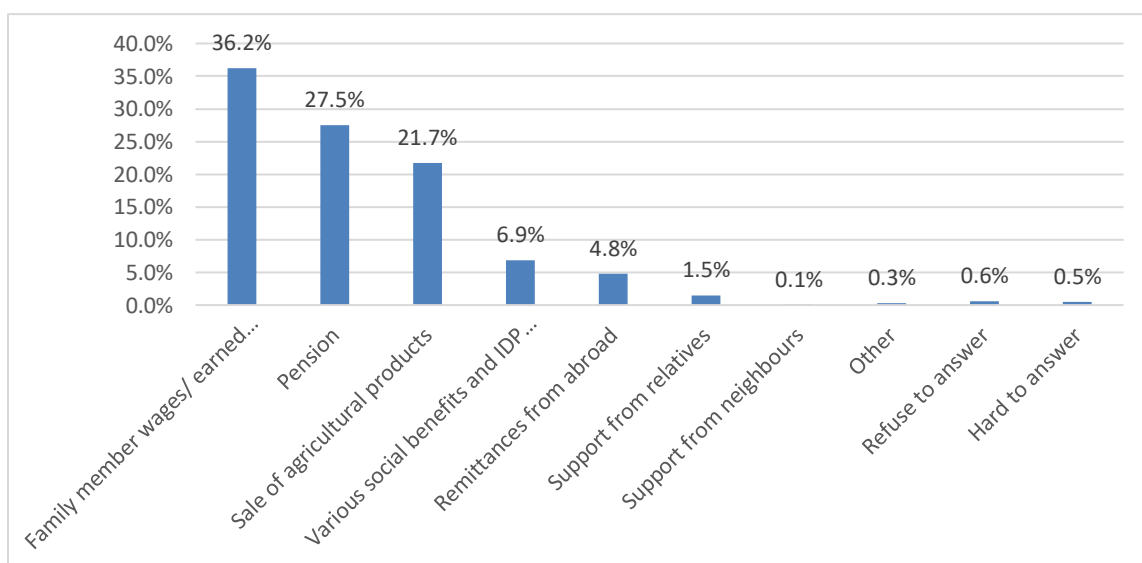
Compared to ethnic minorities, bigger portion of overall population is outside the labour force. Indeed, this number amounts to 49.5% for the overall population, and 39.8% for ethnic minorities. At the same time, the unemployment rate estimated among ethnic minorities (12.9%) is higher than that of the overall off-age population in Georgia (9.8%). The above-mentioned two facts show that ethnic minorities are more actively involved in job-search than typical country residents. But ethnic minorities face barriers in finding employment for what reason unemployment is high among them.

When we analyze the issue of unemployment according to sex, age and the settlement type, we see that being outside the labour force is relatively more characteristic for women than men. Besides, being economically inactive is more typical for the population above 60. And if we analyze the data according to settlement types (rural and urban), there are no major differences in data in this regard.

e) Main sources of income

The given sub-chapter analyzes the main sources of income of ethnic minority households and the households in the general population. The quantitative study of ethnic minorities and the study of the National Statistics Office of Georgia about income sources present their data in comparable form but not in identical forms. Let's discuss Graphs 8 and 9.

Graph 8: Main sources of income of ethnic minority households – 2021 data



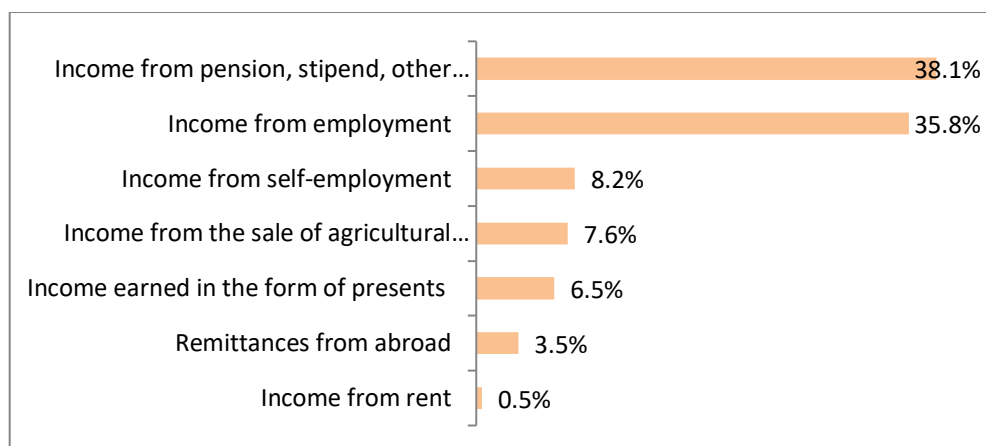
Graph 8 shows information about the main sources of income for ethnic minority representatives. According to the results obtained, the main sources of income are split into the following categories:

1. Family member wages and earned salary: this is a major income source category for the 36.2% of surveyed ethnic minority households;
2. Pension: income from pensions represents a main source of income for 27.5% of the population;
3. The sale of agriculture products: the sale of agriculture products represents the main source of

income for 21.7% of interviewed ethnic minorities.

Other sources of income represent the main sources of income for a lesser part of the population.

Graph 9: Main sources of income for households living in Georgia -2021 data



Graph 9, similar to Graph 8, shows the analysis of the main sources of income. The main difference is that Graph 13 shows information about the overall population. Besides, these results are based on factual data. This means what is categorized as the main source of income is the type of income whose monetary amount exceeds any other income.

As the Graph shows, pensions, stipends and other assistances are the main sources of income for the highest portion of households in Georgia (38.1% living in Georgia). Please note that the mentioned category is divided into two categories in the quantitative study on ethnic minorities: (1) income received from pensions (is a main source of income for 27.5% of ethnic minority representatives) and (2) income received from different type of social and IDP assistances (is a main source of income for 6.9% of ethnic minority representatives). In total, these two categories amount to 34.4%. This means that as for a significant portion of ethnic minorities, for all households living in Georgia, the pensions, social, IDP and other forms of assistance amount to a significant portion of households' cumulative income.

Among the households living in Georgia, the portion of those households whose main income is earned from wages is pretty high. This number amounts to 35.8% and ranks second in the list of income sources. Please note that this indicator is also high among ethnic minorities. 'Family member wages/earned salary' represents the main source of income for 36.2% of ethnic minorities.

When analyzing Graphs 8 and 9, what stands out is: that for ethnic minorities, income earned from the sale of agricultural products is a significant source of monetary income for a significant portion of surveyed population (21.7% of ethnic minority families). For the whole population, the same indicator is 3 times lower and amounts to only 7.6%. In the case of 7.6% of the households, the main source of income is from the sale of agricultural products.

There are better results in the whole population than among ethnic minority households. Indeed, if 53.3% of the whole population has income that is below the average income level, this indicator is at 68.6% for ethnic minorities.

Income scarcity is an especially acute problem for ethnic minorities living in Kvemo Kartli. As the data shows, 83.7% of ethnic minorities living in Kvemo Kartli have income that is below the average income. Samtskhe-Javakheti is distinguished with the best conditions among the target regions/settlements. In here, compared to other target regions/settlements, this indicator stands at 54.9%.

There are similarities among ethnic minorities and the whole population data when we analyze main sources of income. Indeed, income earned from wages is an important source of income both for the whole population of Georgia (35.8%) and for ethnic minorities (36.2%). We can say the same about income from pension, which stands for 38.1% of respondents in case of whole Georgia, and 27.5% in case of ethnic minorities.

1.1.2. Other important social indicators from the ISSA quantitative research

The following sub-chapter shows those important results from ISSA quantitative research demonstrating significant social asymmetries and needs among ethnic minority groups. Due to the absence of relevant studies, the data brought below can't be compared to national data. Hence, only ISSA research results will be discussed. Nonetheless, the grave results of this study explicitly demonstrate the vulnerabilities and needs of ethnic minorities.

a) Knowledge of the Georgian language and its use.

The social and economic vulnerability of minorities is aggravated by the level of knowledge of the Georgian language.

The study shows that 63% of ethnic minorities can differentiate Georgian letters and read words with or without difficulty. According to themselves, 60% of ethnic minorities living in Georgia can communicate with Georgian speakers badly or very badly. And even greater number (84%) can read and understand Georgian literature texts badly or very badly.

It appeared that the age of respondents influences the level of Georgian language knowledge: as the age grows, the number of those who know Georgian well decreases. This is the tendency in regional analysis too, Pankisi being the only exception as almost every age group knows Georgian equally well. The survey shows that the knowledge of Georgian influences respondents' employment status. 26% of the respondents who know Georgian well is employed in the public and private sectors. While only 9% of those who know Georgian badly or don't know it, are employed. This is the tendency in regions too.

b) State involvement in the economic development program

As the ISSA study shows, respondents and/or their family members, in most cases, have never benefited from significant state economic and agricultural programmes/projects. More specifically, respondents had never participated in the following programmes/projects: the state program Produce in Georgia (85.2%), Plant the Future (89.6%), agro-insurance program (90%), discounted agro-credits (80.8%), state program on modernization of milking and market accessibility (91.1%),

farmers and farm registration project (89%). Respondents told of little activity recorded in the case of two projects: discounted agro-credits (8.5%) and the state program Produce in Georgia (5.2%).

Those who responded negatively about participation in state programs were asked for the reasons for it. A relatively bigger portion of respondents (37.3%) say they did not have detailed information about the program. Around one-fifth of the respondents (18.3%) did not need the program's services. We should highlight that 14.5% of the respondents say that they believe the program is not effective. Around 18% don't have an answer to the question.

Barriers that exist in the agriculture sector are connected to the following matters: the complicated situation with the land ownership/registration, high taxes, worn out irrigation system (currently already rehabilitated), an agricultural practice that does not correspond to modern standards, lack of skills necessary for applying modern technologies, poorly organized sale (peasants are independently looking for buyers).

When discussing entrepreneurship and small business development, it was mentioned that there is a lack of business education and absolute insufficiency of business development, also a local bureaucracy (made even more difficult due to not knowing the national language); High taxes, fines and bank loan-related matters are a significant barrier for locals.

c) Social protection

Most respondents (70%) have heard of a Unified Database of Socially Unprotected Households. On the other hand, the remaining 30% have no information about such a database. Most respondents (58%) don't have applications submitted to fall in the Database. 40% of those who have applied said that their actual economic condition does not correspond with the Grading Score of the Database (they say their economic condition is weaker than the evaluation results show), 36% believe the Grading Score is more or less accurate.

According to the research, around one-fifth of the respondents (21.3%) say their Grading Score is between 0-57000. Kakheti (27.8%) and Pankisi (24%) respondents have higher portions of households with a 0-57000 Grading Score.

d) Healthcare

Every second respondent says that each of their family members is insured. Nonetheless, a big portion (33%) doesn't have state or municipally-funded insurance that covers the whole family. And in those families where at least one person is not insured, respondents would mainly explain this with a lack of information about state/municipal medical insurance. On the other hand, every third respondent has no information on who to address for the insurance.

Respondents problematize service fees – this is a particular barrier for around the third (34%). There are similar tendencies on the regional level – service fees are relatively more problematic in Prankisi (37%) and Kvemo Kartli regions (38%).

We must mention that 90% of the survey participants are not vaccinated. In the meantime, most of them (67%) are fully or partially informed about registration procedures for vaccination.

e) Rights protection

A significant number of respondents (42%-91%) say that the rights of each ethnic minority group are protected in their region/city. But, it is noteworthy that in the case of ethnic Georgians, this number is very high (90.7%), while in ethnic minorities, fewer respondents say their rights are protected (Azerbaijanis – 49%, Qists – 42%, Armenians – 53%).

f) Self-government

Considering grave social and economic conditions, self-government participation is low in ethnic minority regions.

The application rate is low for public needs (6%-13%). Most of the respondents (more than 75%) are unaware that they can participate in budget planning, in municipal strategy development, in planning different city/municipal activities, and in determining city/village priorities. But with the growth of knowledge of the Georgian language, the level of informedness about events organized by the self-government units grows.

Interestingly, more than half of interviewed people (57.9%) say they are not informed about the work and duties of local organs. A third of respondents (33.7%) think they are partially informed. While only 3.3% say, they are quite informed.

g) Migration

In this research, respondents also spoke about their desire to emigrate and their reasons. Those respondents who desire to emigrate and/or plan to leave the country often mention poverty as a reason for that (40.5%) and lack of employment opportunities (25.9%). In every ethnic group, the problem of poverty and lack of employment opportunities stand out as a trigger for emigration. But the issue of workplaces is much more common in the Azerbaijani community (83.1% and 86.6%) and in the Qist community (79.6%) as a trigger. Poverty is more common in small urban ethnic groups (65%) and Ossetians (62.3%).

Comparing migration data between the dominant and non-dominant groups is methodologically challenging, but ISSA quantitative research results present high social nihilism.

2. State strategy on social and economic participation of ethnic minorities

Against the backdrop of critical challenges concerning social and economic participation, strategy and action plan do not offer radical reforms and initiatives that would bridge the gaps in many different areas. The quantitative research analysis shows that the state needs a concrete vision and undertakings, and information meetings, trainings or a cycle of consultations – despite their significance and importance–wouldn't being enough to fill these gaps.

The ten-year strategy of the state entails the following: development of inclusive economic growth, and the strategy specifies that information provided will be intensified for ethnic minorities both in their native language and in the state language; creation of an inclusive labour market; strengthening of the social security system; consideration of ethnic minority needs in socioeconomic programs and services; full and equal access to vocational training; development of infrastructure in the minority regions; a collection of statistical information; development of employment opportunities at the public sector with ,1+4 internship program'.

The action plan defines activities for two years and covers the following matters: information campaigns for the support of employment and for increasing awareness about healthcare and social programs, consultation meetings about agriculture programs, development of infrastructure in ethnic minority populated regions, informational meetings and training for developing small-scale

entrepreneurship; as of the collection and analysis of statistical information, the state plans to collect statistics on crimes committed on the grounds of discrimination.

The state won't be able to implement special programs and fill the existing gaps if it doesn't create ethnically segregated data on different spheres of economy, employment, healthcare, access to social and state services, agriculture and others. On the one hand, the state recognizes the necessity of such data, and the strategy also acknowledges this. The action plan includes collecting statistical data on crimes committed on the grounds of discrimination, which has been executed up until now.

Considering the absence of positive state mechanisms, proactive policies, and grave socioeconomic situation in ethnic minority regions, this paper will try to analyze the theoretical framework of social exclusion and the international standards that the Council of Europe establishes for ethnic minorities.

3. What does social and economic exclusion entail?

The term 'social exclusion' was established in Europe to describe wide-scale and persistent unemployment⁶. But later on, this term obtained way wider and more complex meanings than unemployment and poverty. These problems triggered the critique of the welfare systems, which were not managing to overcome poverty and economic underdevelopment. 'Social exclusion', 'new poverty', 'underclass' – are among those terms that first got spread in France, then in Britain and in the rest of the EU to describe what negative influence the failure of universal social policies had on vulnerable groups, and the unequal distribution of employment and income⁷. Besides, the concept of social exclusion encompasses different factors and conditions of social and economic inequality, such as insufficient access to healthcare services, geographic location and cultural characteristics of specific groups⁸. The scale of exclusion gets to be determined by different individual or social characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, social status, religion, economic opportunities, political views, sphere of work, language, and living place⁹.

Bristol University researchers propose a definition of social exclusion¹⁰: 'Social exclusion is a complex and multidimensional process. It entails a lack of access to resources, rights, services and benefits, additionally, the impossibility of participating in normal relations and activities, which is alternatively possible for the majority of the population, in terms of participation in economic, social, cultural or political spheres. This influences the quality of life of individuals, and equality and unity of the overall population.'

When we talk about economic exclusion and the vulnerability of minorities, researchers propose three main arguments to highlight the significance of this matter. Firstly, the economic empowerment of minorities determines the social and economic achievements of the whole country. From a legal perspective, the economic rights of minorities, as this is enshrined in Article

⁶ Babken Babajanian, Jessica Hagen-Zanker, Social protection, and social exclusion: an analytical framework to assess the Links, September 2012, Overseas Development Institute, 2; Arjan De Haan. Social Exclusion: Towards an Holistic Understanding of Deprivation, Department for International Development. (1999); 1-3.

⁷ Glenn C. Loury, Social Exclusion and Ethnic Groups: The Challenge to Economics, Boston University, 3-4.

⁸ Babken Babajanian, Jessica Hagen-Zanker, 2-3.

⁹ Babajanian, Hagen-Zanker, 3.

¹⁰ Ruth Levitas, Christina Pantazis, Eldin Fahmy, David Gordon, Eva Lloyd and Demi Patsios, The Multi-Dimensional Analysis of Social Exclusion, January 2007, University of Bristol, 9.

15 of the Framework Convention, entails not only formal protection of equality and elimination of discrimination but effective measures for social and economic inclusion.¹¹

If the minorities stay in the country without education, decent income and employment, this will directly affect the economic development of this country and region¹². One of the Italian regions is often distinguished as a success story of multiethnic society – in the autonomous province Bolzano, in South Tyrol, the standard of living is higher, and the GDP is 50% higher than the rest of Italy. This region, where the German-speaking and Italian-speaking population lives, is the first in economic development¹³.

Regarding security matters, equal economic and social conditions are significant for preventing conflicts and ensuring peaceful interethnic coexistence. Different studies show that low economic development and poverty create more risk for interethnic tensions that arise on the level of households or on the grounds of unequal distribution of resources.¹⁴

Participation in public life is one of the critical aspects of ethnic minority rights protection. Despite this, in legal documents and literature, when discussing this topic, the major focus is on the political participation of ethnic minorities, and the social and economic dimension of this right is seen as secondary.¹⁵ As a rule, lack of social and economic participation directly affects the quality and intensity of political participation and the realization of their civic and political rights. Besides, lowering economic inequality fosters ethnic minority participation in public life and the development of democracy in general. Democracy researchers often mention the linkages between economic development and democratization, and this is particularly relevant in multiethnic societies.¹⁶ Ethnic minorities living in poverty can not create equal social capital needed for their voices to influence political and social agenda. Respectively, their economic development is directly connected to their political and social condition.

Social-economic inequality is part of people's everyday life in any society. Nevertheless, for ethnic, religious, linguistic or cultural minorities, these inequalities are much graver. In the condition of higher vulnerabilities, the capacities of these minority groups to effectively participate in social and economic life are relatively weak. As a rule, more often than not, ethnic minorities face problems and barriers in employment and earning income. They also have less access to healthcare, decent housing, quality education and public services¹⁷.

¹¹ Alan Phillips, "The Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the Protection of the Economic Rights of Minorities" In: EURAC/ECMI (eds.) European Yearbook of Minority Issues , Vol. 3 (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Leiden, 2005), 287-306.

¹² Jonathan Wheatley, The Economic Dimension of Minority Participation in Europe, ECMI, Issue Brief N15, 2007, 3. See also: Tim Dertwinkel ECMI Issue Brief #19 November 2008 Economic Exclusion of Ethnic Minorities: On the Importance of Concept Specification, 6-7.

¹³ Jonathan Wheatley, The Economic Dimension of Minority Participation in Europe, ECMI, Issue Brief N15, 2007, 4.; GDP per capita in Italy in 2019 by region, ხელმისაწვდომია: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/658274/gross-domestic-product-gdp-per-capita-of-italy-by-region/>

¹⁴ Jonathan Wheatley, The Economic Dimension of Minority Participation in Europe, ECMI, Issue Brief N15, 2007, 4.

¹⁵ ECMI, Socio-Economic Participation of National Minorities; ხელმისაწვდომია: <https://www.ecmi.de/research/equality-and-inclusion/socio-economic-participation-of-national-minorities>

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ ECMI Minorities Blog: Less Equal than others: National minorities and the overlooked challenge of socio-economic inequalities, ხელმისაწვდომია <https://www.ecmi.de/infocchannel/detail/less-equal-than-others-national->

Researchers came up with two explanations of socioeconomic inequality: historically, the legal tools that are oriented at the protection of minorities would put a higher emphasis on the protection of cultural and linguistic rights, including the 1919 minority agreements, that, considering the historical context at that time, would stress on political, cultural and linguistic rights in particular. Even the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, currently the most complex legal document, covers socioeconomic rights with less intensity and focus.

During its periodic assessment of countries, the Advisory Committee of the same Convention pays more attention to protecting civic and political rights than social and economic rights¹⁸. Generally, it is also criticized that, as a rule, the Advisory Committee reports that are prepared on the socioeconomic participation matters to focus on one specific matter, such as housing, employment or infrastructure. Often this analysis is about the data available on the Roma population living in different countries. The little attention that international law pays to these matters is often reflected in national legislation and political decision-making. States rarely collect ethnically segregated data that should reflect ethnic minority participation in socioeconomic life. Therefore, monitoring mechanisms are less developed in this regard¹⁹.

The second reason is mainly connected to the lack of data, which is reflected in the interest levels in academic and political intervention. In most cases, the data and research are related to vertical inequality (among individuals), which is measured in different ways by surveys or by using such measures as the GINI coefficient. Nonetheless, when discussing horizontal inequality (among other cultural groups), information is harder to obtain, as often the data is not ethnically segregated. National legislations often forbid the separation of data according to ethnicity, with the argument of protecting personal lives, or simply due to lack of interest. Due to the lack of data, researchers often use indirect data, such as regionally or linguistically segregated data, but don't respond to research questions. Generally speaking, social exclusion is a wider concept and means the impossibility of participating and inaccessibility to basic social activities. We can broadly define social exclusion as the exclusion or marginalization of one social group because of its identity. It unites different ways of exclusion, such as political, cultural, and economic exclusion²⁰.

From the rights perspective, political exclusion means the absence of equal opportunities for political participation, which, as a rule, is overcome by granting full citizenship or, in case of racial or ethnic marginalization, by enacting special political rights for minorities. As a rule, the political exclusion is connected to the realization of different civic and political rights, including political participation, freedom of expression and manifestation, and others.²¹

Cultural exclusion means the exclusion of minorities with the argument that they speak a different

[minorities-and-the-overlooked-challenge-of-socio-economic-inequalities](#)

¹⁸ Andreea Cârstocea, National Minorities and Socio- Economic Equality: Still Work in Progress, ECMI Brief N 41, 2018, 4-6.

¹⁹ Tim Dertwinkel ECMI Issue Brief #19 November 2008 Economic Exclusion of Ethnic Minorities: On the Importance of Concept Specification,

²⁰ Tim Dertwinkel ECMI Issue Brief #19 November 2008 Economic Exclusion of Ethnic Minorities: On the Importance of Concept Specification, 7.

²¹ Jordi Estivill, CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES FOR COMBATING SOCIAL EXCLUSION: An overview, ILO, 2003, 17.

language from the dominant ethnic group or have other religious or cultural traditions. In its broader understanding, economic exclusion means a low participation level or inaccessibility of the labour market, civil service, finances, education, healthcare and housing.²² But we should also note that the concept of social exclusion has grown over time and gained new dimensions, while initially, it only had its economic size.²³

Due to such a tripartite definition of the social exclusion concept (political, cultural, economic), there are three ways of measuring exclusion indicators: indicators that measure accessibility to certain basic services, including education and healthcare; indicators that measure employment opportunities and income source. And third – civic, political and cultural life participation indicators.²⁴ Because exclusion can concern different areas/spheres of a person's life, for its objective assessment, instead of setting specific-level barriers beyond which the person's social exclusion can be determined, it is more essential to decide on differences and inequalities between different social groups, as symptoms or outcomes of exclusion²⁵.

Researchers of the minority economic exclusion concept believe that it is multidimensional and multilayered²⁶, and that the main ontological components of it are little participation demonstrated in lack of accessibility and discrimination.

Lack of accessibility may exist in the labour market or the higher education system on financial resources, land resources, water, housing, and other essential resources for equal and dignified existence and development. Discrimination is when a specific group of minorities get lower-paid jobs or bullying based on ethnicity at work/school, etc.²⁷ Besides this, the social exclusion also entails processes and relations between different groups that cause the exclusion of one specific group. For example, the political elite may exclude the possibility of exercising civic rights by other groups, which results in the exclusion of these groups; this way, ethnic minorities may be restricted from expressing their identities, etc.²⁸

Additionally, the exclusion is a relative term, which means that exclusion in group X must be compared to another group's condition. In many cases, this other group is the rest of the society or the national average of the overall economic situation. Research conducted by the Economic and Social Issues Department of the UN in 2016 confirms that a person's opportunities to develop and satisfy basic needs depend on which social group s/he belongs to. Differences conditioned by belongingness to different social groups, for example, the difference in accessibility to education and healthcare, as well as differences in infrastructure development and employment, is widespread and symptomatic to different social groups, and these inequalities reinforce one another. For

²² Jonathan Wheatley, "The Economic Status of National Minorities in Europe: a Four-Case Study", 6 *Journal of Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 6 (2007), 1-35. 5

²³ ²⁴ Tim Dertwinkel ECMI Issue Brief #19 November 2008 Economic Exclusion of Ethnic Minorities: On the Importance of Concept Specification, 16-17; Jordi Estivill, *CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES FOR COMBATING SOCIAL EXCLUSION: An overview*, ILO, 2003, 18.

²⁴ UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Leaving no one behind: the imperative of inclusive development*, Report on the World Social Situation, 2016, 34-40.

²⁵ UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Leaving no one behind: the imperative of inclusive development*, Report on the World Social Situation, 2016, 55-70.

²⁶ Arjan De Haan. *Social Exclusion: Towards an Holistic Understanding of Deprivation*, Department for International Development. (1999), 6.

²⁷ Tim Dertwinkel ECMI Issue Brief #19 November 2008 Economic Exclusion of Ethnic Minorities: On the Importance of Concept Specification, 16-17.

²⁸ Arjan De Haan. 8.

example, bad quality healthcare services and education accessibility are directly linked to poverty, unemployment, and little participation in civic and political life.²⁹ Additionally, the high rate of students among ethnic minorities dropping out of school is directly linked to their employment and income-generation opportunities.³⁰

It is also worth noting that social exclusion doesn't mean only poverty and that these two concepts are different according to social science literature. Poverty is mainly connected to a lack of access to, basic needs, which entails food, water, medical assistance, decent housing, etc. Poverty is usually measured by income, but social exclusion, being a multidimensional and relative concept, doesn't only measure income indicators for measuring the vulnerability of a specific group.³¹

When analyzing different countries' experiences and institutional settings, several factors stand out as factors determining minority exclusion or their advancement in these very countries. One of the main reasons is the country's constitutions and institutional settings³². For example, constitutional regulation of such matters as granting citizenship, state language (that later influences employment opportunities or education accessibility), institutional frameworks and the relations between the centre and the regions do affect the socioeconomic being of minorities, their participation in the economic process and accessibility in different spheres.

Besides, the level of regional development is one another factor that exposes the problem of economic marginalization of ethnic minorities. Sometimes, ethnic minorities are in vulnerable economic conditions because they live compactly in peripheral regions that are economically isolated from the capital and other financial centres. Disparities between living standards of cities and peripheral areas are reflected in economic integration processes, and this way, ethnic minorities are in twice more challenging conditions, firstly because they live in the peripheral areas compactly and second of all, due to their ethnicity³³.

When the state-ruled economy was transformed into a market economy, the privatization process was traumatic for many groups, which caused a steady increase in unemployment. Exemplary cases of this are Russian minorities after the collapse of the Soviet Union who lived in Latvia and Estonia. But in some other minority cases, quite the opposite happened, and positive changes ensued; for example, this was the case with Hungarian minorities in Romania. This is also conditioned by the fact that trade developed faster with their kin state – trade between Romania and Hungary grew practically 10-fold between 1993 and 2003, which positively impacted Hungarian minorities in Romania and the other way around³⁴. But this doesn't happen so when the neighbouring kin state is less developed and when such trade and investments are rare (this is the case of Russian minorities in Estonia and Latvia, the countries that became EU members and practically stopped working with Russia). The Council of Europe Advisory Committee also mentions the trade opportunities with neighbours when assessing Georgia in 2009. The Committee writes that the barriers set for ethnic Azerbaijanis to trade with the neighbouring state, when this is an essential source of income for

²⁹ UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Leaving no one behind: the imperative of inclusive development*, Report on the World Social Situation, 2016, 137.

³⁰ Arjan De Haan. 8

³¹ Arjan De Haan. 9.

³² Jonathan Wheatley, „The Economic Dimension of Minority Participation in Europe“, ECMI Issue Brief15, February 2007. Pg 5-7

³³ Jonathan Wheatley, „The Economic Dimension of Minority Participation in Europe“, ECMI Issue Brief15, February 2007. Pg 7.

³⁴ *Ibid*,10.

farmers, is an unjustified barrier to the economic integration of these communities³⁵.

Weak state institutions and corruption are other barriers to the socioeconomic participation of minorities. Non-formal clans and networks and criminal gangs that control primary state institutions and the public good negatively affect the equal participation of minorities in the economy. As a rule, these gangs are mono-ethnic, and the ethnic minorities lose access to public goods and are excluded from basic economic activities.

Considering these circumstances, we can assume that policy planning affects the economic well-being of minorities in different ways. This also includes the legal design of the Constitution and other fundamental laws, the economic policy, development policy, international relations (cooperation with neighboring states, kin-states to national minorities), employment and education policies, the fight against corruption and proper functioning of state institutions.

4. The normative framework of socioeconomic participation and the standards of the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe Framework Convention is the most legal document about the social and economic participation of minorities. Its 4th Article says that the member states if needs arise, should take measures for enhancing the economic, social, political and cultural life of minorities to achieve full and effective equality. In this case, the Convention calls for the member states to consider those particular conditions that minorities are in within their respective contexts. Besides this article, which is generally related to equality, there is also Article 15, which discusses economic, social, cultural and public life participation matters of minorities separately. It obliges the states to create necessary conditions for effective participation in respective spheres of life.

‘Effectiveness’ of participation is central to realizing these rights. Under this right, formal guarantees to inclusion provided by the state are not deemed sufficient. States are obliged that minority participation substantially influences all decisions that are made, and minorities are made into co-decision makers as often as possible. In terms of economic and social inclusion, states are obligated to create such conditions that these groups have access to employment markets as individual actors in the country’s economy and have access to social protection and, eventually, to quality of life³⁶.

As mentioned above, participation in socioeconomic life unites various issues, including access to adequate housing, healthcare, social protection (pension and social benefits), social welfare services and employment. Participation in economic life means access to both public and private spheres, including business and self-employment opportunities. This on its hand, is connected to property rights and to the process of privatization.³⁷ To increase access in all these directions, states must reduce barriers and promote participation by establishing positive mechanisms to do this.

Council of Europe Advisory Committee opinions and findings on socioeconomic participation would become more and more complex during different assessment cycles, which generally shows how this right is developing and how state practices are improving. If observing the opinions of the

³⁵ Advisory Committee opinion on Georgia, 2009, ACFC/OP/I(2009)001, Para 160.

³⁶ Commentary No. 2 The Effective Participation of Persons Belonging to National Minorities in Cultural, Social and Economic Life and in Public Affairs, FCNM, 2008, 24. <https://rm.coe.int/16806b6a0b>

³⁷ Commentary No 2, FCNM, 25.

Advisory Committee, few findings can be distinguished that relate to a better definition of the right; these findings also stand as guiding principles for states to increase socioeconomic participation in policy-making.

The first important matter concerns the collection of statistical information about the socioeconomic condition of minorities (1).³⁸ The Advisory Committee constantly requests the states to collect information and data on the socioeconomic and educational condition of minorities to compare these conditions with the requirements of most of the population. Trusted information that is segregated according to sex, age, and geographic distribution is an essential condition for elaborating sustainable targets oriented at development that answers the real needs. Effective policy planning and tackling discrimination is possible with positive measures if exactly such data exists. Information collected as part of the general population census doesn't usually serve these goals, and purposive research is important for creating detailed statistical materials.³⁹ The nonexistence of statistical information or flaws with it, is another reason the Advisory Committee cannot assess the socioeconomic condition of different countries with uniform standard and structure and cannot provide more specific recommendations for improving specific policies. Observation of the Advisory Committee assessments shows that the recommendations are more regular and standardized concerning the Roma population because data is analyzed more frequently. Hence, such issues as employment, housing, and healthcare accessibility are more diagnosed. Nonetheless, these and other matters are not regularly assessed with regard to other ethnic groups by the Committee. Hence recommendations are rather general and vague in terms of their realization.⁴⁰

Eradicating discriminatory practices on legislative levels (2), that hinder the socioeconomic participation of minorities is another important issue stated by the Advisory Committee assessments. The existence of such legislation that fully eradicates all kinds of discrimination in employment, housing accessibility, healthcare, and social protection is deemed a critical precondition for guaranteeing the rights defined by Article 15. This is why anti-discrimination legislation that will eradicate barriers in this regard and create respective legal mechanisms for enacting the legislation is one of the significant recommendations the Advisory Committee gives to its member states.⁴¹

The Advisory Committee notes that increasing the capacities of public services for them to correspond to the socioeconomic needs of minorities (3) is an important condition for ensuring these groups' access to public services. The administration and public services must address minority needs in education, healthcare, public transport and communication services, housing, social protection, recreation and sport. If this is not so exclusion from these spheres deprives minorities of access to basic social and economic services and causes their social exclusion. For this, the state must have specially trained service personnel and public institutions that are organized respectively. This also means opportunities to access information and receive consultations on those languages that minorities understand. Besides this, the state should particularly ensure the employment of minorities in these spheres, which on its hand, will increase access to services and

³⁸ Council of Europe, The Framework Convention: a key tool to managing diversity through minority rights. Thematic commentary No. 4: The scope of application of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (Strasbourg:2016), p.22.

³⁹ Advisory Committee opinion on Ukraine 2008, ACFC/OP/II(2008)004, Para223-230

⁴⁰ Andreea Cârstocea, National Minorities and Socio- Economic Equality: Still Work in Progress, ECMIBrief N 41, 2018, 9.

⁴¹ Advisory Committee opinion on Armenia, 2016, ACFC/OP/IV(2016)006 pg 12.

strengthen minority participation in socioeconomic life.

Creating special conditions for minorities in the peripheral regions (4) is important for eradicating barriers caused by backward economic and infrastructural conditions. In border regions and in regions far from the centre, minorities face numerous barriers due to low regional development levels, not only in daily life but also in terms of their economic development. The economic rehabilitation program and targeted regional development initiatives must be planned according to minority needs. At the same time, these very groups must be included in the planning, implementation and monitoring process. The first cycle Advisory Committee's recommendation to Georgia concerns exactly the improvement of infrastructure and economic opportunities for ethnic minorities in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti. Besides, the Committee calls for the state to include minorities in critical infrastructure projects to improve economic participation⁴². The second cycle assessment recommendation of the Committee was connected to the same problem of equal distribution of infrastructure projects and finances in ethnic-minority-populated peripheral regions.⁴³

Inclusion of underprivileged minorities in socioeconomic life (5) means increasing access to the labour market, education, housing, etc.. For this, the state must have a long-term vision of developing the economy and strategies that reflect minority needs⁴⁴.

Access to land and property ownership (6) is an integral part of the right guaranteed by Article 15. Unequal access to land and property, which is often a result of privatization too, puts minorities in unequal conditions. For this, the state must have established equal and fair ways for privatization processes and property restitution. Violation of land rights is particularly damaging for those groups for whom land-related activities are part of their tradition or primary source of income and which determines their participation in socioeconomic life.⁴⁵

Employment-related demands (7),⁴⁶ such as residence permit, citizenship, knowledge of the local language, etc., often put ethnic minorities in disadvantaged positions; for this very reason, states must abolish such unnecessary requirements or create respective conditions for minority groups to satisfy these demands, for example, by strengthening language courses, or by translating information about public services. During the first cycle assessments of Georgia, the Committee noted that the language barriers shouldn't be unformidable for the employment of minorities, including in public sector. For example, it called the Ministry of Internal Affairs to offer additional language courses to employed minorities during and after recruitment.⁴⁷

Access to services (8) is one of the critical aspects of socioeconomic rights, in the absence of which minority groups will be doomed to social exclusion and poverty. This matter is mostly connected to gaps in legislation that won't ensure the right to housing or restrict forced eviction. As in many other spheres, it is rather important here, too, for the minorities to be involved in the decision-

⁴² Advisory Committee opinion on Georgia, 2009, ACFC/OP/I(2009)001, Para. 157-158.

⁴³ Advisory Committee opinion on Serbia 2009, ACFC/OP/II(2009)001, Para 261-262.

⁴⁴ Advisory Committee opinion on Germany, 2002, ACFC/INF/OP/I(2002)008, Para 66.

Advisory Committee opinion on Hungary, 2001, ACFC/INF/OP/I(2001)4, pg. 16-17. Opinion on Hungary, 2016, ACFC/OP/IV(2016)003, pg. 4-5.

⁴⁵ Advisory Committee opinion on Georgia, 2009, ACFC/OP/I(2009)001, Para 161-162.

⁴⁶ Advisory Committee opinion on Croatia, 2005, ACFC/INF/OP/II(2004)002 Para 60-62.

⁴⁷ Advisory Committee opinion on Georgia, 2009, ACFC/OP/I(2009)001, Para 159

making process and to have substantial influence on it, per the interests and needs of their groups. Housing-related recommendations are relatively common concerning the Roma population.⁴⁸

Problems related to healthcare accessibility (9) may be related to discrimination, poverty, geographic isolation, cultural differences or language barriers.⁴⁹ To eradicate these barriers, we need positive measures taken by the state and trained medical personnel to deal with cultural and linguistic barriers. Employment of minorities in the medical sphere is another good mechanism for overcoming the barriers. It is also necessary to provide equally effective medical services. Hence, the quality of medical services received by minorities should be equal to what the majority gets.

5. Conclusion – main findings

As the above-mentioned literature and the practice of the Council of Europe show, dealing with the social and economic exclusion of minorities is possible by multidimensional and complex state policies that respond to different layers of exclusion, low participation rates and poverty. Presented data of the quantitative research also confirms that the social exclusion of minorities has multiple dimensions in Georgia, but the state is not ready to develop its policies in response to these challenges.

In the first place, to fight this problem, it is important that the state classifies statistical information according to ethnicity and regularly updates it to measure how special state programs and approaches work. Without such data, developing targeted policies and fostering real changes will be impossible. Regularly updated statistical information is necessary in education, healthcare, employment, social service accessibility, regional infrastructure, economic activity and trade, agriculture, political participation and other spheres.

The state must realize that when developing policies for integrating minorities, social and economic exclusion is a significant barrier, and it requires complex approaches, similar to how multilayered the concept of exclusion is, in general. It is not a state policy now to measure the social and economic integration of minorities with respective indicators and to propose special mechanisms for achieving this goal. The introduction of positive mechanisms, including temporal employment, education, or improvement of economic participation, is critical to eliminate those gaps that the quantitative research demonstrates above.

As this was demonstrated by the research and analysis brought above, the quality of life of ethnic minorities is quite low compared to the majority of the population, which, next to other factors, translates into lower income levels, unequal access to education, and low participation in state social and economic programs. Out of program, project and political participation barriers, the most substantial is the language policy, which disallows the use of minority languages even though minorities don't speak Georgian.

To eradicate exclusion, active state measures and positive mechanisms are necessary in many different directions:

- Improvement of political participation levels is a significant component for eradicating social exclusion. It is obvious that on every level, the political participation of minorities is

⁴⁸ Advisory Committee opinion on Bosnia Herzegovina 2009, ACFC/OP/II(2008)005, Para21-23; Advisory Committee opinion on Bulgaria 2012, FCNM/II(2012)001, Para 83-85.

⁴⁹ Advisory Committee opinion on Ukraine 2008, ACFC/OP/II(2008)004, Para 228.

not improving and often worsens too. This hinders minorities from making decision-makers hear their social concerns and cause much needed social changes. Therefore it is essential that the state first creates consultation platforms on the executive, legislative and self-government levels, which can become real mechanisms for increasing minority participation using different tools, such as the creation of political parties by the ethnic minorities, introducing quota system, funding political parties, etc.

- Employment - it is essential to develop a policy fostering minority employment in the public sector, which will grow minority employment, at least on the self-government level in those regions where these groups have compact settlements. It is also important for the state to collaborate with the private sector to encourage minority employment in it.
- Agriculture and economic activity – the research shows that 85% of minorities don't participate in state-supported projects on agriculture, business and economic activity. Minority groups don't have information about the participation requirements for these programs. It is necessary to take action in this regard; the state must ensure that the number of ethnic minority participants grows in these programs, that information is available in ethnic minority languages, and that consultation services are created that will support their participation and grow the number of applicants. This is particularly important in the context in which agriculture is a main occupation for the local population and when these regions are involved in different agriculture spheres, most of all in the country.
- Education – in this regard, there are numerous systemic problems⁵⁰: quality of education, teaching the state language, textbooks, preschool and school infrastructure, quantity of teachers, etc. The state does not have a coherent and sustainable policy in response to these problems, which negatively affects the socioeconomic inclusion process of minorities. Numerous data from the quantitative research presented in this paper show that the problem of inadequate education among minorities creates fundamental barriers to these groups' social exclusion process. This is why we need universal vision, policy, and clear actions to eradicate the problem of access to quality education and remove the exclusion.
- The research confirmed that the knowledge of state language is a significant problem. The government lacks translation resources to access different social and state services and programs. Knowledge of language is an essential barrier to ethnic minorities. Therefore, before the state manages to improve the knowledge of the Georgian language among all minority groups (in all age groups), translated materials must be created for establishing communication with self-governments and for accessibility to essential state resources.
- In regions occupied by minorities, the grave infrastructural situation contributes to social exclusion. Everyone attests that in the regions with compact settlements, most of the population doesn't have access to drinking and irrigation water, and road problems leave remote villages in total isolation when there are grave climatic conditions. Besides, minorities have numerous housing issues in these regions. Eradicating infrastructural failures in the minority regions must become one of the main priorities in the region, because, next to other factors, it further deepens social exclusion.

Considering all the challenges mentioned above it is critical that the state considers the standards established by the Framework Convention of the Council of Europe, as well as the recommendation provided by it to

⁵⁰ Systemic challenges of the education policy towards the ethnic minorities in Georgia, Social Justice Center, 2020, <https://socialjustice.org.ge/en/products/etnikuri-umtsiresobebis-mimart-ganatlebis-politikis-sistemuri-gamotsvevebi>

Georgia, and creates consultation platforms for the experts on minority issues and for minority representatives for different level decision-makers to discuss and develop state policies and a coherent plan to respond to problems.