RESEARCH ARTICLE

Trauma or Nostalgia? 'The Past' as Affective Ontological Security Seeking Playground in the South Caucasus

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ABSTRACT (max 150 words)

Crises could be understood as dislocations of hegemonic identity narratives. One strategy of seeking ontological security, as re-ordering process to calm and sooth these displacements, is 'defending memory'. But how does 'defending memory' play out? This article argues that to understand those mnemonic processes, one also has to look at the affective investments into these identity narratives informing processes of politicisation and securitisation. The article proposes to look at those processes through the lens of affective geopolitics to shed light onto those in the South Caucasus. In so doing, it explores the affective reproduction of memory and shows how investing, subscribing, questioning or rejecting identity-positionalities is a patch-work process of discursive emotion norm contestations. What emerges is a mosaic of emotion cultures drifting apart (between the South Caucasus countries) and away (internationally) linked to how 'the past' is re-felt either in agony or in gloriousness within presidential discourses.

KEYWORDS: Emotions; Ontological Security; Affective Geopolitics; South Caucasus

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1. Of Crisis and Trauma

'Memory continues to be so deeply troubled—ignored, appropriated, and obfuscated—throughout Eastern Europe.' (Subotić 2019c:summary)

These memory troubles, Subotić further argues, could be observed as part of the Eastern European countries' accession to the European Union during which these states were required to adopt, participate in, and contribute to the established Western narratives of - and feelings towards - the Holocaust in their attempts to seek ontological security (OSS). In line with Krastev and Holmes's (2019) reasoning she implicitly draws on the language of emotions in arguing that this requirement created anxiety and resentment in those post-communist states shifting the attention of whom was legitimate to suffer by the hands of whom from communist terror to predominantly Jewish suffering in World War II[1].

This article illustrates that reconciling, accommodating, challenging or rejecting those memories is an act of affectively seeking ontological security - that is that discursive strategies to console mnemonic security imaginaries not only rely on narrative creativity but on their emotional fit and value. The article thus not only highlights the narrative processes presented by Subotić, but shows the underlying emotional recalibrations, drifts and rifts as additional discursive layer of remembering[2].

Moreover, it sheds light onto a subject which has been relatively sidelined in the study of the South Caucasus where studies on nationalism, protracted conflict, and security have dominated the scholarly debate[3]. It is only within more recent developments that attention was drawn to the study of identity politics[4]. In turn, histori-

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[1] See also Gustafsson (2014) for an account of how memory politics are intertwined with ontological security.
[2] See Rauf & Rena (2011) or Ziemer (2018) for some general explorations.
[3] See Rich (2013), Hayoz & Dafflon (2014), Geukjian (2016).
[4] Particularly two conferences spring to mind here: The Heinrich Boell Foundation et al.'s (2019) 'South Caucasus Regional Conference on Memory Politics' and the Academic Swiss Caucasus Net et al.'s (2016) conference on 'Memory and Identity in Post-Soviet Space. Georgia and the Caucasus in a

ography presented as 'neutral description' of history has itself seen attention within the outlined memory politics to justify either Armenia's, Azerbaijan's or Georgia's interpretation of subjectively appropriate political remembrance and claims to political authority and sovereignty[5].

On the occasion of the three South Caucasus states' (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia) three simultaneous anniversaries in 2018/2019 that have shaped their biographies - and interpretations of victimhood (Lim 2020) -, this article therefore takes a look at today's contested identity imaginations there. In so doing, it takes these biography-shaping events as critical junctures within their discursive canvases that construct those ontological narrations in the first place.

These crises, as Leek & Morozov (2018) state, could be understood as dislocations of hegemonic/ privileged identity narratives (Nabers 2015). As brought forward within this special issue, one strategy of seeking ontological security as re-ordering process to calm and sooth these displacements is 'defending memory' (Mälksoo 2015*)*. But how does 'defending memory' play out? This paper argues that to understand those mnemonic processes, one also has to look at the affective investments into these identity narratives as emotional canvases for processes of politicisation and securitisation.

Thus - in light of the narrative and affective turns in IR - this article highlights the specific role of emotions in shaping those ontological security (OS) rationales and how this has affected change and continuity in renegotiating their identity imaginaries (Browning & Christou 2010; Browning 2015, 2018c; Browning &

Broader Eastern European Context'. See also Grigoryan & Margaryan (2018), Gugushvili, Kabachnik & Kirvalidze (2017), Chikovani (2009), Huseynova (2019), Grant (2009), and Yalçın-Heckmann (2016).

[5]Amongst others see Suny (2004) and de Waal (2019) for an historic overview. Moreover: Agadjanian, Jödicke, & van der Zweerde (2017), Richardson (2010), Cheterian (2008), Dawisha & Parrott (1997), Hille (2010), Oskanian (2013), Eldar & Rauf (2007), Companjen, Marácz, & Versteegh (2010), Kitaevich (2014), and Bursulaia (2020).

Joenniemi 2016). In so doing, it draws particular attention to the affective reproduction of memory and shows how investing, subscribing, questioning or rejecting identity-positionalities is a patch-work process of discursive emotion norm contestations resulting in traumatic or nostalgic representations of the past (Resende & Budryte 2014).

2018/19's triple anniversary character underscores the significance of those three pasts within Armenia's, Azerbaijan's and Georgia's presidential discourses by highlighting the contested nature of their remembrance (Kurilla 2009; Shevel 2011; Bernhard & Kubik 2014; Subotić 2019a; Lim 2020; Yemelianova & Broers 2020).

One, 100 years after their independence from the Russian Empire and formation as independent republics - and thus the re-emergence of independent but contested state biographies located in a volatile 'in-between' of varying, overlapping, clashing and political power claiming empires throughout history (Coppieters 2004; Rayfield 2012; Torbakov & Plokhy 2018; de Waal 2019).

Two, 30 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War - and thus the end of Soviet rule there and their eventual republican independence from the Soviet Union. This furthermore marks the secession wars around Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

Particularly the break-up of the Soviet Union – for some the hope- and joyful end of history, for some the greatest tragedy in modern history – and the resultant independencies of the three Caucasus countries are focal points within the affective OS politics of remembering the past. In this regard, 30 years afterwards the euphoria[6] of the victory of liberal reason against illiberal oppression has given

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[6] See, for example, Fukuyama's (2006) infamous 'The End of History'. However, this was also reflected in an abundance of scholarship on the absolute efficiency and prevalence of (neo)liberal democracy as economic and political governance model after 1989 which was celebrated and justified post-hoc with a litany of relative attractiveness arguments (in comparative transition research) and

way to a resurgence of pessimism and frustration (not only) in the countries which escaped the Iron Curtain. What is more, the hope and optimism in reconciling EU-Russia relations and thus in finding a place (DeBardeleben 2008) for the Central and Eastern European and South Caucasus states - as 'newly independent' neighbours - in-between the EU and Russia has vanished[7]. Moreover, the emergent debates and dynamics around a 'new Cold War', that is the contestation of the form and substance of global order supposedly between 'a declining West' and an 'emergent East' with the fault line to be found in this 'grey zone', have, increasingly so, included the South Caucasus as an area of contestation of ideas of bipolar or multipolar orders amid discourses of multi-order configurations (Bassin et al. 2015; Giragosian 2015; Besier & Stokłosa 2016; Golunov 2017).

Three, 10 years of the EU's Eastern Partnership Initiative mark the institutionalisation of neighbourhood relationships in-between the EU and Russia. The extension of this towards the three South Caucasus states mirrors the just mentioned hopes and disappointments. Furthermore, this both marks the 2008 Russo-Georgian 5-Days War and, at the half-way of this timeframe, the 2014 Ukraine Crisis as major reverberations in this neighbourhood. This volatile area 'in-between' the EU and Russia, the Middle East and Central Asia is an intriguing playing field of a variety of actors with often paradoxical agglomerations of interests and values projected through various means. Amongst others, these means include energy links and economic dependencies, passportisation and the stealth moving of fences, the support of de-facto states, and various modus operandi of militaries (bases, coop-

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'the victory of reason'. To this day, this line of thought finds some devotees, particularly in the neo-realist and neoliberal traditions (see Mousseau 2019).

[7] This affective travel is best represented in relation to footnote one, e.g. Fukuyama's (2018) new - and opposing - appraisal and interpretation of reality as marked by the politics of resentment - through the acclamation of mobilised and exploited identity politics as source and resource of challenging (liberal) order(s).

eration, missions, observations, peace-keeping) as well as the manipulation of public discourses via disinformation (Boyle 2016; Galeotti 2019; Toal & Merabishvili 2019). Moreover, the South Caucasus states find themselves in the vicinity - or periphery - of at least two integration projects (EEU/EU) and potentially overlapping security architectures (NATO/CSTO) (Toal 2016; Buzogány 2019). Conflicting claims to territory and sovereignty mark not-so-frozen conflicts around Abkhazia and South Ossetia between Georgia and Russia and Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh between Armenia and Azerbaijan. The five days war in 2008 between Georgia and Russia and the highly volatile conflict around Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh, expressively marked by cycles of violence, highlight the intensity of these identity politics where (political) belonging is translated through militarised foreign and security policies (Aydın 2011; Altunışık & Tanrisever 2018; Averre and Oskanian 2019).

These outlined three anniversaries can be understood as social markers of history where the abovementioned hegemonic OS narratives were dislocated in a variety of circumstances. Defending a certain version of those events thus becomes a strategy of ontological security seeking, i.e. of recalibrating narrative landscapes to cope with the negatively felt disorientation - a critical juncture - ontological insecurity brings with it.

As such, this article argues that to uphold a positive self-identity, or (state) auto-biography, in form of positive narratives – seeking ontological security – is intricately linked to memory politics (Mitzen 2006; Rumelili 2015a, 2015b, 2018; Mitzen and Larson 2017; Subotić 2018, 2019a, 2019b). However, to make sense of those dynamics it draws attention to the affective reproduction of memory and the construction and contestation of (event) related feeling rules highlighting how 'the past' is re-felt either in agony or in gloriousness. Thus, 'Coming in from the Cold [War]' (Ross 2006) fittingly represents - both literally and figuratively - this line of thought where illuminating the affective underpinnings of OS theory lets us under-

stand the outlined memory dynamics as affective instances of seeking and upholding ontological security.

2. Affective Ontological Security Seeking and Memory Politics

To this effect, this article suggests to re-discover and re-interpret Giddens's (1991) work on OS theory to recalibrate our understanding of OSS through an affective lens. Subsequently, it posits that the need to uphold a positive self-identity (auto-biography) - in form of positive narratives and positive self-affect - drives those affective memory politics where the need for creating or continuing this double positivity trumps physical security. This is denoted as affective ontological security seeking[8] in the following.

In so arguing, this research conceives of those geographies of contested memories as boundaries of identities and emotions - demarcations of 'good and evil' (Lauritzen et al. 2011; Rumelili 2016; Koschut 2017a). This means that these narrated ontologies are interwoven with emotions, for example, fear, anxiety and hate, or friendship, trust and hope (Kinnvall 2016; Browning 2018a, 2018b; Kinnvall et al. 2018; Kinnvall & Mitzen 2018) either supporting or questioning and rejecting claims to 'truthful' history and ontological being throughout it.

The volatile research field of OS studies has encountered several critical debates over time: whereas the initial state-centred approach has given way to a multifaceted one embracing the multiplicity of identity/boundary discourses and the in-

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[8] 'Affect' was chosen here to denominate this cycle since Giddens speaks of 'emotional and behavioural 'formulae' which have come to be part of their everyday behaviour and thought' (1991: 24) regulating this OSS. As such, these formulae are embedded, generalised emotional scripts or norms relatively automatically - subconsciously - applied. This meaning of 'automatism' of emotional recalibrations is carried by 'affect' as implicit ('instinctive') need within OSS and reflects the central role of emotions in the everyday (identity struggle discourses). However, these dynamics are subsequently not interpreted in terms of embodied affect here, but in terms of collective identity formation dynamics in line with Koschut and Wodak (see further on pages 11f.).

stability and fragility inherent to those ontics implicated with power and status dynamics[9], 'the inefficient causation of [OSS]' (Mälksoo 2018) and the 'too elastic definition of crisis in OS' (Ejdus 2017, 2019) remain problematisations at the heart of OS theory's epistemology and ontology (Chernobrov 2019; Steele & Homolar 2019).

What runs like a common thread through OS theory literature, furthermore, is that in a keen manner it has jumped towards the language of emotions[10] - particularly anxiety as coined in Laing's (1968, 1969, 1991) and later Giddens's (1991) original works on OS - but has so far discredited or under-conceptualised their role within, where most understandings were limited to rather essentialist readings of anxiety/fear as either ex-ante or ex-post condition of in/security struggles, or conflations within only paying lip service to 'emotions' (Crawford 2019).

However, in Giddens's initial definition, ontological in/security as the disruption of self-narratives[11] is directly linked to emotions, explicitly shame as negative emotion: 'In order to be able to 'go on' an agent has to be able to tell a reasonably consistent story about where it came from and where it is going; it has to

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[9] '[…] calls for a more open understanding that: (i) links ontological security to reflexivity and avoids collapsing together the concepts of self, identity and ontological security; (ii) avoids privileging securitization over desecuritisation as a means for generating ontological security; and (iii) opens out the concept beyond a narrow concern with questions of conflict and the conduct of violence more towards the theorization of positive change.' (Browning & Joenniemi 2016; also Croft & Vaughan-Williams 2016) 'Ontics' are here understood as the abundance of all contested narrative constructions and processes within the OS space – inherently unstable and requiring maintenance, especially during periods of crisis or transition (cf. Ejdus 2019).

[10] For example, Mälksoo's (2019) article draws on the language of emotions ('doubts' about the EU's efficacy and 'concerns' about the EU's resolution in face of rising populism), but leaves it at that. The same applies to Subotić's (2013a) 'a sense of routine, familiarity, and calm.' However, one has to acknowledge, amongst others, the recent contributions by Browning (2018a&b) and Kinnvall (2016) embracing the intricate nature of emotions within ontological security phenomena.

[11] 'A reasonably consistent story with bearing' implies a multitude of narratives making up the ontic space -given that a story is normally made up of different single narratives casting different angles and details, e.g. an assemblage of various narratives within and across (ontological security) imaginaries.

have a certain bearing. When this is not the case, the agent experiences shame.' (Giddens in Steele 2008: 1).

What is more, for him these crises are not only challenges to those self-understandings leading to shame, if successful, but to emotional disorientation. Most prominently, he mentions anxiety:

'[t]his cognitive and emotional disorientation – fragility - leads to 'flooding in anxiety'[12] (Giddens 1991:37).

One should note that this emotional disorientation during and after crises is - in the words borrowed and adapted from Leek & Morozov (2018) - a dislocation of emotions which were present before: in a turn to the negative. Insofar, critical junctures shall be understood as the dislocation of dominant emotions linked to OS narratives.

But what is more, in contrast to the preoccupancy with 'existential anxiety', Giddens sketches more specific emotions as relevant against the backdrop of this anxiety: namely shame and guilt (Giddens 1991:65) - as well as trust, confidence and pride. In so doing, he also specifies the strategies with which these are provoked and felt[13], namely humiliation and situations in which feelings of inadequacy are elicited[14]. Moreover, if reality is understood through this affective lens, 'social manage-

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[12] Giddens (1991:44) specifically differentiates between anxiety and fear: 'Anxiety is essentially fear which has lost its object through unconsciously formed emotive tensions that express 'internal dangers' rather than externalised threats. We should understand anxiety essentially as an unconsciously organised state of fear. Anxious feelings can to some degree be experienced consciously, but a person who says 'I feel anxious' is normally also aware of what he or she is anxious about. This situation is specifically different from the 'free-floating' character of anxiety on the level of the unconscious.'

[13] This is congruent with a definition of ‚mobilisation of emotions in discourse', e.g. the hereunder used terminology of emotionalisations.

[14] '[…B]ypassed shame links directly to feelings of ontological insecurity: it consists of repressed fears that the narrative of self-identity cannot withstand engulfing pressures on its coherence or social acceptability. Shame eats at the roots of trust more corrosively than guilt. […] Shame and trust

ment strategies/routines/mechanisms' of anxiety or other emotions are open to include a litany of different emotionalisations[15]. Consequently - given the aforementioned affective conditions of OS(S) - in addition to up-holding just a positive self-narrative there's also a need of balancing (narrations of) emotions linked to this identity[16].

Figure 1. Two mutually constitutive Domains of affective OSS.
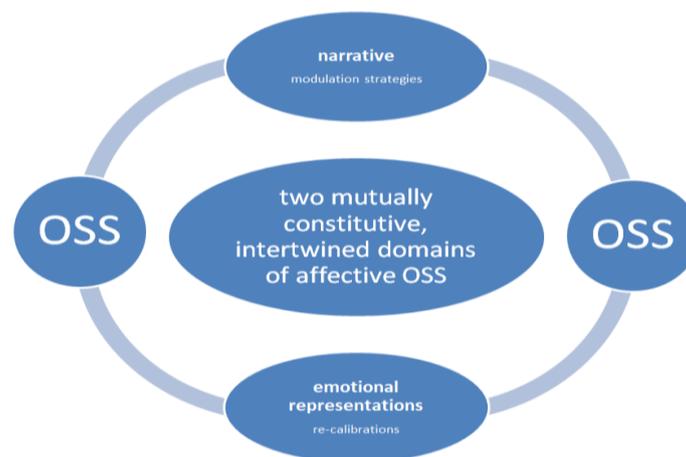
Source: Author's own visualisation of elaborated theoretical framework.

Like for identity research, the vocabulary to denote is plentiful - affect, sentiment, attunement, and feeling, amongst others - referring to different concep-

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are very closely bound up with one another, since an experience of shame may threaten or destroy trust' (Giddens 1991:66).

[15] 'Since anxiety, trust and everyday routines of social interaction are so closely bound up with one another, we can readily understand the rituals of day-to-day life as coping mechanisms. This statement does not mean that such rituals should be interpreted in functional terms, as means of anxiety reduction (and therefore of social integration), but that they are bound up with how anxiety is socially managed.' (Giddens 1991: 46)

[16] Elemental to this understanding is to re-assess critical junctures - ontological insecurities - as re-inspections and points of departure for recalibrations of emotions (and their representations). This is in line with Laing's (1960, 1961, 1968) foundational thoughts on OS where expressed feelings are taken as explicit impressions of subjective experience.

tualizations of emotions[17]. What they all have in common, however, is that they tackle the 'politics of anxiety' (Eklundh et al. 2017) from varying angles. In this regard, Koschut et al.'s (2017), Clément and Sangar's (2018), and van Rythoven and Sucharov's (2019) edited volumes provide an excellent overview of the richness and diversity of this volatile field[18].

Relevant to this article's approach, the emerging discourse-emotion nexus in IR seeks to systematically integrate emotions within discourse analysis and to highlight the power of language in conveying emotional meaning (Hutchinson 2010, 2016; Solomon 2012, 2013, 2018; Edkins 2013; Ross 2013; Koschut 2014, 2017b, 2017c, 2018, 2019; Åhäll & Gregory 2015; Fierke 2015; van Rythoven 2015, 2018; Bleiker & Hutchinson 2018). As such, emotion discourse refers to the assumption that discourses have affective content and that emotions can be studied via speech acts.

Koschut (2014, 2017a,b,c, 2018, 2019), for example, highlights the relationship between emotion and culture by investigating the affective reproduction of culture in world politics. The most significant term coined by this contribution is

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[17] Affect is broadly understood as 'the bodily experience of emotion' (Fierke 2014), or as the inner (embodied) disposition of emotions - as biological, physiological, instinctive process of appraisal (Åhäll 2018). 'In other words, whereas emotion might capture the conscuous throught, subjective experiences and normative judgements […], affect refers to a completely different order of activity where affect can be understood as a ‚set of embodied practices' or as a form of ‚indirect and non-reflective' thinking that never quite rises to the level of an emotion' (Thrift 2008: 175).

[18] In this ambition, Åhäll (2018) fits into a recent surge to make sense of emotions in IR engaged in highlighting the multiplicity and diversity in theoretically interpreting and methodologically grasping emotions (Crawford 2000; Crawford and Hutchinson 2016). Approaches vary according to the ontological *(*emotions in/of the body, individual, collective, social discourse?*)*, epistemological (emotions as rituals, practices, norms, (re-)actions within or in-between the micro or macro level?) and analytical (consequences of emotions on behaviour/empirical phenomena, rationality and instrumentality of emotions, bodily effects by and of emotions?) status of emotions in the chosen research, opening up a vast space of literature discussion those phenomena (Demertzis 2013; Reus-Smit 2014; Ekman and Davidson 2015; Mordka 2016; Boddice 2018; Prior & van Hoef 2018; Agathangelou 2019; Crawford 2019; Schick 2019).

the introduction of the complex of an 'emotion culture' which Koschut understands as a culture-specific complex of emotion vocabularies, feeling rules and beliefs about emotions and their appropriate expression that facilitates the cultural construction of political communities and identity. These (political) communities imagined through emotional representations draw our attention to the affective investments (Solomon 2013; Chatterje-Doody & Crilley 2019) sustaining and challenging those communities as foundations of belonging and alterity - of affective boundary drawings in general. Koschut terms them 'emotio(nal) communities' – 'groups in which people adhere to the same norms of emotional expression and value – or devalue – the same or related emotions' (Rosenwein 2006:2).

As such, affective investments correspond to the vocabulary Giddens (1991) uses when outlining the conditions for the in/stability of OS rationales, namely sufficient emotional commitment. Specifically, he understands trust, hope and courage as relevant commitments in this context, meaning that these emotional representations of OS narratives sustain those against challenges. In this regard, introducing affective investments as theoretical understanding of the emotional commitment to OS narratives draws on the same logic as denominating the outlined OSS logics ‚affective OSS‘, i.e. that 'affect as an experience […] lies beyond the realm of discourse, yet nevertheless has an effect upon discourse‘ (Solomon 2013:907). It thus underlines the 'emotional and behavioural 'formulae' which have come to be part of their everyday behaviour and thought‘ (Giddens 1991:24) regulating this OSS. This meaning of 'automatism' of emotional re-calibrations is carried by 'affect' as implicit (‚instinctive‘) need within OSS and reflects the central role of emotional commitments in the everyday identity struggles.

As such, emotion communities can also be considered as imagined communities, and going back to Giddens's interpretations of the role of emotions, as security communities where security would then be ontological security.

Koschut furthermore argues that 'emotion norms – the expression of appropriate emotions in a given situation – stabilise a security community'.

This emotional code of an emotional culture prescribes what is regarded as an appropriate emotional performance (and what is not) within a particular group, thereby reproducing its collective identity and power structure (Koschut 2017). Frequent occurrences of emotional states linked to particular group identities build up associations of specific emotions with particular identities and lead to the display of relatively stable emotional profiles, such as an association of a national identity with pride or an identity as a member of a conflictual group with anger[19].

In this context, Koschut goes on to argue that emotional representations and emotionalisations are the discursive containers graspable in discourse, namely the attachment of emotional meaning to narratives and the mobilisation of emotions in discourse as the practice, performance or ritual to give something an emotional quality or to make an emotional display in discourse (Wodak and Schulz 1986; Wodak and Meyer 2009; Wodak 2015; Koschut et al. 2017; Koschut 2017b, 2017c;). Consequently, affective dynamics are here understood in Koschut's and Wodak's discursive understanding.

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[19] 'It is argued that emotions provide a socio-psychological mechanism by which culture moves individuals to defend a nation-state, especially in times of war. By emotionally investing in the cultural structure of a nation-state, the individual aligns him/herself with a powerful cultural script, which then dominates over other available scripts.'
See also Fierke (2015): '[narratives] acquire emotional resonance within social, cultural and/or political context. We are socialized to experience the emotions of fear, revulsion or horror that accompany memories of past wars, among others.' This resonates with Giddens's standpoint that identity relations are constituted emotionally first and foremost and that the being comes into the world by acknowledging trust relations.

3. Studying Affective Memory Politics

According to Toal (2018:1) 'affective geopolitics is the study of the powerful forces of emotion, the experience of being outraged, the desire to condemn, to abhor the behaviour of another state' (see also Moïsi 2010 and Gökarıksel & Secor 2018). As such, he is interested in the role of 'shock events' in international relations and how they disturb international order and how these events can, and have, defined community and belonging. In this regard, Toal (2018) understands these affective geopolitics as amalgamation of 'a leader's affective dispositions', 'affective storylines' and 'state-sponsored mobilizations' as well as 'geopolitical culture' and proposes to study them through a combination of thick description, critical discourse-emotion analysis, power structure analysis and survey research[20].

What this article lays out is an understanding of these affective geopolitics through readings of OS theory to substantiate what Toal (2018) calls 'shock events' as critical junctures related to felt ontological insecurities, and to shed light onto constructions of 'the past' through the dynamics of emotion communities within the logics of affective ontological security seeking.

As outlined in the introduction, 2018/19's particular triple anniversary and victimhood character for the three South Caucasus states provides a peculiar entry frame into the affective contestations of 'the pasts'. The chosen comparative design allows exploring those contested affective memories from different discursive angles and highlights the varying affective interpretations and consequences of those events. Accordingly, the timeframe under scrutiny was chosen to account for and trace the discursive dynamics since the last major anniversary marker in 2008/9 up until the most recent feasible present in 2018. This accounts for a one-year buffer to

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[20] Nevertheless, this is a relatively thin definition and understanding of what these affective geopolitics are and how they shape identity constellations given that he doesn't delineate the co-constitutive relationships of those aspects/dimensions (Reeves 2011; Gökarıksel & Secor 2018; Laszczkowski & Reeves 2018).

consider a closed corpus at the time of writing this article. This timeframe allows, first, to discern larger trends in the presence, production and rejection of affective OS narratives, second, to identify and qualify these potential changes, variations and adaptions, and third, to map emotional landscapes and affect through various contexts or discursive categories.

Here, what Toal (2018) calls 'a leader's affective dispositions' serves as entry point to the presidential mnemonic processes - under scrutiny via a leadership trait analysis; what he calls 'affective storylines' is re-interpreted as assemblage of narrative and affective landscapes - under scrutiny via an emotion discourse analysis; and what he calls 'state-sponsored mobilizations' is translated into presidential emotionalisations as the practice, performance or ritual to give something - here the remembrance of the past - an emotional quality or to make an emotional display - also under scrutiny via an emotion discourse analysis.

Presidential speech acts as practice of affective storylines thus constitute and contest, tap into or reject emotion norms as function of upholding ontological security along self-gratification or other-rejection motives.

In synthesis of the above, this work argues that one should focus on emotional representations rather than on emotion itself, circumventing the otherwise inevitable epistemic and ontological pitfalls such as individual affective phenomenology or personification of states to trace those OSS dynamics as argued by Koschut (2017b/c, 2018) or Wodak (2009). Therefore, the following methods were applied:

Table 1 - Overview of Methods

What?	How?	How so?	Of whom?
Analytical Focus	**Method**	**Instrumental Steps of Method**	**Corpus Construction**
- Cognitive drives for behaviour: need for affiliation, achievement, power, reward, risk[21] - temporal orientation of presidential discourses: past, present, future	*Leadership Trait Analysis (LTA)* through an automated cognitive linguist analysis (ACLA)	1. *LIWC 2015* provides a dictionary covering about 4,500 words and word stems from > 70 categories. 2. Automated analysis of pre-given measurement categories for cognitive drives and temporal orientations based on programme dictionary.	Presidential Discourses in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia from 2008-2018[a]
- Imaginaries of ontological security narratives and identity constructions and their emotional representations and respective emotionalisations	*Emotion Discourse Analysis* (EDA)	Three-step inductive coding: 1. sensitive exploratory reading of the text sample 2. Structured coding and classification: emotion categories and locus (self/other), context, emotionalisations 3. Refinement and specifications and cross-check	

[a]*Sample: all interviews, messages, speeches and statements of the respective heads of state (presidents) as published on their official webpage (English version) as data entry points from 2008 to 2018. Armenia: in total: 433; transcribed 9; translated 4; missing: 1 (2009), 2 (2017). Azerbaijan: in total: 153; transcribed 11; translated 0; missing 1 (2010), 2 (2011), 2 (2013), 2 (2015),1 (2016), 1 (2017). Georgia: in total: 515; transcribed 12; translated 4; missing: 0. Government tenure: Saakashvili 2008-2013 (in total 309); Margvelashvili 2013-2018 (in total: 206). Based on http://www.president.am, https://en.president.az, http://www.saakashviliarchive.info, https://www.president.gov.ge.*
Source: author's own elaboration on method and sample (see above).

[21] Tausczik & Pennebaker 2010.

Emotion discourse analysis is concerned with how actors - here the heads of state of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia - talk about emotions and how they employ emotion categories when talking about subjects, events, or social relations. Theoretically, such an understanding views emotions as socially constructed representations of meaning that are linked to conceptions of identity and power (Koschut in Clément & Sangar 2018: 277ff.). While emotions are, indeed, fluid and shifting, EDA argues that they also display a high degree of attachment and entanglement resulting in relatively stable patterns of emotional meanings and webs of interconnections which can be traced and analysed (Koschut in Clément & Sangar 2018: 297ff.). This approach was chosen because it suggests a remedy to the problem of the subjective ontology of emotions by shifting the analytical focus from their individual internal phenomenological perception and appraisal to their intersubjective articulation and communication in discourse so that one is able to study emotions as intersubjective representations (Capelos & Chrona 2018).

Within this emotion discourse analysis, a special focus lies on the (ontological security) narratives the presidents employ, that is, what stories they create and instrumentalise to interpret social reality in the context of specific social, historical and cultural locations (Somers 1994: 606). Here, the strategic use of narratives is considered as a strategy to promote a particular interpretation of a given issue for understanding both the past and the present in a simplified, schematic, and linear fashion - as 'cognitive molds' (Subotić 2013b, 2016) representing the causal fabric of experience (Goffman 1974)[22].

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[22] Like Subotić (2016), it seems fruitful to look at those narratives in a more intertextual manner via 'schematic narrative templates' (Wertsch 2008) - narratives of general patterns across space and time, reflecting a single general story line - instead of focusing on specific narratives of individualities. They are particularly prone to an 'instrumentalisation of narratives': their (state) control, production, and consumption, here through the presidents as collective identity entrepreneurs (Subotić 2016; van Hoef 2018).

The Leadership Trait Analysis sheds light onto the cognitive drives for behaviour (need for affiliation, achievement, power, reward, risk) and the temporal orientation of the presidential discourses (past, present, future).

These cognitive linguistic traits show how frequent specific motivations for behaviour were articulated in discourses and which temporal focus speeches had. This lets us discover both articulated underlying motivations and temporal orientations in presidential reasonings. It distinguishes between the motivations for affiliation - the need of belonging to or identification with something (may it be an elite/ party/ country/ international alliance), for achievement - the need of signalling success and wanting to 'continue winning', for power - the articulation of individual/group power and the constitution of power hierarchies through speeches, for reward - to explicitly please the individual/group, and for risk - to exhibit the willingness to take risk for one's goals.

This serves to discern individual aspects and sets of discursive practices/ cognitive preferences of the scrutinized presidents as identity entrepreneurs to contextualize the EDA.

This combination of methods as outlined in Table 1 reflects upon the manifold spatial and temporal avenues and interlinkages of markers and symbols of (ontological) insecurity and affective subjectivities (Solomon 2012, 2013) and the still experimental nature of exploring them.

4. The Affective Memory Politics of the South Caucasus 2008-2018

As outlined in the introduction, this article interrogates today's contested mnemonic imaginaries in the presidential discourses of the South Caucasus on the occasion of the outlined three simultaneous biography-shaping events in 2018/2019.

The first part of the following analysis contextualises the contested nature of this triple anniversary's remembrance by outlining the leaders' affective disposi-

tions through a leadership trait analysis with specific attention to the temporal focus of their presidential speech acts. As such, it is guided by the question of how the presidents represent their imaginaries stylistically in order to draw attention to their motivational cues and discursive temporalities.

The second part of the following analysis traces the contested nature of this triple anniversary's remembrance within the leaders' affective storylines and mobilisations by interrogating the seven emblematic discursive categories relating to those anniversaries through an emotion discourse analysis.

First, relating to the temporal character of anniversaries and the ontology of being 100 years after their independence from the Russian Empire and their formation as independent republics, it starts by asking 'how is 'the past', or 'history', conceived of and re-narrated - and how is 'the state', or 'the sovereign' imagined within this transitionary time?'.

Second, relating to the ontology-unsettling change 30 years ago with the fall of the Berlin wall and the 'end of the Cold War' and thus the South Caucasus states' independence from the SU but also the start of the secession wars around Nagorno-Karabakh, it interrogates the mnemonical re-construction of those times by looking at the discursive categories of 'the Soviet Union', 'the break-up of the Soviet Union', and '1989-1992' as representations what is or is not remembered as ontologically instable timespan.

Third, relating to the contextual foreign policy change for the South Cau-casus states induced by the institutionalisation of the EU's EaP as well as the 2008 Russo-Georgian war 10 years ago and, at the half-way to today, the 2014 Ukraine Crisis, it inquires how both '2008/ Georgia' and '2014/ Ukraine' are remembered and refitted into present ontological discourses.

Fourth, relating to the adaptive nature of ontological security stability seeking narratives and supporting emotional representations, it reflects upon the different notions and meanings of 'crises' emerging from those preceding themes

4.1. Leaders' affective Dispositions: a Leadership Trait Analysis[23]

The LTA as context for the following assemblage of narrative and affective landscapes has revealed distinct drive patterns within the discourses of the four presidents. Both the needs for affiliation and power rest on a high level for all presidents. The need for affiliation explicitly reflects the OS reverberations flowing through all those discourses as a baseline and represent the presidents' coping and creativity in imagining relational identities. The high level of power drive present within those discourses reflects on the authoritarian tendencies of all those presidents - or their imagination of how a consolidation of power within a limited elite serves their policies best. Interestingly, the drive to 'achieve' is constantly higher than the one for 'reward' - this could be interpreted as shallow populism where one rather showcases achievements as act of signal(ling) than to substantivise them in form of rewards towards the population/elite. Moreover, this reflects upon the exuberant narcissism - towards the individual self, the ruling elite and the 'state' as a national construct - shaping the discourses of Aliyev, Sargsyan and Saakashvili and only to a lesser extent that of Margvelashvili.

In this regard, different motivational sets emerge within situations of crises and let us distinguish the quality of those. Around critical junctures, the willingness to signal 'risk' increases for all four presidents. However, cognitive OSS[24] is different after those junctures where either 'affiliation' or 'power' as motivational drives

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[23] See Annex 1 for a graph and data overview.

[24] In contrast to affective OSS, cognitive OSS is concerned with the changes in cognitive reasoning to uphold a positive and constant self-image. As such, this is tightly related to Festinger's (1962) theory of cognitive dissonance (Caverni et al. 1990; Sun 2006; Glöckner & Pachur 2012; Findlay & Thagard 2014; Park et al. 2017; Gilmore & Rowling 2018).

peak. For example, the need for 'affiliation' increases after a crisis in Saakashvili's case whereas 'power' emerges dominantly in Margvelashvili's. Aliyev and Sargsyan both tend towards affiliation with a relatively high level of power underlying this. Interestingly, Sargsyan recently exhibits a tendency towards an increase in 'power' in addition to a heightened focus on achievements as a reaction towards critical junctures. This lets us distinguish the quality of those crises in a sense that the affiliation drive rather speaks to identity recalibration crises whereas the power drive rather speaks to ruling system justification/legitimization crises[25].

What is more, all those discourses are caught in the present with more of a focus in the past than in the future. Not only does this reflect the confinement of those (identity) discourses in an everyday struggle of re-interpretation and contestation, but it highlights the potential for 'the past' to be drawn on and mobilized where the future is only a distant utopia.

4.2. Leaders' affective Storylines and Mobilisations: an Emotion Discourse Analysis[26]

Affective OSS highlights that there are two underlying dynamics within what we understand as OSS. Upholding a positive self-understanding is split into two mutually constitutive but separate domains: one, the domain of narrative modulation strategies; two, the domain of affective re-calibrations. This work has argued that what we can observe as affective OSS is sustained and rejected through these intertwined collective identity dynamics.

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[25] This is particularly obvious in Sargsyan's case where one could identify his attempts to re-justify the ruling system through the increase in signalling achievements as an act of showcasing output-legitimacy. Of course, it is difficult to discern identity crises from ruling system legitimization crises when looking at presidential discourses given that their (collective) identities overlap and a challenge to state ontics most often is intertwined with narratives about the legitimate rule within.

[26] See Annex 2 for a data overview and coding illustrations.

What is striking in Sargsyan's OS discourses is his engagement in memory politics in order to sustain Armenia's OS. Particularly interesting is here that self-victimisation is Sargsyan's discursive strategy of choice. This could relate back to his construction of Armenia as (ontologically) superior where self-victimization is then a strong marker of frictions to those OS narratives.

To pick and choose from the repertoire of moments in time in order to consolidate own OS narratives is a welcomed strategy by Aliyev. What becomes obvious here are three themes along stressing own historic greatness and using narrations of the past as justifications of current policies. Within these memory politics, first, the Azerbaijan-Nagorno-Karabakh togetherness is re-constructed by blocking any Armenian existence or experience there; second, Armenia/Turkey, Russia and the SU are remembered as the evil and the good respectively; and third, Aliyev's general debate on and interpretation of history reveals intriguing insights into his understanding of Azerbaijan's ontology and of global politics. Aliyev's use of national memory is a stringent one: he only draws on memories supporting his vision of Azerbaijan's OS narratives and blocks all accounts reciting otherwise. This blockage is absolute: there's no defiance of those accounts in his discourse, but a complete absence insofar as these memories shall not even discursively exist.

Saakashvili's and Margvelashvili's mnemonic discourses are different in referent object and qualities, but similar in discursive articulations. For both, falling back onto the past happens in the context of ontological crises such as 2008 and 2014, where the temporal orientations of their speeches change relatively towards the past, decreasing both present and future orientations.

The relative increase in the future and decrease in the past orientation at the end of Saakashvili's tenure hint at two things: one, a relative conflict relief or less strained ontological security; two, 'building a legacy' through a positive future outlook based on his achievements.

In turn, the increase in the temporal orientation towards the past around 2014 could both represent a motivation and tendency to cope with the induced ontological insecurity through the Ukraine Crisis or as reflecting upon the achievements and failures of Margvelashvili's predecessor.

The contestation of and challenges to ontological security rationales have been traumatic for all three South Caucasus countries. Spread over seven emblematic discursive categories relating to the discussed triple anniversary, the contestations of those identity signifiers highlight the makings and breakings of emotion communities as phenomenon of the dynamics of the affective geopolitics of the South Caucasus. Moreover, their contestation highlights the abundance of the rhetoric of memory politics embedded within affective OSS (Bernhard & Kubik 2014; Gustafsson 2014; Resende & Budryte 2014; Mälksoo 2015, 2019; Nicolaïdis et al. 2015; Rumelili 2018; Subotić 2018, 2019; Donnelly & Steele 2019).

History?

History is imagined as source for offensive memory politics, as constant process of struggle and thus as source of pain and anger by all four presidents.

Sargsyan imagines history as source of double agony - that is of genocide remembrance (1915/Ottoman Empire/Turkish genocide denial)[27] and Azerbaijan's

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[27] 'In his interview with Der Spiegel, speaking about the genocide which took place during World War I, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated that 'there can be no talk of genocide.' Why cannot your neighboring country come to terms with its own past? - Mr. Erdogan once also said that the Turks couldn't have possibly committed genocide and that Turkish history is "bright as the sun". The Turks are opposed to the definition of the event as Genocide. But no matter how ferociously Turks oppose it, Ankara is not the one to decide on this issue. Now Erdogan is even threatening to expel thousands of Armenians, who reside in Turkey illegally. Unacceptable statements such as that one stir up in our nation the memories of the Genocide. Unfortunately, such statements articulated by the Turkish politicians come as no surprise to me. Statements like that one can be found in not so remote history – similar statements were voiced in Azer-

fascism. As such, seeking OS translates into Sargsyan's appeals to 'redress the mistakes of the past'[28] where 'healing the past' is a metaphor both for a reintegration of Artsakh into Armenia and for genocide recognition by Turkey. This is deeply embedded within the mentioned self-victimization discourse.

Aliyev and Saakashvili are united in their scepticism about Fukuyama's end of history.

'History'[29] is a volatile signifier in Aliyev's discourses: it is both an interpretation of a long tradition (of ontics) stretched over the - unconceivable - past and a pick-and-choose mechanism for specific instances favouring Aliyev's OS narrative constructions. As such, the timelessness of national traditions and patriotism is deeply engrained in this understanding. Against this background, 'the past' is imagined as something very positive, whereas 'modern times' are imagined as negative. This backwards-leaning tendency supports Aliyev's critique of Western modernism as such and finds it utmost articulation in his outspoken scepticism about the iconic 'End of History' by Fukuyama. This scepticism about the 'victory' of liberal democracy after the 'defeat' of the Soviet Union underlines two assumptions of Aliyev's historicised world view: first, his fundamental critique of the Western liberal order

baijan in 1988 and as a result dozens of Armenians became victims of the massacres conducted in Azerbaijani towns Sumgait and Baku.'"(Sargsyan, 05.04.2010).

[28] 'It was not about getting the news because it was our calculated step. After the August putsch, Mutalibov was trying to tame the wave of nationalism which was becoming more extremist. On August 30, 1991 Azerbaijan declared that Azerbaijani state of 1918-1920, which Nagorno-Karabakh had never been part of, was being reinstated. Under the circumstances we had to utilize our rights envisaged by the Constitution of the USSR and the Law on Secession from the Union. And we did: on September 2, the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh declared independence.' (Sargsyan, 2.9.2011).

[29] 'I think that we all had great illusions, of course. At the current stage of development there is an increasing awareness of the fact that there is no single model, as you say, liberal-democratic. It does not exist even in the countries that claim to be its authors. And the events unfolding in the euro zone and the crisis show that without government intervention and regulation it will be very difficult to achieve sustained growth. I believe that the blame for the financial crisis lies mainly on the irresponsibility of politicians who, in fact, climbed into the pockets of future generations and could not possibly imagine, and perhaps even on the contrary, what consequences this will lead to.' (Aliyev, 14.04.2013).

and its unwanted intrusions, and second, his positive re-evaluation of the SU and attached governance principles[30]. This feeds into his ritual of shaming potential practices of 'forgetting history' - and thus the 'consequences of fascism' - as acts of securitising memory.

Fascism as the most gruesome experience of the 20th century is being brought up repeatedly in this context to construct Armenia as perpetrator of it, as historically evil other. This lesson from the past is part of the standard repertoire being mobilised around Armenia, together with the counter-narrative of Azeri love for Nagorno-Karabakh. 'Forgetting' history - and the lessons learned, e.g. what Aliyev narrates as Armenian fascism - is a cautious warning frame in Aliyev's interpretation of national memory. This becomes clear when Aliyev expresses worry about attempts to rewrite history[31] - intentionally leaving what he means by that relatively open - in order to harm Azerbaijan and Russia[32].

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[30] 'It was only revitalized with the ascent of President Heydar Aliyev to power in 1993, when Victory Day was declared a public holiday. It is a day off now. Thus historical justice has been restored. We have a very good attitude to our veterans. I must say that this year we will complete the program on the provision of all our veterans with cars. We also regularly allocate apartments, areas for recreation and cash rewards to them. They are the pride of our people, and we honor the memory of those killed. And we are convinced that the young generation should be brought up on the example of the selfless heroism and love of the homeland, so that the tradition of heroism and love of the Fatherland continues. Also, as you have pointed out, this is a historic moment that brings all nations of the former Soviet Union together. In principle, it should bring together all those who contributed to the victory over fascism.' (Aliyev, 29.04.2015).

[31] 'We are very concerned about these attempts – first, to rewrite history and belittle the role of the Soviet army in the victory over fascism, as well as the attempts we are seeing in terms of the glorification of Nazi criminals, their followers and those who share their ideology. It probably seemed to us all some time ago that fascism was completely over with and that this evil mankind had not seen in its history is gone forever. Unfortunately, after some time, as a result of the efforts of certain circles and a propaganda campaign, we can see that a part of the younger generation around the world does not know the actual history. Constantly inculcated with distorted historical facts, they somewhat become susceptible to this virus. We see marches, torch processions and demonstrations of neo-fascists in many regions around the world. All this is of great concern.

This securitisation continues along the just outlined motives of critiquing the Western governance model(s) as inapt, as a challenge to regional and global stability. In so doing, his appeal to 'learn from history' in order to not ever be not sovereign anymore could be read as implicit threat and critical engagement with post-Cold War intellectual thought.

For both Saakashvili and Margvelashvili, history is legitimising source of Georgia's Europeanness and constant reminder of Russian offensive behaviour against Georgia. Where Saakashvili joins Aliyev in his pessimistic revaluation of Fukuyama's theory, he extends this to a more securitised vision of the present and future where there was not only no end of history in sight but that tragedies were always possible. This highlights Saakashvili's understanding of history as potentially repeating, as constant precarious struggle of seeking ontological security[33]. In this regard, Margvelashvili is in accord with Saakashvili's historical cataclysms as hurdles to OS which are a recurring theme within his narrated ontological insecurities.

We cherish our history and the heroism of all the peoples of the Soviet Union and other allied countries which put an end to this nightmare. It must live in the memory of generations. So I think that it is now the responsibility of politicians, the leaders of countries and influential public figures who revere the great feat of our fathers and grandfathers. […] I think that at this stage all public entities sharing the convictions I am talking about should coordinate their actions, should work hard in terms of informing the public, especially the younger people, about the historical truth and counter the glorification of fascism and the rewriting of history' (Aliyev, 29.04.2015)

[32] As such, the just described methods are applied by him to both reject the narrations of the past not in line with his interpretation, as well as to stabilise, defend and seal his vision of a consolidated past.

[33] 'I am speaking at the UN and I think the main thing is that it's 20 years after the demise of the Soviet Union which Zbigniew Brzezinsky had lots of things to do with. He predicted it when nobody ever believed it. He didn't predict the exact date but he predicted it correctly. And then it's of course the anniversary of 9/11 and every time pundits were wrong. Both times they said history is finished, that it's all over. You know, history is certainly not finished and things can get very tragic. And certainly we will consider these things. On one hand there is this thing of anniversaries. I mean things have gone reverse after that. You know Russia has become more revisionists - trying to restore some sphere of influence in the former Soviet Union. Terrorists have gone on attacks. But on the other hand the good news is that there is the Arab spring there is a wave of democratization. But it can go both ways among what was the former Soviet Empire.' (Saakashvili, 26.07.2011)

The Soviet Union?

The Soviet Union is imagined on a nostalgia scale from exuberant to non-existent.

Both Armenia and Azerbaijan state a discontinuity between 'the Soviet' and 'Russia', but instead argue in favour of identity continuity through nostalgia for the good old times.

In Armenia Soviet Union nostalgia is excessively displayed, where it is remembered as experience of glorious peace.

In Azerbaijan, Soviet Union nostalgia prevails as well where the SU's positive cultural impact and the fact that Nagorno-Karabakh was designated under Azeri authority are cherished. Particularly the Azeri past of Nagorno-Karabakh in Soviet times is repeatedly mobilized, singularized and contextualised with the Helsinki Final Act, in which Nagorno-Karabakh 'was promised to Azerbaijan' to treasure this specific narration of the past in favour of Azeri ontics. However, this is joined by trauma of the break-up chaos leading to a negation of those ontics.

In Georgia, there's no nostalgia present, but trauma based on the remembrance of gruel Soviet occupation and domination where both presidents see continuity between 'the Soviet' and 'the Russian' as harmful reality[34]. Where Saakashvili imagines the Soviet Union through its totalitarianism as opposite to his ideal of a

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[34] 'If I think about our Soviet past, I remember the emotions that Georgians had when they came here; the emotion that they were visiting a nation that has the same attitude towards unacceptance of Soviet occupation and Soviet rule of life. Of course, there could not be much political connections at that time, but the emotion that we cannot accept being forced out of our statehood and forced into this union was uniting at that time. Of course, after that we found each other, embraced each other and now I can say that our cooperation and our support to each other is extremely important. Georgians are so thankful to you because your government, your president, your people support us so much on our way to European and Euro-Atlantic community. You are the ones that are talking in the name of values of freedom and statehood. You are not talking only for yourself, but also for countries like Georgia. I would like to thank every Lithuanian for doing this.' (Margvelashvili, 28.02.2018)

modern state, Margvelashvili underlines the trauma of Soviet dominance and occupation ever since as fundamental ontological insecurity struggle.

Break-up of the Soviet Union?

The SU's break-up is imagined according to its outlined antithetic revaluations.

Sargsyan portrays the break-up as painful, chaotic tragedy.

Aliyev draws on the trauma of the break-up chaos as founding myth of the new Azerbaijan under Heydar Aliyev who mastered successfully the ensuing insecurities.

Both Saakashvili and Margvelashvili represent the break-up as traumatic pain but emphasise the contrasting joy and happiness of ensuing freedoms and sovereignty. The metaphor of falling walls is employed here to mobilise positive emotions around hope and unity since the SU's break-up to represent the obsolescence of old structures to be replaced by new, efficient ones. In contrast to Saakashvili, however, Margvelashvili approaches what he frames as democratic consolidation through a less neoliberal lens, articulating the concerns of people over being left behind and not benefitting enough where living conditions are still difficult. It is within this context that Margvelashvili implies Georgia's fears of a new Cold War, but asserts that in reality this is already a given.

1989-1992?

'1989-1992' is imagined as tumultuous time of transformation, reorientation and seeking and acquiring ontological security during and after the break-up of the Soviet Union.

In Armenia, these years are imagined as years of struggle and purification of the nation marked by Azeri inimicality.

In Azerbaijan, these years are signifiers of a triple ontological crisis (existence, military power and authority over Nagorno-Karabakh, spiritual reorientation) and feed into the funding myth of glorious leadership under the Aliyev family.

In Saakashvili's Georgia, these years are portrayed as a quest for purification, modernisation and liberation from the Soviet Union.

In Margvelashvili's Georgia, 1989-1992 is re-imagined as actual start of the Russian occupation and attempted annexation of Georgia. In this regard, Margvelashvili asserts that 'historical justice' was always on Georgia's side against Russia and that the ongoing occupation since 1990 - not 2008 - was to stop. Moreover, all ensuing bad experiences and developments of Georgia are linked to this period in time and justified through Russian malevolent behaviour since then.

2008/Georgia?

'2008 and Georgia' is as disputed as the imaginaries of the Soviet Union and its break-up between the four presidents.

Sargsyan's imaginaries showcase an intensive mixture of affective positivity/negativity. 2008 is signifier of a double crisis, but also signifier of a double relaxation. In this context, 2008 feeds into an imaginary of Armenia as a suffering victim (through the 5 Days War in Georgia and perceived EU/NATO advancements in the neighbourhood having led to this confrontation) and of Armenia as optimist and hopeful agenda setter for conflict resolutions (in Artsakh and normalization efforts with Turkey).

Aliyev's interpretation of 2008 is one of Western normative imposition where Georgia's Western orientation has led to critical instability in the neighbourhood.

Saakashvili sees 2008 as articulation of the cynical revisionist realpolitik by Russia which pursues ambitions of hegemonic reign like the SU. In this regard, 2008 is portrayed as 'verge of life and death' of the Georgian nation, as all-fractioning ontological insecurity[35]. However, it is also remembered through Georgian resolve and Western support as counter-vision to what is labelled experience of existential angst. This existential angst of 2008 signifies a securitised ontological insecurity imaginary where Saakashvili posits 'another 2008' as ever-so-possible.

Margvelashvili draws on Saakashvili's representations of 2008 and represents 2008 as the critical wound at the origin of Georgian suffering: 'the Russian trauma'. Interestingly, he requalifies 2008 also as critical juncture not only for Georgia's OS but for relations with Russia which are portrayed as strong bond beforehand. This requalification of 2008 is also visible when he pessimistically identifies 2008 as pre-set for 2014 and the beginning of the multiple failures of the West.

Here, the trope of unity, sovereignty and stability draws on this asserted new Cold War reality to emphasise the importance of those qualities for Georgia's (ontological) security. Margvelashvili depicts unity as the only, ultimate truth and links this to his discourse of sovereign choices to rally the domestic around the flag against international challenge(r)s. Moreover, he bridges this with the appeal to consolidate Georgia's European democracy as expression of this ontology and mecha-

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[35] '- In Ukraine, everybody knows about your friendship with the former Ukrainian President -Viktor Yushchenko. When was the last time you met him?
- Last time - a couple of days ago in Krynica, during the Economic Forum. I shook the hand of Viktor Andreevich. Of course, we have a good relationship! As you know, he came to Georgia during the 2008 Georgia-Russia conflict over South Ossetia. Our country needed support the most back then. After all, we were on the verge of life and death. An army of about 100 thousand soldiers came close to our capital, but we did not have enough weapons and soldiers to defend ourselves! And our main weapons were not the troops. The fact that thousands of people came out into the streets of Tbilisi and our friends arrived - five leaders of the former Soviet Union (as well as president of France) held hands near the Parliament... In short, the main thing was not the fact that Viktor Yushchenko was in Tbilisi at a difficult moment, but the fact that he represented Ukraine in Georgia at that time. Our country will remember it forever.' (Saakashvili, 15.9.2011).

nism to find unity (preferences). In this regard, Margvelashvili narrates Georgia as having overcome the inner turmoil of the past to find this consensus.

Remembering 2008 as a critical wound which has to be healed feeds into these dichotomous memory politics of before-and-after-2008: hopeful narratives about Georgia as peaceful and tranquil country support a vision that is was somehow possible to go back to the better past before-2008 if Russia was as tranquil as Georgia.

2014/Ukraine?

'2014 and Ukraine' is imagined in surprising unison with regards to its nature as critical juncture in and for the neighbourhood with regards to the ensuing security fragility. In contrast, it is imagined in complete oppositional terms with regards to its assumed reasons for onset and consequences.

Armenia and Azerbaijan agree that the Ukraine Crisis is a consequence of Western hegemonic norm imposition.

Armenia depicts 2014 as a painful critical juncture which has made clear the East-West divide and the EU's drive for normative hegemony in the neighbourhood. In this regard, Ukraine is characterized as defiant other. In contrast, satisfaction with EEU accession talks is voiced as an alternative.

Azerbaijan's temporal othering of a favoured Ukraine under Yanukovych pre-2014 and a disfavoured Ukraine post-2014 underlines its evaluation of the Ukraine Crisis as violently fragmenting the neighbourhood.

In contrast to Armenia and Azerbaijan, Georgia identifies Russia's annexation of Crimea as an act undermining and violating liberal norms and global order.

Georgia's Saakashvili, albeit not in power anymore at this point in time, construed Ukraine as ontologically similar to Georgia during his tenure. Moreover,

he saw Georgia as a role model for Ukraine and empathetically and fearfully projects the possibility of historic tragedies towards Ukraine.

Georgia's Margvelashvili initially articulates discourses of hope and optimism in an amelioration of relations with Russia is in parallel to - and later gilded by - discourses of contempt and resentment. These are, falling back into line with Saakashvili's rationales, guided by an understanding of Russia as complete ontological opposite of Georgia from which different understandings of all essential political principles are derived.

This change happens with the Ukraine Crisis which is immediately understood as synonymous to the events and situation in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Thus, the identification of Ukraine as experiencing the same ontological insecurity as Georgia instigated by the very same challenger lets those hopeful discourses collapse into pessimistic visions where perceived similarity with Ukraine (and Moldova) foster Margvelashvili's new narrations of Georgia as best in being able to understand, analyse, question and critique Russian (foreign) policies and propaganda.

2014 as critical juncture thus re-intensifies the uncertainty and insecurity of Margvelashvili's OS narratives in relation to Russia, where he reverts to securitised arguments that meetings with Russia were only possible if they met on Georgia's ontological self-definition terms[36].

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[36] 'I think, in 2008, there was no understanding of the essence of the policy pursued by Russia in the international arena. At that time, there were attempts to 'explain' somehow Moscow's absurd actions on locating troops into Georgia. We all have paid a fee for the fact that neither then, nor now, no strong and firm response is given to the Russian policy. After all, it is a fact that Russia has declared clearly and unambiguously: what is in the Russian slang called the ,near abroad', in fact is a 'zone of privileged interests of the Russian Federation'. Apparently, it is meant that international law quasi does not apply to these states, these 'territories'. But, even if it does, so only in some strange, distorted format, in which international rules are formally in force, still, the final word goes to Russia and the Russian weaponry. This kind of attitude is fraught with problems not only in Russia's relations with its neighbors. If we 'develop' such 'logic' on a global scale, we get destabilization not only on the border with Russia, but in any region of the world, where there is a strong state with nuclear

The metaphorical equation of 2008 and 2014 as similar critical junctures thus securitises and politicises Russia's OS contestations in the neighbourhood. It casts and shames Russia as challenging and re-drawing (b)orders and creating artificial states in the neighbourhood. 'Artificial' describes the different understandings of ontologies between Russia and the states experiencing its occupation - where Russia's reading is framed as unfitting with the existing ontics, thus as creating frictions in these OS narrative webs.

This metaphor is emotionally and morally charged and draws on Margvelashvili's memory politics: it includes narrations of the historical injustice of Russia's OS contestations - framed as genocides - and seeks to dispose of them through assuming that the very historical justice will be on Ukraine's and Georgia's side eventually, which is represented through pain, anger, hate, and disgust but also anxiety, regret and remorse about the current insecurities.

Moreover, this metaphor draws in - voicing disappointment - the failures of the West as preset for and continuity of these critical junctures and in so doing casts Ukraine and Georgia - but also all other EaP countries which are perceived as potentially having to experience Russian meddling - as a different emotion community. This emotion community is one of empathetic understanding of the pain and

capability and a theoretical possibility of treating its weaker neighbors in the same way, as Russia treats its neighbors. Unfortunately, the West failed to comprehend the absurdity and tragedy of what happened in 2008. As a result, in 2014 we got the 'Ukrainian Front'; and Russia, having the 'experience of 2008', was much more organized and rapid, because the Russian leadership considered the aggressive style of action acceptable. I think that today the West's fidelity to principles should be based exactly on this bitter experience. When I communicate with colleagues in the West, I always tell them: ‚the point is to be very honest with Russians and tell them directly: this is unacceptable to us!'; and also, confirm that the West considers Georgia, Ukraine and other Russian neighbors, as equal and sovereign subjects of international law. This is the ‚mere truth' of international relations. This is to say that it is necessary to speak clearly with Russia. I think, the peaceful future can only be achieved through these relations for Russia, as well as for Georgia and other states." (Margvelashvili, 3.10.2016)

sufferance attached to these ontological anxieties and a mirroring of the extensive feelings of hate and disgust towards Russia, and therefore in contrast to what is construed as more restrained emotional reactions of the West.

Crises?

Crises are imagined completely differently based on the abundance of just outlined affective imaginaries (of the past).

For Armenia, regionally exclusive structures imposed by the EU/NATO, Artsakh/Azerbaijan, the domestic opposition, Turkey's genocide denial, and the SU break-up are imagined as crises limiting the ability to go on and feel as before. Moreover, Sargsyan denounces the lecturing of smaller states by bigger ones as crises of status and prestige. Interestingly, a securitised looming global crisis is not only seen as threat, but also as opportunity for new security structures - excluding and being directed against Azerbaijan.

For Azerbaijan, crises are identified in an Azeri ontological crisis on its own, the question of Nagorno-Karabakh, the opposition contesting domestic legitimacy, the global economic crisis and local reverberations, 'the West' - and particularly the EP - critiquing Azerbaijan as well as the inaptness of Western governance models as challenge to regional and global security. As such, Aliyev engages highly critically in a deconstruction of post-Cold War modernist intellectual thought.

For Georgia, crisis signifiers change between the two presidents under scrutiny for this timeframe. Saakashvili identifies the dialectical, entangled relationship between Georgian and Russian ontologies as linchpin to all further security imaginaries. As such, strained ontics as repeated, ever-so-present threats to the survival of the self by Russia dominate his discourses. Moreover, he posits reverberations to global order given the imminent Russian collapse as upcoming crisis of a global power vacuum. In this regard, he supposes that if the US would be weak(ened), subsequently the EU, as implicit ally/vassal of the US, would be

weak(ened) too - leading to the instability of global order. Furthermore, relating to the EU and NATO, feelings of rejection and neglect invoked by those ontological anchors are portrayed as crisis of trust, similar to what he identifies as internal crises of the EU, namely lagging reforms and integration fatigue. Margvelashvili builds upon but also adapts Saakashvili's crises imaginaries. He identifies Russia as all-encompassing threat by expatiating on its aggression/occupation, its wrongful near abroad conceptions, its construction of NATO myths, and its EU undermining. Furthermore, he identifies crises in concentric OS circles: the domestic (Russian sympathies), Russia (where South Ossetia and Abkhazia are linking back to the domestic), Ukraine (as empathetic critical juncture), and a broad category of the international (liberal order's credibility and efficiency, EU/NATO's fatigue/rejections).

5. Reflections

'Cultural issues of identity and history have also been integral to the ascent and consolidation of populism in post-communist East Europe. The fact that East European trauma under communism is not adequately understood and appreciated in the West is the central grievance of these movements, and this feeds into new cycles of victimization – this time the perceived oppression focuses on Western liberal ideals, such as 'gender ideology', feminism, LGBTQ rights, or even more dramatically, Middle Eastern migration and refugee flows. The core of populist resentment is the issue of cultural imposition – and the deepest cultural imposition post-communist Europe feels today is the imposition of the Western memory on their own pasts.' (Subotic 2019b:1)

What this article has laid out is an understanding of these affective geopolitics - marked in the above quote by 'trauma', 'grievance', 'victimization', or 'resentment' as emotional representations of what is construed as imposition of Western memory - through readings of OS theory to substantiate what Toal (2018) calls

'shock events' as critical junctures interpreted as affective ontological insecurities, and to shed light onto constructions of 'the past' through the dynamics of emotion communities within the logics of affective ontological security seeking. This has highlighted the central role of affective markers of ontological insecurities in discourses and how this has affected change and continuity in renegotiating remembrance by the presidents of the South Caucasus states. In so doing, it has drawn particular attention to the affective reproduction of memory and has shown how investing, subscribing, questioning or rejecting identity-positionalities is a patchwork process of discursive emotion norm contestations resulting in traumatic or nostalgic representations of the past.

Here, an analysis of what Toal (2018) called the 'leaders' affective dispositions' of the four presidential discourses from 2008-2018 through a LTA showed the different discursive approaches to identity politics in general. An analysis of what he called 'affective storylines' and 'state-sponsored mobilizations' through an EDA showed the multiplicity of specific affective landscapes and discursive practices to create emotional representations within affective OSS logics.

Spread over seven emblematic discursive categories relating to the discussed triple anniversaries, the contestations of those identity signifiers highlight the makings and breakings of emotion communities as phenomenon of the dynamics of the affective geopolitics of the South Caucasus. Moreover, their contestation highlights the abundance of the rhetoric of memory politics embedded within affective OSS.

'Defending memory' as seeking ontological security is then achieved through articulating opposite emotions towards the same events: to redraw what is perceived as appropriate feeling (rule) towards the past. As such, trauma and nostalgia are affective re-interpretations of those insecurities as well as affective canvases to justify present and future politics. Affective investments as emotional commitments to those re-interpretations vary in their salience and valence. The dissected

presidential discourses highlight the repertoire within affective storylines to imagine a canvas (emotional representations) and paint on it (emotionalisations) to (re-)seek ontological security.

There, the affective difference between politicisation and securitisation gets qualified: discursive moves of politicization exploit the salience of (pre-existing) affective investments, discursive moves of securitization change the valence of (pre-existing) affective investments.

Particularly, the presidential discourses show another dimension of 'how the nation continues to operate as a salient register' (Antonsich et al. 2020), namely through its affective re-appraisal as ontological anchor.

What this work has furthermore shown is that these dynamics are to be understood as way more than scaremongering and blaming, or hate and love, but as amalgamation of a situated variety of emotions and emotionalisations (Hor 2019). Particularly the role of pain and suffering - and subsequent anger - as additional markers of ontological insecurities and critical junctures as well as the delineation of a vast bi-valent variety of emotionalisations within affective OSS adds to the literature which has mostly zoomed in onto anxiety and fear as emotional representations of these insecurities as well as blaming and shaming as emotionalisations.

These findings also speak to what Giddens called 'colonisation of the future': the practice of system justification and political ordering. In turn, this often overlooked aspect of Giddens's work is related to 'risk reduction' (that is, minimising the vulnerability to critical OS junctures) and memory politics: 'People in all cultures, including the most resolutely traditional, distinguish future, present and past, and weigh alternative courses of action in terms of likely future considerations. But as we saw in the previous chapter, where traditional modes of practice are dominant, the past inserts a wide band of 'authenticated practice' into the future. Time is not empty, and a consistent 'mode of being' relates future to past. In addition, tradi-

tion creates a sense of the firmness of things that typically mixes cognitive and moral elements. The world is as it is because it is as it should be.' (Giddens 1991: 48, 133f).

As the above quote highlights, these struggles about the power of (affective) interpretation do not only take place within the South Caucasus countries, but are part and parcel of broader international contestations. These contestations not only encompass identity-positionalities, but attached emotion norms and adjoint emotion communities. The latter communities drift not only apart (between the South Caucasus countries), but also away (different anchors/poles of perceived appropriate emotion norms internationally, e.g. here either the EU or Russia). In this regard, those emotion communities are imagined OS communities bound by empathy and sympathy - to care for the self/other - or by the complete opposite of it - to deny the self/other those emotions when interpreting not only the past.

As such, discussions about a potential revival of Cold War imaginaries should not be limited to tracing narratives, but should pay attention to the widening divergence in emotion (norms) attached to those re-interpretations (Creutziger & Reuber 2019).

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Annex 1: Leaders' affective Dispositions and temporal Focus in Discourse in the South Caucasus 2008-2018
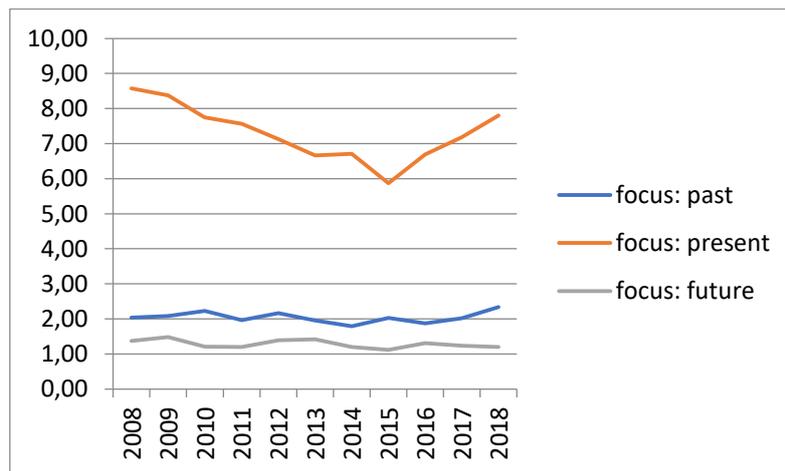
Armenia

Figure 1: Sargsyan's individual Traits and Predispositions: Drives in Discourse 2008-2018 (ACLA)
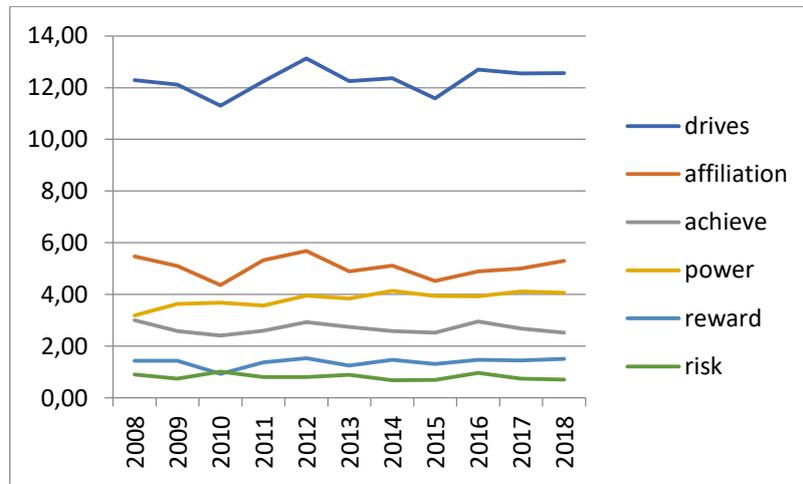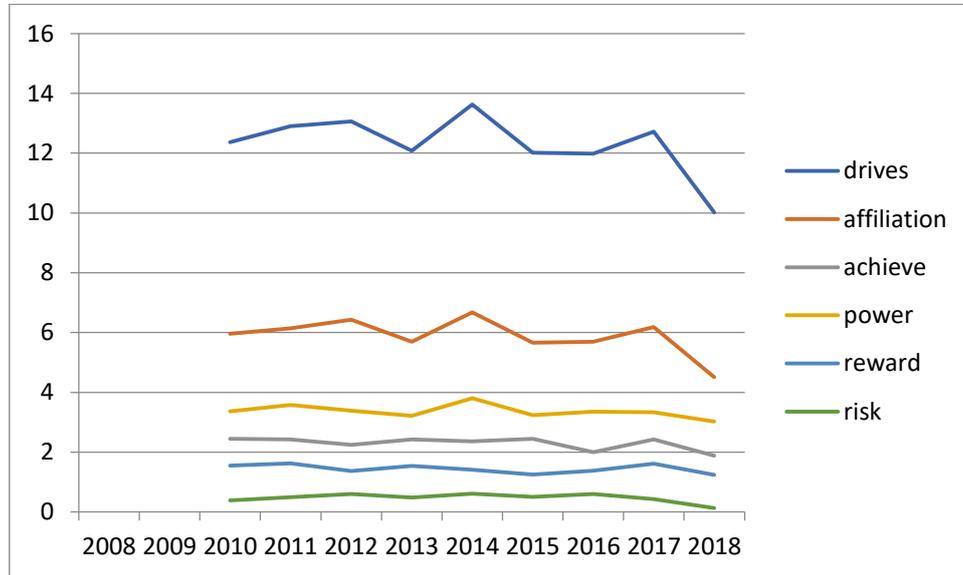

Source: own elaboration.

Figure 2: Sargsyan's individual Traits and Predispositions: Temporal Focus of Discourse 2008-2018 (ACLA)
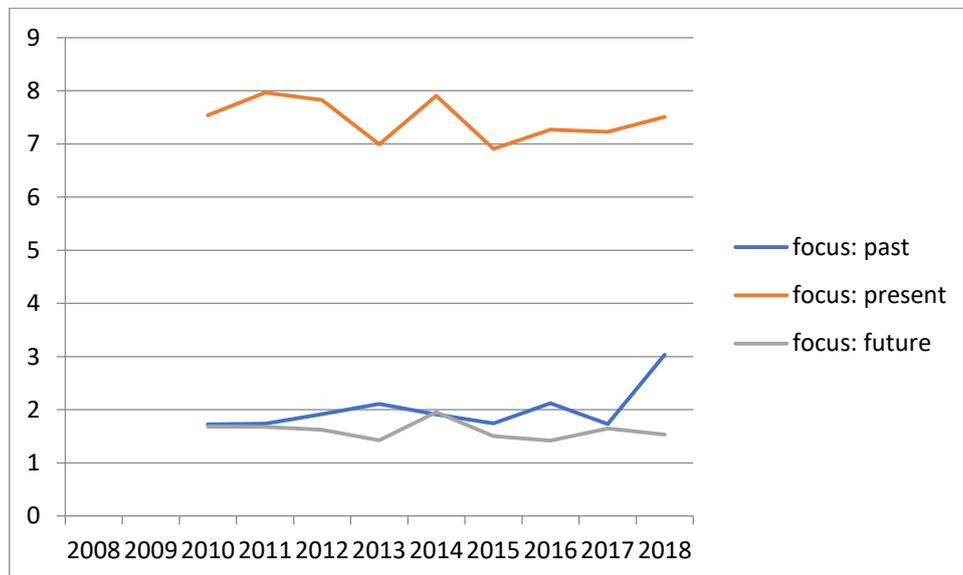

Source: own elaboration.

Azerbaijan

Figure 3: Aliyev's individual Traits and Predispositions: Drives in Discourse 2008-2018 (ACLA)
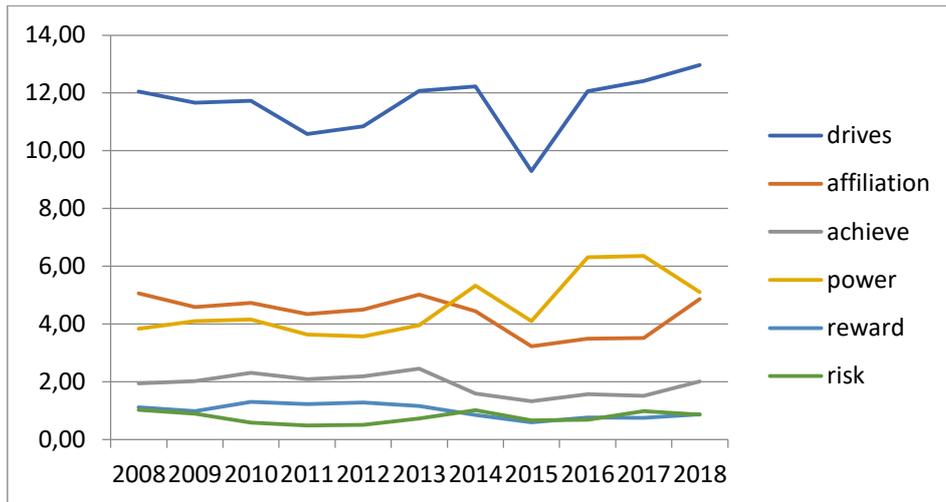

Source: own elaboration.

Figure 4: Aliyev's individual Traits and Predispositions: Temporal Focus of Discourse 2008-2018 (ACLA)

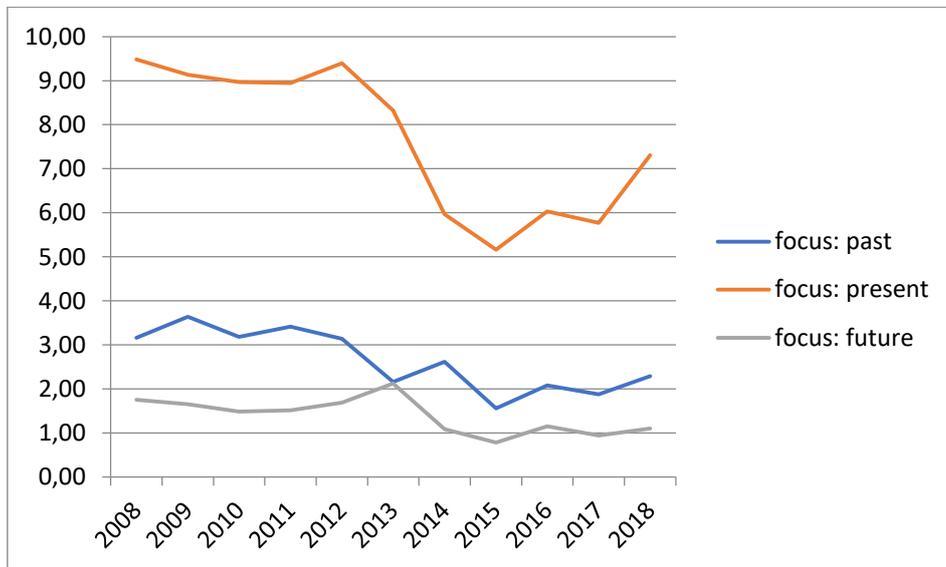*Source: own elaboration.*

**Georgia
(Saakashvili 2008-2013, Margvelashvili 2013-2018)**

Figure 5: Saakashvili's and Margvelashvili's individual Traits and Predispositions: Drives in Discourse 2008-2018 (ACLA)

Source: own elaboration.

Figure *6*: Saakashvili's and Margvelashvili's individual Traits and Predispositions: Temporal Focus of Discourse 2008-2018 (ACLA)

Source: own elaboration.

Annex 2: Corpus Overview and Illustrations

a. *Code Sets Overview*

Table 1: Code Sets Overview for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia (Saakashvili and Margvelashvili), 2008-2018.

Code Set	Azerbaijan	Armenia	Georgia	
			Margvelashvili	Saakashvili
Ukraine	14	4	87	15
Crimea	/	/	29	/
CSTO	/	16	/	/
CIS	9	7	/	/
EEU	/	36	2	/
CU	2	14	/	/
Soviet	7	5	5	3
China	3	7	20	/
Iran	9	36	3	/
2008	/	36	31	8
West	6	5	27	1
US	2	14	23	9
EaP, ENP, DCFTA, AA	/	19	18	4
NATO	/	8	50	4

Neighbourhood	7	5	14	14
East-West	5	5	3	/
Kosovo	1	3	1	/
Turkey	44	86	16	3
ontology	96	91	86	38
other-ing	8	24	5	17
enemy	6	5	1	14
friend/ally	20	22	26	5
threat	31	40	23	10
security	27	38	9	2
crisis	12	18	14	2
foreign policy	37	7	36	5
sovereignty/self-determination	3	11	12	1
conflict	8	12	11	/
past, history, memory, tradition, always	37	84	62	20
Nagorno-Karabakh	150	111	8	/
South Ossetia, Abkhazia	/	5	151	21
domestic policy issues, domestic groups	325	109	126	67
emotions and emotionalizations	360	296	165	65

EU topics	25	48	127	6
Russia topics	76	60	219	47
Russia as …	12	15	26	19
		genocide: 51		
	Armenia as…:172	Azerbaijan as … :143		
Codings:	**2653**			
in sets:	**4781**			

Note: '/' means 'no codings' for these categories for the respective country

Source: own sample (see page 16 in this article)

b. Data Exploration and Interpretation: Example of Inductive Coding

Context of the interview:

A correspondent of Radio Liberty met with Georgian President Giorgi Margvelashvili to discuss the future of the country's foreign policy and its relations with Russia, Ukraine and the West. The conversation took place after Margvelashvili's meeting with Pope Francis on October 3rd, 2016.

– Your meeting with Pope Francis ended a few minutes ago. What value do you attach to the Pontiff's visit to Georgia, the Caucasus, and what are the main topics raised in the course of the tête-à-tête conversation?

This is a historic visit of the spiritual and state leader of the Catholic Church and the State of Vatican. Of course, the main emphases derive from the essence of politics, on the one hand, of the State of Vatican, and, on the other hand, Christianity as a peacekeeping religion, focused on love and prosperity of nations. The Pope's political role is enormous. Emotions and wishes with which we communicated with each other, – the wishes of better times, resolving the conflicts and tensions, so that the countries, individuals, nations could develop peacefully, - are of the great political significance for millions, I would say more than a billion of the Catholic Church parish worldwide. And also for the countries of Christian faith and the principles of good will.

- What is you opinion on the Russian-Georgian conflict?

[I]f we look at the status quo that we have in Georgia and generally in the region, we'll see a strange reality; the reality, in which the problems are not actually being solved by any of the conflicting parties. The situation is simply absurd. [...] This is tragic for our country, the Georgian people, and the Georgian state. This is the fee that we pay for our freedom and independence. But, let us look from the other point of view: after all, no new prospects have opened neither for our fellow Abkhazian and Ossetian citizens! They live in occupied territories without any real perspectives, without future. [...]

Moreover, the issue of dignity has emerged there: how can a friendly country [Russia], a nuclear power that recognized the independence of Georgia in 1990 and contributed to this process, attack and invade its neighbors - Georgians, who, along with Russians, developed a common culture, fought against fascism, and, at some point, created a united cultural social community?! [...]

We all have paid a fee for the fact that neither then [2008], nor now, no strong and firm response is given to the Russian policy. After all, it is a fact that Russia has declared clearly and unambiguously: what is in the Russian slang called the "near abroad", in fact is a "zone of privileged interests of the Russian Federation". Apparently, it is meant that international law quasi does not apply to these states, these "territories". When I communicate with colleagues in the West, I always tell them: the point is to be very honest with Russians and tell them directly: this is unacceptable to us!; and also, confirm that the West considers Georgia, Ukraine and other Russian neighbors, as equal and sovereign subjects of international law. This is the 'mere truth' of international relations."

Russian leaders have claimed that it was Saakashvili's aggressive position that caused all ills. We mentioned that we were ready to start our relations from a "new page", and offered our colleagues to stop scolding each other and build the relations not based on aggressive rhetoric, but rather on a rational analysis of the situation - the current state and the interests of Russians, Georgians, including Abkhazians and Ossetians, and all ethnic groups living in Georgia. These were emotional expectations. I was exposed to them too. After all, when there comes a new president, a

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attachement of positive emotion (love) to Christianity and reference to importance for ontology

reference to (positive) emotions as main norm of communication and understanding; connection of love, trust, friendship and happiness with faith and greater in-group, c.f. all Christians/not only Georgians

repeated implicit and explicit emotional expression of disgust/annoyance with the other

rationalization of non-utility of current situation

very explicit emotionalisation of conflict by blaming and shaming the other through contrasting priorly held positive emotions and collective identity formations/in-group understandings with current negative emotions of fear, anger and hatred

repeated reference to/emotionalisation by appeal to dignity, honesty and clear intergroup differentiation, e.g. rationalization of intl. law

direct reference to a priori held positive emotional expectations 'clouding' rational decision making: hope,

new government oriented on a rational dialogue, this creates an opportunity to escape a problematic situation.

confidence – contrasted by anger

By the way, there were the first "sprouts", first hints of the fact that the situation was moving towards a real dialogue on the problems between the Russian and Georgian states; we have reestablished economic ties, more Russians began visiting Georgia ... However, since 2014, we have been witnessing the process that is beyond the logic of the existing opportunities. I am referring to certain "strategic agreements" between Russia and Abkhazia and Russia and South Ossetia. That is, Russia has made a new step towards deepening the problem of the occupied regions and their alleged "recognition" as "independent states".

expression of utilitarian cooperation as sign of hope

Well then, you tell me: was not the border between Russia and NATO the calmest and safest one? Does not it remain so? Politicians are namely the ones, who just live with myths that NATO and the EU policy is directed against Russia. Tell me, what is problematic for Russia, if Georgia, as a member of the EU, would become a much more developed country, including in terms of economy, and also, for the Russian business, which would become able to develop relations? Why is the stable Georgia providing stability to the region, so problematic to Russia?

reference to irresponsible behaviour of the other; blaming – in-group cohesion and out-group derrogation

repeated emotional expression of disgust, anger and annoyance

It is also necessary to realize that Georgia is a good neighbor for Russia. We wish and hope to build good neighborly relations with Russia, considering the only condition: our sovereignty, our independence should be recognized by Russians.

strategy of blaming and shaming – attachement of the source of the problem to the other

We, Georgians, are generally known for emotionality and temper; however, in this case the Georgian state has shown the a good level of diplomacy and tact. In difficult times for the Ukrainian state, we have never raised this sensitive issue [political asylum for the former president M. Saakashvili]. I have approached this topic several times, but only in general terms: the high official of a friendly country should not speak out against the Georgian government and make sharp statements against a friendly state.

securing ontological security as core condition for positive emotions towards the other

explicit expression of importance of emotions for in-group in contrast to utilitarian behaviour; pride of 'right' behaviour; re-constitution of Ukrainian stereotype

Our relationship with Russia is targeted on the policy of bringing the dialogue to rational discussion, the policy of maintaining peace and not letting any of the war parties engage the Georgian side in any kind of provocation.

explicit claim of intergroup situation being predominantly emotional with aim to bring it to the 'rational level'