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Framing national security objectives: the cases of Georgia and Azerbaijan

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Between 2005 and 2007, Georgia and Azerbaijan developed their respective National Security Concepts. The article comparatively examines the existing policy patterns of territorial reintegration in these two countries and focuses on how that question is reflected in these important political documents. Comparative study of National Security Concepts of two South Caucasian states sheds light on the contextual features, the differences and similarities of pursuing territorial reintegration goals.

Keywords: Georgia; Azerbaijan; national security; conflicts; NATO

Introduction

For the last 18 years, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan have come to find refuge in radically different threat perceptions and have subsequently developed diverging strategic and security arrangements. At the collapse of the Soviet Union, the vision of national security was mainly about maintaining independent posture and winning the wars over Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh. In the following decade or so, these states have undergone thorough fundamental structural and institutional reforms. They were also engaged in different regional and trans-regional integration projects with NATO, EU, OSCE, CIS, CSTO, etc. At the turn of the century, the leaders of those states came to acknowledge that in order to ably manage state-building and international integration processes, more strategic planning was required. One of the ways to reach that goal was to devise new strategic-political documents, which would conceptualize security interests, priorities, risks and threats as well as future visions, according to certain methodological recommendations of Western specialized security institutions. As a result of that strategic outlook between 2005 and 2007 Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan elaborated and subsequently promulgated their National Security Documents (NSD) which were named *Strategy* in Armenia and *Concept* in Georgia and Azerbaijan (National Security Concept of Georgia 2005; National Security Concept of the Republic of Azerbaijan 2007; National Security Strategy of the Republic of Armenia 2007). Adoption of these documents coincided with increasing interests of Euro-Atlantic institutions in the South Caucasian region and appeared as a part of the process of

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deepening cooperation with NATO. As a result, NSDs of South Caucasian states were born as a result of extensive political consultations, reviews and critical contributions of different domestic and international stakeholders.

As regional geopolitics and security environment grew in complexity, the South Caucasus attracted more and more attention. However, interestingly enough, these critical political documents and, thereof, the existing 'security pluralism' in the region remained understudied. The objective of this paper is to comparatively examine the differences and similarities in the National Security Concepts of Azerbaijan and Georgia through the lens of a single vital issue of their post-Soviet political histories – the restoration of territorial integrity.

Notwithstanding the deep-rooted historical and political tensions, the South Caucasian states have been externally viewed as a territorially coherent international subsystem because of their geographical proximity and the particular nature or intensity of their interactions. Furthermore, some integration projects have been pursued along that line of perceptions; for instance, the Council of Europe membership process, the EU's political initiatives (European Neighbourhood Policy or Eastern Partnership) or NATO's different engagement projects. Homogenous perception of the region led to misrepresentation of regional stakeholders, which led to another extreme – neglecting the fact that currently there exist six political entities which are part of the regional geopolitical landscape – Georgia, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia. Despite conflicting views on the status and international recognition of some of them, they all constitute part of this volatile region and the efforts to distort that reality can misguide assessments and analysis.

The remainder of the paper is divided into four sections. It will present the basic features of securitization, then the eastward integration process of NATO will be presented with a particular attention to one of its programmes – the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP); the third section presents a comparative analysis of the Georgia's and Azerbaijan's National Security Concepts concerning the question of the recovering of their territorial integrity; and the final section will conceptualize the reasons of policy differences of the two states in relation to territorial recovery.

Framing national security preferences

The literature on critical security studies reveals that during the 1980s and 1990s, the constructivists sought to disassemble the concept of security from its realist premises. Their prime concern was to revisit the referent object of security and their accomplishment soon became evident as they brought into the discourse the developing countries' conceptions of security, which immensely transformed the style and content of the scholarly debates in the field of security studies. Thomas, Ayoob, Azar, Chung-in Moon, Barry Buzan and Ken Booth have been among the outspoken critiques of traditional interpretation of security as they brought different aspects of security, as well as different reference points on categorization and conceptualization of threats (Thomas 1987; Azar and Moon 1988; Ayoob 1995; Booth 2007). Although Ayoob, Azar and Moon have dealt with security politics mainly from Third World and post-colonial perspectives, their critics of traditional security approaches served as important contribution to deepening the discourse of security.

The referent point of security varies from one social construction to another. It has also been broadened and deepened in order to redefine the security agenda away from the state-centric focus. While the security of the state, which is largely presented as national security, is the predominant one, there also exists societal security, individual citizen's security, identity security, regime security, economic security, environmental security, cyber security, feminist security, etc. However, the political and regional contexts determine the priority of security that a particular state adopts. Hence, for our case, we apply the concept of national security with its analytical sub-concepts of state security and regime security. For the states which are in conflict, state security comes first with its more functional and practical subcategories like consolidation of territorial integration.

National security, which Arnold Wolfers has defined as 'an ambiguous symbol' (Wolfers 1952), has been and remains a largely contested term like the term *security* itself. However, it has served both as an analytical and practical device for understanding power behaviour of different regimes. Even though Buzan posits that national security is a conservative concept, which 'is about the ability of states to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity' (Buzan 1991, 116), the case may become different when states engaged in war try to conceptualize their national security. The national security of post-Soviet states came to be largely shaped by the external security environment and historical contexts. Buzan's contention, that the existence of historical enmity, mutually exclusive existence and repeated wars tend to amplify present perceptions of threat (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 59), is an accurate formulation that reflected in the mutual perceptions in the region. Lynch's formulation about this angle is illustrated by the regional context where mutual tendencies are more intensified as the legacy of war crimes and atrocities,

as well as the experience of blood split ... produce[s] a very powerful but volatile mixture, which is exacerbated by current conditions of insecurity and perceptions of fear in the de facto 'states'. (Lynch 2007, 485, 490)

It is, therefore, NATO's requirement for the South Caucasian states to adopt NSDs implicitly facilitated and stimulated the process of securitization, because of the existing memories of previous conflicts.

However, immutable factors like geography, demography, natural and human resources, which are central for the Realists, also come to shape the nature of regional security architecture. The treatment of the South Caucasus as a system structure in Waltzian terms can also be helpful, because the arrangement, positioning and relations of units toward each other have all the necessary prerequisites to deal with the structure from a methodologically sound basis (Waltz 1979, 100, 101). However, the failure to fathom the dynamics and evolving character of the system structure on the part of sub-units creates a distinct ground for the system to malfunction and disintegrate.

One of the enduring characteristics of the South Caucasian security paradigm is the pervasive existence of the threat of war. Countries like Georgia and Azerbaijan, which still challenge the results of the demise of the Soviet Union, notably, have transformed the conception of the threat of war into a 'war as a central institution', to use the term of Bull, as a systemic working paradigm with its subsystem categories and functional components (Bull 1977, 187). Carr's argument that war 'lurks in the background of international politics just as revolution lurks in the background

of domestic politics' (Carr 1964, 109) was true not only during the cold war era of superpower confrontation, but in the post-cold war era as well.

The international system requires states to be socialized; otherwise, they will be injured or even destroyed (Waltz 1979, 127–8). NATO's enlargement process, which is viewed by constructivists as one of the avenues for international socialization, has been viewed as a significant factor for many of the post-Soviet era states. However, in the South Caucasus the circumstances are somewhat different since three states have almost totally different perceptions of security, alliance formation and cooperation patterns. Georgia is aspiring to join NATO even at the expense of confrontation with Russia; Azerbaijan, while being a part of certain NATO projects, refrains from explicit statements about joining NATO, being confident that its geostrategic importance as an energy producing and transit county bears inherent security guarantees.

By positioning territorial reintegration as a highly urgent political problem and by ascribing to it qualities of existential threat, the governments of Azerbaijan and Georgia have labelled the problem as a security issue and, hence, as a political objective it has been successfully securitized. Buzan's proposed model of securitization dynamics (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 7) helps to explain how Azerbaijani and Georgian governments have positioned territorial reintegration as a direct threat to their political (*existential threat to sovereignty, organizational stability, ideology, social order*), societal (*existential threat to collective identity, language, culture*) and military (*existential threat to population, territory, military capacity*) sectors. Securitization entails the use of exceptional and extraordinary measures in order to tackle or neutralize the threat (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 21–3). If all conditions are met, the securitized issue is elevated to the national agenda which leads to the next step of political planning and implementation. The implementation stage heavily depends on the proper presentation of the securitized problem and the process of persuasion. International and domestic audiences have mostly inconsistent evaluation conditions of threats and vulnerabilities; therefore, credible 'selling out of the threat' becomes an immense job for the government. Understandably, in the era of globalization and integration trends, that governmental task requires well-engaged channels and efficient management of resources. Thus, different documents (be them strategy, concept or plan), which are sometimes devised because of international commitments, serve as meaningful channels to reach out to the international audience. The case with domestic audience requires different management because of different nature and stakes. It is in this context that the leaders of Azerbaijan and Georgia took the proposal of NATO to write their strategic documents with ease because that could serve an extra channel to present not only those states' strategic visions and perceptions, but also raise the awareness of international community about the existing security dilemmas.

The process of political conceptualization

After major geopolitical, regional and trans-regional events, state leaders are faced with a set of new issues, which trigger 'a demand for a revised set of institutions and criteria for managing and understanding the vastly different international system' (Dupont 1990, 2). This claim of Alan Dupont, which he made at the time, when the collapse of the cold war system was imminent, clearly portrays that even for countries which are far from the epicentre of world politics, such as Australia,

strategic planning, implementation and revision were considered routine measures. After the demise of the Soviet Union, the newly formed states found themselves in a completely new strategic environment without a legacy of comprehensive political culture on issues of national security policy planning and management. That shortcoming was more visible in the case of the South Caucasus as it went through conflicts over territory and status. After gaining independence, a period of geopolitical, social and ideological disorientation came to dominate the political agendas of the South Caucasian states. Svante Cornell's concise framing to display the security deficit in the region because of different alignments may be helpful to grasp the potentially devastating implications of contradictory threat perceptions:

Armenia, perceiving threats from Turkey and Azerbaijan, has sought security through ties with Russia; Azerbaijan, perceiving threats from Iran, Armenia, and to a decreasing extent from Russia, has sought western and Turkish support; while Georgia perceives Russia as the most significant threat to its sovereignty ... and in order to balance it Georgia mainly seeks American protection. (Cornell 2004, 126)

The phenomenon of dysfunctional and shifting security preferences came to dominate the foreign policy agendas of the newly independent states. Armenia was quick to set its security preferences and took Russia's side, whereas another three to four essential years were needed for Georgians and Azerbaijanis to pass through the post-independence euphoria characterized by high expectations 'largely generated by irresponsive nationalist and populist figures' (Rondeli 2001, 202). The constant efforts of Azerbaijan and Georgia to reshuffle their security alliances by eschewing constant Russian pressure became a conventional rule of the game. Circumstances began to change after 1996–1997 as both Georgia and Azerbaijan overcame their internal political crises and Presidents Eduard Shevardnadze and Heydar Aliyev tightened their grips on power. However, Georgian political expert Rondeli extends the stabilization period in Georgia and states that since 1991 '... for 10 years Georgia has only been able to focus on its survival rather than on concepts of "strategic choice", foreign policy orientation, long-term perspective and so on' (Rondeli 2001, 201). He also mentions two problems hindering the elaboration of a sound NSD: the lack of internal consensus and the 'unwillingness of the authorities to annoy neighbouring countries, mainly Russia' (Rondeli 2001, 199). Huseyinov depicted regionalism and clan allegiances, the lack of socio-political cohesiveness and consensus, a largely disillusioned and apathetic society, weak effective channels of state-society relations and the elite's lack of legitimacy as credible reasons for Azerbaijan not having a sound document on the basic security premises of the state (Huseyinov 2003). A few reasons could also be added to Huseyinov's list: the semi-authoritarian structure of the government, the lack of freedom of free speech, marginalized opposition forces and the preoccupation with energy exportation projects. This does not suggest, however, that the objective of restoring the territorial integrity was absent in leadership's rhetoric and politics. It is just the contrary. The leadership of Azerbaijan has used every opportune moment to underline the government's resolute intention to restore the territorial integrity of the state. In the 2004 piece, Brown has depicted a few speeches and statements of Heydar Aliyev on territorial integration and indicated that even though that political objective was omnipresent, domestic peculiarities in Azerbaijan in the 1990s largely hindered leaderships' efforts to strategically contextualize

that objective within emerging international integration tendencies (Brown 2004, 583–6).

Meanwhile, in the second half of the 1990s, NATO became pre-occupied with the eastward enlargement policy. For that purpose, different engagement strategies were proposed based on divergent interests of post-Soviet states towards NATO. Faced with Russia's explicit resentment of its enlargement policies, NATO preferred to institutionalize its relations with the post-Soviet states through political and reform-oriented agendas. The first document, named 'Partnership for Peace', was signed by three South Caucasian states in 1994. Owing to this process of integration, the concept of security was elevated into a nation-centric discourse from its inherently state-centric legacy of the Soviet era. In the regional context, however, the urge from NATO to assess the security preferences of three states primarily meant 'stabilization of conflictual relations' (Wæver 1995). As Georgian leaders were never at ease with the status quo, they drafted a few documents to conceptualize their National Security preferences. One of these documents, loaded with anti-Russian rhetoric, was prepared in April 1997 and entitled 'Basic principles of the sustainability of social life, strengthening of state sovereignty and security, and restoration of territorial integrity of Georgia' (Rondeli 2001, 196). The other one, prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia in 2000, was entitled 'Georgia and the world: a vision and strategy for the future', and dealt with Georgian political and security preferences and stressed the pro-Western orientation of the country's foreign policy. However, none of those documents were sufficiently viable to accommodate NATO's increasing involvement in Georgian affairs.

At its Prague Summit in 2002, NATO decided to elevate its level of cooperation with the three South Caucasian countries and for that purpose it proposed another framework for multifaceted cooperation called IPAP. Georgia became the first country to present its IPAP to NATO in 2004, Azerbaijan's IPAP was accepted a year later. According to that cooperation project, each partner country was to receive focused, counter-specific advice on reform objectives in a number of political and security related areas: defence; public information; science and environment; civil emergency planning; and administrative and resource issues. As South Caucasian states were about to start the elaboration of their respective NSDs, it became obvious that each of them would pursue its own security agenda by incorporating only those methodological recommendations that the West considered highly desirable.

The NSDs of Georgia (2005) and Azerbaijan (2007) were first in their kind in these countries and, therefore, generated much interest among politicians, scholars and the international relations community. These important documents came to prioritize each country's security needs, to identify the state's enduring strategic interests and to outline the methods necessary to ensure those interests. It is generally agreed that the lack of the national security concept helps to maintain a vicious cycle that can erode any statehood. The consensus is also that without the national security concept, governments can have a harder time efficiently allocating scarce national resources. This can lead to geopolitical mispositioning which might damage any state's security and increase the risk of sending confusing or wrong signals to both its own people and the outside world (Miller 2003). The South Caucasian political elites welcomed those precautions which found a fertile ground in the security communities of each state, although concerns about the inherent incompatibility of post-Soviet and Western security management cultures were also pervasive.

Western countries, mainly the USA, played a major role in trying to conceptualize those documents and formulate them in accordance with an agreed framework. The Baltic States, particularly Latvia, were helpful in sharing their experience about the elaboration of the National Security Concept with Georgia. Latvia's motivation derived from that fact that together with Georgia it had '... a common bond – the suffering under Soviet occupation ... feel[ing] affinity for other small nations that are still trying to do what we have achieved' (Miller 2003) and the Georgians largely embraced it. Azar and Moon warn that 'direct emulation and adoption of national security management tools and techniques', without paying sufficient importance to the contextual features of 'each national security environment', can lead to erroneous perceptions (Azar and Moon 1988, 12). However, NATO managed to provide a conventional ground to Azerbaijan and Georgia for devising their NSDs. Thus, despite heavy revanchist and vengeful rhetoric from both states, they managed to incorporate other sectors of security – political, military, economic, environmental and societal, which constructivists had been consistently urging states to take into account (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 2008, 8).

Azerbaijan and Georgia pursued different policies in attaining reintegration objectives. Georgia in comparison to Azerbaijan was more straightforward in its pursuit of territorial reintegration. After the collapse of the SU, Georgia lost effective control over former Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia and Autonomous Oblast of South Ossetia. Two bloody wars were fought over these territories between 1992 and 1994 claiming the lives of 15,000 (Hunter 1994). In the 1990s, in parallel with domestic crises and civil wars, Georgia tried to find different avenues to bring back two breakaway regions. However, none of the efforts, done either through the EU, OSCE channels or Russian mediation efforts, yielded any fruits other than maintain a fragile peace. The leaders of Georgia's Rose Revolution took different positions in territorial reintegration policy which became more active than it had been hitherto. After being elected President in January 2004, Mikheil Saakashvili set out the reestablishment of Georgia's territorial integrity as his top priority and made this a deep personal commitment (Nilsson 2009, 89–91). His determination to restore territorial integrity through non-violent means gained large public support as well. His formula included extensive application of soft power and he was convinced that an economically strong Georgia would be attractive to the breakaway regions. At the outset, Russia took more neutral stance and the relatively quick and bloodless reintegration of Adjara region boosted Saakashvili's confidence. In May 2004, four months after he was elected president, full control over Adjara was established (Zurcher 2007, 205–6).

The initial success in Adjara led Saakashvili's government to assume that if acted promptly and coherently the South Ossetia and Abkhazia will follow suit. South Ossetia (or the Tskhinvali region, as referred in Georgian official documents) was the first in line. In 2004, the Georgian Government employed different, and to a significant extent unprecedented, methods to regain control over that territory which, however, proved futile. Although the Ergneti border market was closed, promises of aid followed aiming to compensate possible economic losses that local population could suffer. That move was paralleled with assurances that economic opportunities will make the South Ossetia's leadership and population more prone to compromises. These efforts yielded opposite results as tensions escalated which led to violent confrontations between local and Georgian militias eventually forcing Georgian troops to discontinue month-long operation (ICG Report, 2004).

In 2005, acknowledging the limitations of his approach, Saakashvili intensified the efforts to attract the international community's support to his cause. Meanwhile, the strategy and rhetoric of reintegration were slightly revised and a loose federal framework was promoted based on the ideas of political and cultural autonomy for two regions (Fuller 2007). Georgian leaders viewed the South Ossetian conflict as solvable through incorporation of more economic incentives, while the Abkhazian conflict was perceived as having deep ethno-political roots, which required a prolonged process of reconciliation (Nilsson 2009, 91). In 2006, the Georgian Government again took a more assertive stance on its reintegration policy as it felt empowered by a strong military built-up. Subsequent successful military operation 'to reestablish constitutional order' in the Kodori gorge, which is located in Eastern Abkhazia. The designation of the gorge as the seat of the government-in-exile allowed Saakashvili to once again regain confidence in his policy (Kupatadze 2006). Meanwhile, the conflictual policy of reintegration coincided with internal political disturbances, the erosion of societal consensus and the fading away of revolutionary zeal. The last and most debated initiative of the Georgian Government came to be the August War in 2008 to regain control over the South Ossetia. That short war, which shook the international community and particularly the immediate region, proved to be unsuccessful attempt on the Georgian side to bring back the South Ossetia (Asmus 2010). Some of the methods that Georgia (Russia as well) employed in the war were condemned by the international community (IIFMCG 2009). Furthermore, the war indefinitely alienated not only South Ossetia but also Abkhazia, although Saakashvili had no initial intention to deal with Abkhazia at that time. Following the war, Russia and five other states came to recognize the sovereignty of Abkhazia and South Ossetia (UN member states that recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia since the end of the August War of 2008 are Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Nauru, Vanuatu, Tuvalu). The August war debacle further radicalized the conflicting parties in Georgia and came to prove that the reintegration policy pursued from 2004 had turned out to be unproductive. It needs to be added that Georgia has never accepted the results of the war nor has it recognized the breakaway regions as a fait accompli, thus Georgia keeps exploring different avenues to reverse the international recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia and find avenues for working with local populations.

Azerbaijan's efforts to regain control over Nagorno-Karabagh were significantly different from the Georgian approach. The fragile cease-fire signed in 1994 by the Defence Ministers of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh was sustained through negotiations in the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group. Azerbaijan's intentions, visions and resolution proposals were all incorporated in the negotiation process and, contrary to the Georgian case, there was hardly any effort to deal directly with de facto authorities of Nagorno-Karabagh outside of the OSCE Minsk negotiation format. Resentment to acknowledge Nagorno-Karabagh as a conflict party has produced a dead-locked condition and a deep sense of mistrust. Moreover, once various energy exportation projects were substantiated at the turn of twentieth century, the discussion of resuming the war and winning Nagorno-Karabakh back militarily became of a primary political preoccupation.

Divergent patterns of subsuming de facto independent states

The actual comparison of the Georgian and Azerbaijani cases of territorial reintegration should begin with each country's formulation of major threats. In the 'Threats section' of each document, both states conceptualized 11 possible threats and challenges which could be incompatible with their national interests. In Georgian case, threats include: infringement of territorial integrity, spillover of conflicts from neighbouring states, military intervention, international terrorism, contraband and transnational organized crime, the Russian Federation's military bases, corruption and an inefficient public administration system, economic and social challenges, energy-related challenges, information-related challenges and environmental challenges. In Azerbaijan's case, threats are: attempts against the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and constitutional order, actions undermining performance of State functions ensuring rule of law, maintaining public order and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, separatism, ethnic, political and religious extremism, terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts and transnational organized crime, actions against energy infrastructure of the Republic of Azerbaijan, external political, military or economic dependence, economic destabilization, inadequate professional human resources, regional militarization and environmental challenges (NSC of Azerbaijan 2007). In both cases, we see similarities in broadening and deepening the traditional range of security sectors leaving a 'broad grey area between these obvious threats and the normal difficulties in international relations' against which Buzan warns that 'excessive use of security justification cannot but shift the process of government away from constitutional practices, and towards what the authoritarian methods are in effect' (Buzan 1991, 116). Thus, positioning of lost territories as national as well as existential security threats justifies the potential use of extraordinary measures, the use of force and mobilization efforts. Georgia views the territorial recovery as the sole goal of its integration policy, whereas Azerbaijan has elevated the territorial recovery issue into an interstate conflict with more actors involved and subsequently with more referent objects.

Georgia formulates (Section 4.1) the lack of control over former territories as a threat and as 'infringement of Georgia's territorial integrity', which 'is a major national security threat' hampering 'Georgia's transformation into a full democracy'. While Azerbaijan is more explicit, it mentions the 'aggressive policy of Armenia' as a 'vivid example of such threats' and further states that the '[Nagorno-Karabakh] problem, with trans-regional implications, represents a major threat to the national interests of the Republic of Azerbaijan' (Section 3.1) (NSC of Georgia 2005; NSC of Azerbaijan 2007). The undisputed support of Russia to South Ossetia and Abkhazia notwithstanding Georgia's NSC thus refrains from mentioning explicitly Russia as an aggressor or violator of its territorial integrity, referring only to the 'support to the separatist movements from outside', whereas Azerbaijan's NSC is full of references to Armenia.

The sections also elaborated on the implications of having unresolved conflicts: the Georgian case indicates that 'infringed territorial integrity is the main source of a number of other problems that undermine the political, economic and social stability of the country', while the Azerbaijani case states (Section 3.1) 'Despite reforms in the rapidly developing economy, and other important accomplishments,

[Armenia] continues to create serious social and political impediments' (NSC of Azerbaijan 2007).

Section 5.3 (Georgia's NSC) and Section 4.1 (Azerbaijan's NSC) elaborate on central issues of restoration of their territorial integrities. In that very critical section, Azerbaijan firstly refrains from indicating the ultimate paradigm of restored territorial integrity and then circumvents the means of achieving it by vaguely indicating the prospects of using 'all means laid down in international law'. Meanwhile, Georgia indicates its intention to 'achieve full democracy and constitutional order through the restoration of its territorial integrity' by resorting to 'all available lawful means to resolve peacefully and justly all issues that might arise in the process of restoring the constitutional order on the territory of Georgia'. Furthermore, the Georgian document underlines that 'based on the principles of international law [Tbilisi] is ready to ensure protection of civil, political, economic, social, religious and cultural rights of all ethnic groups residing on its territory', whereas in the Azerbaijani case no security and civil guarantees are indicated. Georgia even acknowledges the *de facto* authorities of the 'breakaway regions,' whereas Azerbaijan has no mention of Nagorno-Karabakh's *de facto* authorities. To emphasize that approach even further, Azerbaijan points to only the superiority of territorial integrity in international law by stating that 'the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan shall be united, inviolable and indivisible', whereas Georgian document suggests the possibility of combining the two conflicting concepts of territorial integrity and self-determination based on the premise of 'separation of powers between the national and regional governments.'

However, both states are not forthcoming as it comes to future visions of integrated existence with 'separatists'. Georgia is more straightforward with its vision and as a result, in the case of Abkhazia, vows to grant 'a special status ..., broad powers for its government, and the rights and interests of Abkhazia's multinational population'. In the case of South Ossetia, Georgia offers (Section 5.3) 'autonomous status' based 'on the principles of self-determination of nations, cultural identity, minority rights, human rights, and freedom and equality of citizens as stipulated by the Constitution of Georgia' (NSC of Georgia 2005). Azerbaijan, however, offers (Section 4.1.1) a vague prospect of 'elaboration within the framework of a lawful and democratic process of the legal status [for Nagorno-Karabakh]' and 'high level self-rule within the Republic of Azerbaijan' (NSC of Azerbaijan 2007). Thus, in contrast to Georgia, which offers 'a special status' to Abkhazia and 'autonomous status' for South Ossetia, Azerbaijan offers the vague prospect of 'high level of self-rule'. At the risk of exacerbating the existing security deficit and intolerance in the fragile region even further, Section 3.1 of Azerbaijan's NSC sketches its skepticism about the prospects of peaceful coexistence with the 'Armenian State' 'regardless of the outcome of the conflict ..., [because of the] persistence of the ideology of mono-ethnic statehood [in Armenia]'. However, a few lines below in Section 4.1.1 of the same document, we witness a temporary transformation where it states that 'as soon as such an agreement is achieved Azerbaijan and Armenia will be directed at establishing lasting peace and mutual understanding between the two peoples' (NSC of Azerbaijan 2007).

These relatively short citations from those political documents illustrate the acute security deficit in the region. The comparison of the two countries' visions on the restoration of territorial integrity leads one to conclude that in Georgia's case, we see a more conciliatory and tolerant approach; whereas in Azerbaijan's case,

there is a vivid manifestation of revanchist tendencies. The vague conceptualization of the nature of conflict resolution, the disregard for Nagorno-Karabakh's authorities and its people, vis-à-vis Georgia's explicit recognition of 'de facto authorities' of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, as well as contradictory visions on the prospects of the future coexistence of Armenia and Azerbaijan, without even mentioning the role and place of Nagorno-Karabakh in that context, feed the existing lack of consensus on the parties to come to terms with basic principles of the conflict resolution. These approaches exacerbate the insecurity dilemma in the region making it even harder for international actors.

Based on the provided comparative data, some observers would assume that Georgia's take is more acceptable and that Georgia's conciliatory approach reflects the real vision that the authorities of Georgia overwhelmingly endorse. Conversely, the violent conflict between Russia and Georgia over the South Ossetia in 2008 undermined that supposition. The state that was more conciliatory turned out to be more violent and war-prone, whereas Azerbaijan, with its flamboyant rhetoric, kept a low profile during the August war and did not venture to restore its pre-independence territorial integrity, despite its possessing much publicized military resources and a more coherent societal consolidation.

The existing differences in Georgia's and Azerbaijan's NSCs also reflect the timing of their acceptance and other realities. The two-year difference between the Georgian and Azerbaijani NSCs reflects the rapidly changing regional security architecture. In 2004, when Georgia's new, enthusiastic leader Mikheil Saakashvili came to power after the 2003 Rose Revolution, he could not immediately turn against Russia and preferred to choose a more balanced policy in attaining his goals. As a result, the Georgia's NSC, with the clear support of NATO, turned out to be quite balanced taking into consideration various geopolitical realities and avoiding tensions. However, within the next few years that paradigm shifted toward an unambiguous anti-Russian orientation which became a central legitimating mechanism in Saakashvili's power. Within first three years of Ilham Aliyev's ascent to power (2003–2006), Azerbaijan's position was also clearly transformed particularly in the matters of aggravating anti-Armenian tendencies. The latter became more militaristic and more revanchist. After inheriting the presidency from his father, I. Aliyev was quite successful in consolidating his power. With the exploitation of the country's vast energy resources and the ever-increased speed of their exportation, Azerbaijan's leadership became more convinced that in the visible future circumstances would change to their advantage. The oil-driven economy started to boom from 2005 onwards resulting in a windfall of revenues, which the government chose to use to inflate its military budget and boost revanchist rhetoric. It can also be ascertained that Georgia benefited from the Caspian Sea energy projects too which, along with extensive domestic reforms, enhanced self-confidence of the country leaders and encouraged them to be more vocal in their strategic objectives.

As a continuation of the argument on divergent perceptions of the conflict, it can be stated that Azerbaijan and Georgia had different degrees of success in generating public support for winning back the lost territories. The importance of territorial reintegration viewed from public opinion survey can substantiate the level of importance governments and societies pay to the question of territorial reintegration. For Georgia, the problem of territorial reintegration has always occupied the second rank in the hierarchy of major problems that country has faced. The 2003 survey showed that only 16% of respondents viewed territorial reintegration as the most

important issue that Georgia was facing, while in 2007 that figure reached 33% (Georgian National Voter Study 2003 & 2007). In Azerbaijan, the reintegration issue has always occupied the first or second place in the hierarchy of major problems, because of the government's extensive intervention to control and set that agenda. In 2003, the problem of Karabakh and territorial reintegration, which are sometimes treated separately but are essentially the same, were viewed as the most important problem with an average 71% of societal concern (Faradov 2003, 13), while that figure gradually increased and in 2005 it reached 73% (Sharma 2006, 8). The comparison of the two cases and increasing war-prone dynamics results from the flamboyant rhetoric of the leaders of Azerbaijan and Georgia. After their election to power in 2003 and 2004 (H. Aliyev & M. Saakashvili respectively), both have been very consistent in bringing up the sensitive issues of territories; thus, we see an increase in revanchist dispositions in both societies.

Azerbaijan and Georgia have also adopted different approaches to their governments' institutional build-up. An indicator of the enhanced securitization of political life is the level of separation of the armed forces and intelligence services from civil power. In states where this critical separation is ill-functioning, much of the routine politics is pushed into the security realm. In Azerbaijan, National Security has a Ministerial level in the government, whereas in Georgia it has the status of an Agency. In the midst of reshuffling of the Georgian Government, in 2008 President Saakashvili decided to transform the State Ministry for Conflict Resolution Issues into a Ministry of Reintegration with the aim to contribute

... to the restoration of territorial integrity of Georgia; the reintegration of local inhabitants of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia into unified state of Georgia; to the return of all refugees and IDPs and their descendants to these regions. (State Ministry of Reintegration of the Republic of Georgia)

In 2005, Azerbaijan's President Aliyev decided to create a Ministry of Defence Industry in order to implement 'the state policy and regulation in the sphere of defence, radio electronics, instrument engineering' (Ministry of Defence Industry of Republic of Azerbaijan). This intention notwithstanding the Ministry was later heavily involved in design and production of various products related to the electrical engineering industry and to communication means and radio-electronics, air, sea and battle navigation systems, as well as heavy warfare weapons.

Buzan's differentiation between securitization and politicization effectively fits into the Azerbaijani and Georgian cases. His definition of securitization as 'the move that takes politics beyond the established rules of the game and frames the issue as a special kind of politics' (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 23) is clearly in line with Azerbaijan's NSC and to a lesser degree with Georgia's. Elevating public issues from the non-politicized to the politicized and then to the securitized spectrums of politics is a common practice for belligerent states. The NSCs of Azerbaijan and Georgia, initiated and embraced by NATO, were served to frame, politicize and securitize all significant political and public issues. Politicization and securitization, which were once ad hoc political business, became institutionalized and more rigid. Thus, the NATO programme on the elaboration of the NSCs in order to institutionalize securitization runs contrary to the constructivists' claim that 'security should be seen as negative, as a failure to deal with issues as normal politics' (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 29). At the domestic level, national

security in Azerbaijan is mostly idealized to silence the opposition, to repress freedom of speech and 'to exploit "threats" for domestic purposes, to claim a right to handle something with less democratic control and constraints' (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 29). Foreign securitization is focused on external threats and thereby military security is primarily about the two-level interplay between the offensive and defensive capabilities of the respective armed forces on the one hand and their perceptions of each other's capabilities and intentions on the other hand (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998, 51).

There are indications to state that both states viewed their strategic security concepts as provisional, since they were determined to solve their territorial disputes first. In other words, IPAP initially dealing with dialogue, cooperation, reforms and consultation came to serve as an intermediate avenue for self-imposed security norms and limitations. Thus, to a certain extent, the policy of territorial reintegration reflected in the NSCs of Georgia and Azerbaijan may be characterized as an imitation policy. For instance, Azerbaijani experts believe that IPAP, along with its components (like the implementation of the National Security Concept), contains only symbolic statements, because the Azerbaijani Government is reluctant to conduct the kind of required political and economic reforms and wishes to perpetuate the domestic status quo (Ismailzade 2007). In the provisional sense, Georgia went even further. First, in January 2010, Georgian Government unveiled a new document entitled 'State Strategy on Occupied Territories: Engagement Through Cooperation' and in December 2011, a new National Security Concept was adopted. Both documents reflected post-August realities. The new 'State strategy' was aimed to create 'frameworks, incentives and mechanisms for engagement' in order 'to promote interaction among the divided populations of Georgia' (State Strategy on Occupied Territories: Engagement Through Cooperation 2010, 1–2). The document also provides a detailed road-map for creating a common ground and agenda for eventual reincorporation of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The 2011 NSC followed the logic of the 2010 'State Strategy' and largely relied on the same rhetoric and policy options.¹

NATO, which Cornell hails as the most promising organizational vehicle for change in the South Caucasus, has largely failed to accommodate the existential threats and to minimize the possibility of war such as that of August 2008 (Cornell 2004, 129). We hereby return to challenge the above-mentioned Waltzian claim about the general requirement for states 'to be socialized, otherwise they will be injured or even destroyed.' Georgia, which under the auspices of NATO and the USA initiated a large-scale extensive socialization, which ultimately left the Georgian state unprotected with Russian tanks stopping some 80 km away from Georgia's capital. This case undermines the general rule of guarantying security through socialization.

Both Azerbaijan and Georgia are having a hard time trying to accommodate the external insistence on institutional socialization with international organizations and domestic security preferences and constraints. Cost-benefit assessments of Azerbaijan and Georgia vary in relation to their goals of territorial reintegration, because their hierarchy of preferences differs and because they attach different meanings to achieving that goal.

Conclusions

Given the current security perceptions, the South Caucasian states will continue the current pace of armament. Various regional integration processes can hardly downplay the pervasive existence of mistrust and acute lack of confidence. After the war in the South Ossetia in 2008, it became obvious that claims over NSDs being based upon long-lasting security preferences were seriously outmoded. In the meantime, the leaders and the security community of these countries recognized that NSDs are vital components of the power structure at the national, regional and international levels. Although these documents claim to be the foundations for implementation of national security policy-making, a solid methodological basis for reviewing, updating and developing these strategies is largely absent. National security is a constantly changing concept and notion depending on the country's priorities and preferences. Although NSDs reflect different dimensions of security trying to accommodate realist, neorealist and neoclassical realistic interpretations of international politics, the decision-makers of both countries treat national security primarily in terms of military and political matters.

Azerbaijan and Georgia illustrate two different cases of reintegration policies although there are some remarkable similarities. Both governments used different methods and techniques to keep that agenda alive and they have been successful in using it as a part of national political discourse. NATO's role as a facilitator and broker in adjusting security preferences has not been successful so far. Understandably, Russia's heavy involvement in the regional conflicts plays its part as well. However, if NATO wants to succeed in the South Caucasus, its paradigm of collaboration with the South Caucasian states need to have different and more emphasized conciliatory features.

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Note

1. The scope and the methodology of this article do not allow covering the recent NSC of Georgia. For thorough analysis of Georgia's recent national security concept see MacFarlane, N. 2012. *Georgia: National Security Concept versus National Security*, REP PP 2012/01, London, Chatham House, August.

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