“The Upside-Down”:

Ambivalent Affective Geography of the Georgian Parliament Building

By

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Submitted to

Central European University

Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Sociology and Social Anthropology

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Vienna, Austria

2023

Abstract

This thesis explores the ambivalent affective geography of the Georgian parliament building, which has been the main site for political struggles for over 35 years. Throughout the years, it became a site that encapsulates positive as well as negative experiences, memories, meanings and affects. In other words, various ups and downs have unfolded in the area – a process captured by the thesis title, "the upside-down". This study builds on subject and object-oriented approaches. It illustrates that ambivalent affects emerge from memories and meanings that people assign to the area, as well as from the physical setting and the built environment. To describe the complex and conflicting character of affect, this thesis is structured around concepts of space, place, and territory, through which different affective aspects of "geography" are uncovered. Apart from ethnographic and qualitative methodology, participant-based drawings of "the upside-down" are utilized and proposed as a research method that facilitates the analysis of ambivalent affective geography. This thesis contributes to the literature on arts-based methods, along with contributing to larger theoretical discussions about affect and geography.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not be possible without my respondents, whose touching stories, and experiences from the area of the Georgian parliament building allowed me to analyze its ambivalent affective character. Therefore, I first want to thank those who participated in my research. I am incredibly grateful for people who were willing to make drawings of the area and whose unique works enhanced my research. Enormous debt goes to my stubborn friends, members of the activist group GEUT, who accepted me as one of their own, who tirelessly responded to my questions and who totally transformed the field site of the Georgian parliament building.

My deepest gratitude goes to my supervisor Claudio Sopranzetti for his tireless guidance since the beginning of the research, for his invaluable suggestions and skill of bringing my thoughts in order. I am greatly thankful to my second supervisor Alexandra Kowalski, who motivated me to look at the area of the parliament building through various theoretical approaches. I also want to thank Andrea Kirchknopf from the academic writing center for her consistent and thoughtful feedback throughout the year.

Finally, I thank my parents for their support and interest in my work, for the intriguing questions that prompted me to think about the area of the Georgian parliament building beyond the academic lens and without whom I would not be able to engage with the researched topic with existing interest.

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Introduction

The area in front of the Georgian Parliament building has been the central site for political events for over 35 years. As a person who lives several meters away from the building and who attended her first protest when she was just three years old, I have heard and seen people encountering the area in various types of protests and celebrations. I have seen people covered in blood running away from the riot police or people coughing hard, wrapped in a haze of tear gas. But I have also seen people singing and chanting at the top of their lungs, dancing in celebration or protest. I have seen people sobbing, but I have also seen excited, proud faces. I have heard about people being killed as they stood before the Soviet tanks rumbling forward in loud unbearable noises. But I have also heard about people gathering to celebrate the day of independence with their flags raised high in the air, waiving to the rhythm of national songs.

All the "upsides" and all the "downsides" that people have seen, experienced or associated with the building are captured in the notion "the upside-down", the title of this thesis. The Georgian parliament building is an area where all the successes and failures merge into one, forming the upside-down, where ambivalent affective qualities of the area are embroiled in one another and often expressed by the people who encounter it. Over the years, I have met people who believe that something good will happen in the area while also referring to it as cursed, painful, and frustrating. These experiences led me to the main question of this thesis: How can one geographical area be affectively so ambivalent?

With this question in mind, I have spent dozens of days outside the Georgian parliament building protesting and observing the site (Figure 1)[1]. It was only last week of the fieldwork in April when I got to pass the barricades, metal fences, and security men and finally go in.

It was April 25, 2023. I woke up early even though I had to be at the parliament building in the late afternoon. I kept looking at the clock impatiently, thinking about what it would be like to go inside the building I had stared at from the outside all my life. Just the day before, I discovered that there was a museum in the building and soon, I would meet with the tour guide and go in.

Figure 1: The Georgian Parliament building from the Rustaveli Avenue.

It usually takes ten minutes to get to the parliament building from my home, but that day I managed to reach it in five. Sofiko, who helped me get the entry pass, called me in from the wooden door. Following Sofiko through a dark hall, we reached the inner courtyard from

[1] All images are taken by me unless otherwise indicated.

which a small section of Rustaveli Avenue was visible through the pillars. Four parts of the building surround the courtyard (Figure 2). The front side, which is visible from Rustaveli Avenue, was built in 1953 after the back sections that were built in 1938. As I stood in the inner courtyard, I remembered reading an article in the archives from the Soviet journal "Communist" announcing the end of the construction work in 1938 (Lomtadze, 1938) by referring to the building as a "Nine-Story Giant". And an article from 1953 highlighting its monumentality and greatness (Lortkipanidze, 1953). Now this "Nine-Story Giant" was looking over me from all sides, and even though it did not feel like a giant at all, it was bearing me down, enclosing the area of the courtyard from all sides.

As I motionlessly looked beyond the pillars of the front section, Sofiko talked about St. Alexander Nevsky Military Cathedral which stood in this area and was demolished in 1930 to build the current building. A huge crack in the wall on the left side of the arch caught my eye (Figure 3), I had never seen cracks on the building from the outside. I felt strange heat pass through my body. I have been on the other side of the pillars dozens of times, I have stared at the arches and wondered what it would be like to be in the inner courtyard, but I have never imagined feeling this uncomfortable. Suddenly Sofiko asked: "Do you have any questions so far?". Embarrassed to realize that I have not paid attention, I murmured: "No, not yet I will ask questions along the way". I felt blood rushing up my head and a flush creeping across my cheeks as we walked down the stairs.

Figure 2: Courtyard of the Georgian parliament building.

Figure 3: The front section of the Georgian parliament building from the courtyard.

We entered a chilly room with the red memorial board of Georgia's independence (1918 - 1921) on one of the walls. Sofiko started telling me about people who were killed during the Red Army invasion of Georgia in 1921 and then buried here, in the church square. We continued our way towards a small room, a chapel, that was a symbolic reference to the demolished church. When passing by the stony wall that led us to the room I shuddered, felt cold and quickly put on the jacket.

As we left the chapel and walked up the stairs, the smell of mold made me dizzy and I balanced myself by gripping the banister, trying to look as if I was feeling okay. We went out into the courtyard again and in just two seconds, I felt hot, my forehead was sweating and my knees trembling, I took off the jacket. I felt sick and lightheaded but continued to act "normally". I tried to ask some questions, probably none of which made much sense, but Sofiko kept responding patiently.

We entered the museum, and I felt my mouth going numb and my heartbeat increasing. I couldn't act anymore and quickly dropped on the nearest bench in the middle of the room. Sofiko looked at me confusingly and asked if I wanted her to stop. Embarrassed that my condition was overshadowing any "anthropological" skills I had, I boldly answered that we could continue. I couldn't read the texts under the pictures, as all I saw were chunks of foggy letters. I obsessively took photos of the walls. But looking back at the pictures, most of which are blurry, I realize my hands were shaking. I don't remember the way out of the museum or way out of the building, I don't remember if I thanked Sofiko for the tour or if I said anything at all. I just remember us passing through the courtyard for the last time as I stared at torn walls and dark patches under the yellow color of the building's facade.

As soon as I left the building, I started crying and shaking. I ran down the hill and went into a random cafe to call my mom. By blubbering words between deep breaths, I asked her to come and pick me up as I couldn't go back home alone. I remember repeatedly telling her: "I will never go into that building again, never". As I was waiting and trying to calm down, I wondered what had just happened to me. Why did I feel like I would faint? Why were my knees still trembling? Was it my fault, was it my health? Or was it the building, the smell of mold, the chilly halls, and the cracks in the walls? Did I feel uncomfortable entering a place that I had only seen from the outside, or did the area itself make me feel uncomfortable?

Later I discovered that my blood pressure was very low, but I still will never know the exact answer to the above questions. It's only now that I understand - I don't have to. Retranslating

these questions in academic terms would lead me to the main theoretical question behind this thesis: does the built environment transmit affects, or is it us who project our subjectivities on it?

Affective Geography

While my initial tendency would be to pose this as an either-or question, in this thesis, I argue that the duality suggested in this formulation may be erroneous. In other words, human and object-centered approaches to built environments should not be antithetical. In developing this view, I follow what Yael Navaro-Yashin calls a "both-and" approach. She developed this approach in the book "The Make-Believe Space: Affective Geography in a Postwar Polity" (2012) to dismantle the divide between interiority and exteriority, or subjective and objective. The "both-and" approach allows me to structure this thesis around both theoretical domains of affect: the subjective and the object-oriented. The subjective, social constructivist analysis looks at affect as being human-produced and facilitates the exploration of memories and symbolic meanings inscribed to the built environment. And a more object-oriented framework defines affect as discharged energy through material surroundings. But still what is affect?

Affect has been discussed in “sheer range and variety” (Anderson, 2014) and developed into several theories (see Thrift, 2004), thus one general definition of affect would be difficult to provide. Affect has been extensively studied through “non-representational theory” – a term developed by human geographer Nigel Thrift (1996, 2007). Thrift coined the term in response

to representational dimensions in social sciences that were focused on linguistic, constructionist and poststructuralist approaches. The non-representational approach has been used in a variety of forms (Anderson & Harrison, 2011) and often has been argued that "non-representation does not mean "anti-representation" (Dewsbury et al., 2002). But its primary aim has been to go beyond "representing aspects of the world through an act of interpretation" (Anderson, 1994) and look at what things do instead of what things stand for. In this reading, affect is not "reducible to the affections or perceptions of an individual subject" (Thrift, 2000), thus "its scope goes beyond human subjectivity and self" (Navaro-Yashin, 2012, p. 167).

While this is so, material gathered about the area of the Georgian parliament building also shows that the ambivalent affective quality of this area doesn't only emerge from the built environment but is also embedded in symbolic meanings or memories that people assign to it. Therefore, even though, a non-representational theory emerged against social constructionism, which is "distinguished by a preoccupation with representation; specifically, by a focus on the structure of symbolic meaning" (Anderson & Harrison, 2011, p. 4), my material prompts me to analyze these two theoretical approaches in unison and conceptualize affect by capturing legacies of the both.

In this sense, built environment and tangible constructed objects around the parliament building are analyzed as having their agency (Latour, 1996) that enables them to discharge affect (Thrift, 2007). But affect is then mediated and qualified by people who encounter the

area (Navaro-Yashin, 2012). This process, Yael Navaro-Yashin calls the "affect-subjectivity continuum" (Navaro-Yashin, 2012, p. 24), which is the unison of subjectivities of human beings with the outside material environment.

Navaro uses the term "affective geography" to capture this continuum and propose a perspective on affect theory that looks at the affects "of an outer environment and those of interior human selves" (Navaro-Yashin, 2012, p. 24) at the same time as they are intertwined in one another and often inseparable. In this thesis, I follow her theoretical approach but build on concepts from human geography to further develop the notion of "affective geography". The term "affective geography" has been used and mentioned in scholarly articles to analyze affects that are transmitted through spaces or to discuss relations between humans and places (Anderson, 2005, 2006; Bristow, 2015; Daya & Wilkins, 2013; Watkins, 2011). However, the "geographical" part of the term has rarely been addressed comprehensively. The question of how conceptual deconstruction of the term "geography" might help us in the analysis of "affective geography" has been neglected. In this respect, different geographical terms (such as space or place) have been used interchangeably in relation to affect. I suggest that the multi-layered and ambivalent character of "affective geography" can be captured by approaching the term through concepts of "space", "place" and "territory" as entry points of discussion.

In the first chapter, space as simultaneous multiplicity and heterogeneity (Massey, 1994, 2005) of various time periods is used as an entry point to the discussion of overlapping

spatialized memories that exist about the area of the parliament building. Throughout the chapter, I discuss memories that my respondents elaborated on and show how their spatialized and simultaneous character influence the emergence of ambivalent affects. In the second chapter, the concept of place is utilized to discuss how people perceive the physical setting of the Georgian parliament building, what activities are associated with the area and the meanings assigned to it. Place here is analyzed as a particular moment in time (Massey, 1994) rather than a bounded and unchanging sphere, as I acknowledge that meanings and affects are complex and dynamic. Finally, in the third chapter, the term "territory" is used to explore how various constructed objects around the parliament are used and understood to be symbols of "the struggle over the control and occupation of" (Hsing, 2010, p. 15) the area. By structuring this thesis along these three concepts, I aim to analyze how the ambivalent character of affect is embedded in different layers of geography.

"Both-and" Approach in the Methods

The theoretical "both-and" (Navaro-Yashin, 2012) approach to affect is echoed in the methodology of this research. Qualitative methods consisted of ethnographic fieldwork and semi-structured in-depth interviews, and I also utilized participant-produced drawings as a research method. Interviews and fieldwork were conducted mainly through April 2023, but as the material analyzed in the thesis will show, some sections are based on my previous engagement with the area and the protests.

For semi-structured in-depth interviews, I used non-probability sampling and focused on recruiting young activists (age 20-35) as well as people who have actively participated in older protests such as Rose Revolution in 2003 or April 9th, 1989. I recruited members of the "younger" as well as "older" generation to analyze how ambivalent affects are produced based on different memories and experiences that activists have with the area. In total, I conducted 14 semi-structured in-depth interviews.

Ethnographic fieldwork consisted of participant observation of the April 9th commemorative protest and daily hourly protest with "GEUTs"[2], activist group that gathers in front of the parliament building every day since April 2022 as a form of resistance to the current government. Throughout the fieldwork, I carried out ethnographic interviews (Munz, 2017) with 16 people, while being in the area around the parliament building. This allowed me to identify how people related to the built environment and led me to realize that memories that they have of the Georgian parliament building are intensely spatialized, as conversations often started by pointing at a section of space and telling a story that unfolded in that location.

I chose to participate in the "GEUTs" daily gathering for several reasons. Firstly, as they have been gathering daily in front of the Georgian parliament building for over a year, I aimed to understand whether their relationship with the area differs from other activists. Secondly,

[2] GEUT in Georgian translates to *stubborn*. They started gathering in front of the parliament building in April after solidarity protests for Ukraine ended. As some stubborn activists told me, they aim to keep the function of the area as a site of protest, to create a sphere where political and social issues are openly discussed, and in this manner, daily protest the current government.

interviews and follow-up conversations always took place in front of the parliament building, which, as mentioned above, facilitated an understanding of how these activists relate to the area. Thirdly, participant observation led me to identify embodied practices and activities that captured affective qualities. I observed activists engaging in practices that, as explained in the second chapter, often go beyond a "traditional" understanding of activism. Observation of such activities facilitated an understanding of not only how they articulated their relationship with the area but also how ambivalent affects emerge through their practices.

In short qualitative methods, consisting of interviews as well as participant observation capture the theoretical approach of the thesis, I looked at not only discursive forms through which symbolic meanings and memories are articulated (following the social constructionist thought) but also embodied activities and practices through which people encounter the area (following the non-representational approach). This "both-and" (Navaro-Yashin, 2012) perspective is further encapsulated by drawing as a method to which I refer as "the upside-down".

"The Upside-Down": Drawing as a Method

The title of the thesis – the upside-down - that captures the ambivalent character of the area around the Georgian parliament building was inspired by utilizing drawing as a method. I asked participants of the in-depth or ethnographic interviews to draw the area of the Georgian parliament building first by thinking about good associations with it, then to rotate the paper upside-down and do the same by thinking about the negative ones. In this respect,

the upside-down developed into a notion that let me and the participants navigate through the ambivalent affects of the area.

In the last years, art-based visual methodologies have become more and more popular in social sciences (GaryKnowles & L.Cole, 2008; Hawkins, 2013, 2020; Pink, 2007; Sullivan, 2008; Trafí-Prats & Castro-Varela, 2022). Drawing as a method has been used by ethnographers themselves to better understand the field sites (Causey, 2017; Taussig, 2011), but it has also been used as a "participatory tool" (Antona, 2019), in which case participants or subjects of the study are asked to draw. Such a method has often been employed when working with children in health, social care and education research (Angell et al., 2015) as well as in geography (Bunge & Bordessa, 1975). It has further been utilized, for example, with migrants (Antona, 2019; Tolia-Kelly, 2008), women in the military (Harel-Shalev et al., 2017), people with learning disabilities (Murray, 2019) and participants in the research that aimed to understand how people negotiate domestic space (Hurdley, 2013, 2019). Despite this growing interest in drawing as a research method, it still needs to be further utilized and developed to fully uncover its potential and contribution.

The "upside-down" methodology benefited my research in several ways, for which we will need to look at drawing as a method from two perspectives: the process of drawing and the drawings themselves. As British cultural geographer Harriet Hawkins argues, using participatory art has influenced the emergence of discussion on relations between art as a process and art as an output. While participatory art often privileges the first over the second

(Hawkins, 2020, p. 96) in this research, I view these two as equally important, as they both demonstrate the advantages of the method.

Cultural geographer and visual artist Giada Peterle, when advocating for doing comics as a research practice, distinguishes between "practice of doing comics" and "comics as doings" (Peterle, 2021, p. 3). This distinction echoes the process-product discussion above, but instead of prioritizing one over the other, her approach demonstrates how comics could be used as both "representational and more-than-representational" (ibid.) research practice. In this respect, comics are viewed to be more than a mere representation, as they themselves "act, move, affect and intervene in the material world" (ibid.). Applying her approach and analyzing the "upside-down" method by talking about the "practice of drawing" as well as "drawings as doings" benefits my thesis, as it illustrates the advantages of the method along with its relevance to the theoretical approaches of the thesis.

The practice of drawing "the upside-down" helped the participants to think about the space creatively and, by drawing, be "affectively attuned" (Navaro-Yashin, 2012) to the area of the parliament building. Most of the drawings were done before the interviews and appeared to be a great "opening" activity. As I conducted most of the interviews with activists or politically active people, there was a risk of them talking more about the protests than about their relationship with the area. However, drawing "the upside-down" proved to be a method that motivated participants to think spatially. It allowed them to participate in what Laura Antona calls "boundary making", "choosing what to include in their images and what to

omit" (Antona, 2019). This facilitated an understanding of how they perceive and reconstruct the area or to which aspects they assign more meaning. This aligns with the more subjective, social constructionist approach of my thesis.

On the other hand, analyzing drawing as '"doings" is in accordance with the "non-representational" line of thought. Even though art and in our case, the upside-down drawings can be seen as representations of the area of the Georgian parliament building apart from demonstrating what they stand for, they themselves are "doings" (Anderson, 2019; Peterle, 2021). Ben Anderson, a human geographer who often engages with non-representational theories, argues that amidst the emergence of non-representational approaches, cultural geography is once again interested in representations such as texts, images, and words. But instead of viewing representations as significations and focusing on what they stand for (more social constructionist approach) now, the question shifted to what representations do (Anderson, 2019, p. 1122). In this respect, representations become "representations-in-relation" that "incite, move, anger, transform, delight, enchant or otherwise affect" (Anderson, 2019, p. 1120). In my research, looking at the drawings as "doings" permits me to analyze the advantages of how drawings affected the participants.

Conversations started by explaining the drawings, which led them to discussing different details of the area, describing memories, experiences and affects that were revived by the drawings themselves. During the interviews, I noticed that some of the informants used "the upside-down" as an entry point when talking about the area. When talking about the

negative experiences or associations, they would point to the downside and relate their conversations to the drawing, while when talking about the positive things, they would do the same on the upside. In this respect, drawings as "doings" allowed my informants to navigate through ambivalent affects by thinking about the area of the Georgian parliament building.

In the following chapters, which are structured around the concepts of "space", "place", and "territory", the upside-down drawings are integrated into the text, along with the participant's own interpretations of them. However, in some cases, "the upside-downs" as "doings" allow the reader to be affected and to interpret the drawings beyond my analysis, which is a further advantage of the method. Before the reader moves to the subsequent chapters, I want to end this section with Tim Ingold's advice that drawings, and in this case, "the upside-downs," should not be looked *at*, but rather looked *with* (Ingold, 2016, p. 1). With "The Upside-down" reader will be able to see how the affects of the "upsides" and "downsides" merge into one, permitting the emergence of ambivalent affective geography.

Chapter 1: Space as Simultaneity of Memories.

For more than 35 years, the area of the Georgian parliament building has been a central site for all types of political events, whether struggles or celebrations; it has always been in the crux of it all. As people encounter this space, their minds wander towards different time periods, and multiple memories of intensive affective experiences get embroiled in one another, intersect and overlap, creating a sphere of heterogenous simultaneity. In utilizing space as a concept that captures these processes, I follow Doreen Massey, who, with an aim to develop the term of space as "dynamic simultaneity" (Massey, 2005), suggests that it should always be "conceptualized integrally with time" (Massey, 1994, p. 2). In this case, space is not a pause in time – as is the concept of place in the second chapter – but instead "play" in time.

As soon as people encounter the space around the parliament building multiple time periods are enacted at once. In this respect, as Maurice Halbwachs, who coined the term collective memory, argued - different portions of space "correspond to various and different aspects of the structure and life of their society" (Halbwachs, 1980, p. 130). And through this process, the space of the parliament building becomes a type of Lieux de memoire (sites of memory) "where memory crystallizes and secrets itself'" (Nora, 1989).

To argue for the heterogenous, simultaneous, and dynamic character of space, Massey talks about social relations that are "stretched-out" into the spatial. Instead of relations, in this chapter, I would like to take Massey's approach to talk about multiple collective memories that are "stretched-out" into the spatial, or in my words, are spatialized simultaneously

through the space of the parliament building. The chapter aims to demonstrate how the analysis of heterogeneous overlapping layers of collective memories that are sedimented (Nelson, 2003) in this space will facilitate an understanding of how ambivalent affects coexist and produce affective geography.

With this aim in mind, in the first section, I start by demonstrating the spatialized character of memories and explain how space becomes simultaneity of past, present, and future through them. Then I analyze six memories my respondents have shared to examine how spatialized memories intersect and form conflicting affects. In the second section, I look at the memory of April 9th, 1989, and 1991, as this date is the most common overlap between spatialized memories and largely influences the creation of ambivalent affects.

1.1 Memories Spatialized

It was November 19, 2022. I approached the parliament building to attend a protest organized by united oppositional parties. City Hall had started preparation for New Year's Day way earlier than usual and was constructing a Christmas tree in front of the building. So organizers had to put up the stage for public speeches on the opposite side, in front of the Fine Arts Museum. As I approached the crowd, one of the leaders of the oppositional party, Nika, was at the microphone voicing the demands. At the end of the speech, he increased his voice and said: "If they [the government] don't satisfy our demands, we will utilize a tactic that this avenue has not seen for over 30 years". Everyone started clapping and shouting as some turned their heads towards the parliament building and glanced up at the stairs that

lead to the main gate of the building. It took me a second before realizing which memory had been recalled.

It was November 1988 when hundreds of students went on a hunger strike and stayed on the stairs of the Supreme Soviet building (current parliament building) for a week to protest potential amendments in the Soviet constitution that aimed to transfer the right of secession from the republics of the Soviet Union to the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies[3] (Gudava & Gudava, 1989; Sartania, 2019). Protests first started at Tbilisi's Hippodrome, on November 22nd, 62 people (Gudava & Gudava, 1989) began a hunger sit-in in front of the parliament building, and later, the number increased to approximately 900 (ibid.). The protest proved to be successful as the Soviet authorities agreed to maintain the current constitution without any amendments.

When Nika referred to a tactic that had not been utilized for over 30 years, everyone understood that he was talking about the hunger strike of 1988 because they all had a collective memory of the event, and people who turned towards the parliament building knew the exact location where it unfolded.

Through this space, Nika reconstructed the past into the present and connected it to the future in one sentence: "We will utilize a tactic that this avenue has not seen for over 30 years". In this regard, the space of the Georgian parliament building becomes simultaneity of not only memories of the past but also simultaneity of past, present, and future. A similar

[3] Highest organ of Soviet state authority from 1989 to 1991.

process can also be illustrated by a speech that Akia, a former general and founder of the "Movement for Freedom – the united frontline of Resistance", gave on February 24th, 2023[4]:

"We must change this situation [referring to the government], today and here, on this [parliament] square, in the sacred area, where we often gather when something important is happening, an important issue in the history of our country is unfolding [he pauses and people cheer] Here, these walls remember many victories [people cheer again], but unfortunately many failures [people are quite], but more victories, more happiness, [people cheer again] and yes tears, but happiness more, proudness as well, that dignity too, that we have always had, when on April 9th we were stopping military tanks with our bare hands, I don't feel that pride right now, why ?! ... Here on this square, our fate is decided".[5]

Memories of failures or victories refer to different time periods, but they overlap and intersect as they are recalled through the space of the parliament building. Based on these spatialized memories past, present, and future come together, intensifying the simultaneous character of space. But what allows me to talk about these memories as spatialized? Why don't I refer to them as personal memories that are projected onto the space instead of highlighting their spatial character?

The answer can be found in the provided stories itself. Firstly, as mentioned above, people looked at the stairs of the parliament building when Nika referred to the hunger strike, highlighting the fact that memories are connected to and recalled through different portions

[4]On February 24th, 2023, people organized a solidarity protest for Ukraine on the day of one year anniversary of Russia's invasion.

5 All translations of respondents' quotes in this thesis are mine.

of space. Secondly, one crucial common detail in Akia's and Nika's words illustrates the spatialized character of memories. In both speeches, the subject who sees and remembers is space itself. Rustaveli Avenue has not seen a hunger strike for over 30 years, and the walls of the parliament building remember victories along with failures. Memories of various events are so tightly connected to the space around the parliament building that one could say - this space itself remembers.

To demonstrate how these spatialized memories overlap and create space of ambivalent affects, in the following paragraphs, I will reconstruct some of them. However, as the reader continues, they should remember that this chapter is not a historical reconstruction of the events which have unfolded in the area, and some important political protests may be neglected from the analysis. Instead, I focus on six events, chronologically organized, in which space, affect and memories are intertwined.

To begin, let us go back to the hunger strike of November 1988 that Nika referred to. Lela, one of the students who participated in the hunger strike, told me about unbearable cold nights that starved students spent on the stairs of the parliament building. However, she also highlighted the positive atmosphere among the protesters: "I remember being bound to the area because of the amazing super high energy and mood among the protestors." In Lela's words, memories of cold, difficult nights, along with high and positive energy, create an ambivalent affective setting that becomes spatialized and leads her to be attached to the area years later:

"When I was on hunger strike in November, I sat on the right side of the stairs below the Soviet monument. Now the monument is not there, of course, but I always go there as if I am obsessed with or attached to that location. This area gives me power. I participate in many protests, and each time I am reminded of the old times, and I feel strong, powerful, and responsible towards people whose blood was split at this square."

Protesting in the same area further reinforces the spatialization of memories, which emanate powerful energy. Lela is one of many who go to the same spot repeatedly. Most of the activists I refer to below (except Natia and Zaza) stated that they have "their own" spots during protests. Some choose it strategically, some are used to it, some like the area, and some distance themselves from the crowd, but every time there is a protest, they stand in the same location as they did during previous ones. In this regard, memories that these people embody become localized in certain spots. This process could be explained by using Paul Connerton's distinction between two commemorative practices (Connerton, 1989). Through "incorporating practice", memory is embodied by the individual and through the "practice of inscription", it is stored in something that traps it, in this case, space. Going to the same spot as Lela's case illustrates becomes a commemorative practice that comes with its own affective qualities.

When Lela describes the "incorporated practice" of remembering past events, she mentions "blood that was spilt at this square", which is a reference to the protest of April 9th, 1989. The memory of April 9th is one of the most intense overlaps between intersecting memories that

people have about this space. It is a dualistic date, because on April 9th, 1989, people demanded the independence of Georgia in front of the parliament building, but they were dispersed by the Soviet military and tanks, which killed 21 people and injured hundreds. And two years later, in 1991, on the same date, the first president of Georgia Zviad Gamsakhurdia announced the independence of Georgia from the Georgian parliament building. These two dates, celebrated on the same day, create an affective quality of space that is very ambivalent. On one side, it is a tragical and traumatic spatialized memory, while on the other, it is the celebration of victory and triumph. Here, I will not elaborate on April 9th further as I focus on memories of April 9th in the second section of the chapter. After April 9th, 1989, as many of my respondents remembered, walking through the area of the parliament building was very painful. Flowers brought by people to honor the killed were a constant reminder of traumatic events. But, after April 9th, 1991, as the reader will later see, people felt proud of finally being independent, and it partly overshadowed past painful memories.

However, this didn't last for long. Painful, regretful affects materialized in the destroyed parliament building (Figure 4)[6] and the whole of Rustaveli Avenue as the civil war of 1991-1992 took place in the area. It was triggered by forces who aimed to end Gamsakhurdia's rule, and approximately a hundred people were killed. Natia, a former journalist and an active participant in contemporary protests, remembered walking through the avenue and her mom crying upon seeing the ruined buildings: "She was crying out loud, her handkerchief was all wet, she cried like that time when her sister passed away". The image of damaged Rustaveli

[6] Source: Radio Liberty

Avenue and the parliament building was also painfully recalled by a politician of the opposition party, Nugzar:

"The image of burnt Rustaveli and the Parliament building was very painful for a long time. I would look at or recall it and wonder why we did this, not literally but in the national sense, we couldn't solve the issues humanly and we went and damaged the whole Avenue. That's why it was very hard to walk through space, I wondered if we as citizens were useful for the country at all, or if we could actually build a nation when instead of discussing the issue, we shot and bombed each other".

Figure 4: The damaged Georgian parliament building, January 6th, 1992. Source: Radio Liberty

In his comment, the built environment around the parliament building is affective and has political implications (Knox, 2017). Based on spatialized memory of the ruined area, Nugzar constructs an image of a citizen that is not useful for its nation. In this regard, the affect that was transmitted through the destroyed built environment becomes a "nationalist affect"

(Wilson & Anderson, 2020), "through which the nation becomes present as an imagined-material resource to which people might attach and through which senses of belonging may be enacted" (ibid. p. 595). In Nugzar's case, the nation, as well as a citizen, is imagined through the destroyed Avenue, and the ruined image of the space shatters the sense of belonging as well as the belief in nation-building. In this regard, affect that emerges based on spatialized memory of civil war consists of regret and confusion. In contrast, the memory of the Rose Revolution, the subsequent event on which my respondents, including Nugzar, elaborated for most, resulted in the sense of pride and power.

Rose Revolution of 2003 started in response to rigged parliamentary elections and culminated in the resignation of Georgia's second President, Eduard Shevardnadze. Againstt painful memories of April 9th, 1989, and the civil war, my respondents, who have participated in the revolution, elaborated on the positive character of the event. For example, after talking about painful memories of April 9th and the civil war, Zaza, a lawyer and former politician, continued with the Rose Revolution, saying that "energy was very positive and euphoric, the temperature very high." For respondents who shared this view and contrasted affective qualities of previous painful memories with the Rose Revolution, space around the parliament building becomes a simultaneity of coexisting but affectively conflicting memories. As shown below, this is also depicted in "the upside-down" paintings.

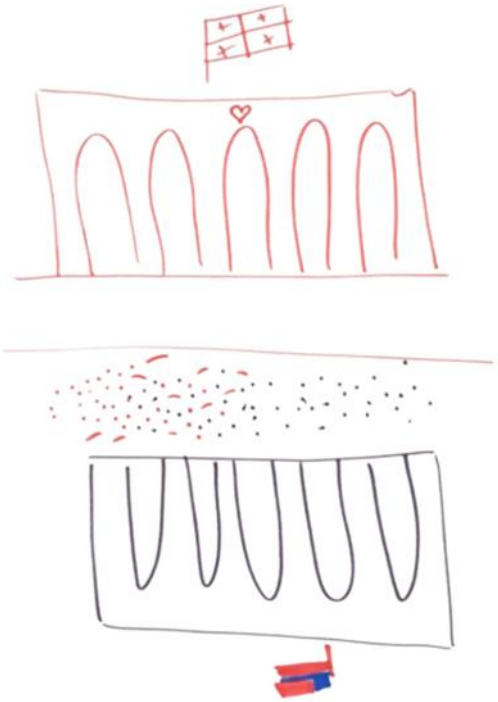
"The upside-down" drawings by Nugzar and his friends, Levan, and Goga[7] illustrate how different time periods are brought together through the space of the parliament building and how the Rose Revolution is opposed to more painful memories. Levan painted the parliament building in red on the upside, which is a symbolic reference to the Rose Revolution, and put the scene from April 9th on the downside (Drawing 1), where black dots signify the Soviet military, red dots are people and red lines are the bodies of the killed. Levan's downside also intersects with Nugzar's drawing where he drew dead bodies and metallic shovels with which they were killed (Drawing 2). Nugzar's upside does not depict the Rose Revolution but an imagined good future, and the portrait of Levan in the middle, because, according to Nugzar, "if anything good is happening around the parliament building, Levan is surely there smiling". Contrary to Levan's and Nugzar's downsides, Goga didn't draw April 9th,1989, because, as he said, he doesn't have direct memory of the event. Instead, he depicted the parliament building in its contemporary form on the downside and the revolution of 2003 on the upside (Drawing 3). In his drawing, positive and negative memories are spatially separated as positive is associated with the inside of the building and negative with the outside:

"I don't have direct memory of April 9th, so I painted the area of the parliament as it is now, with the police car, soviet symbolism on the building, April 9th memorial and torn flag of EU on the downside.

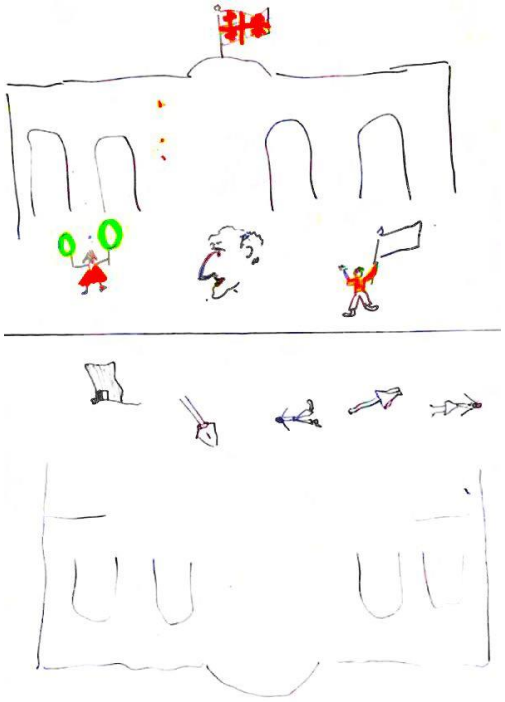
[7] Name changed for anonymity.

On the upside, only positive thing that I can remember is revolution and it is linked to the inside space of the parliament building, this is Mikheil Saakashvili[8] in the assembly room of the parliament".

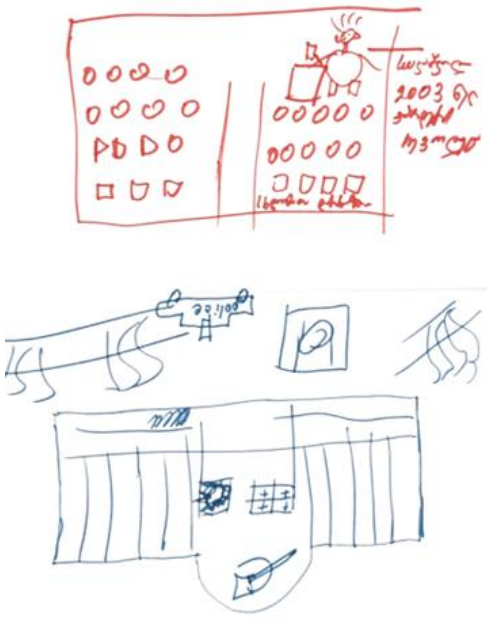
These drawings illustrate that different memories create affective ambivalence as they are put on opposing sides of the upside-down. And past memories are sometimes conflicting with the present (Drawing 3) or future (Drawing 2), sharpening the heterogenous simultaneity of space.



Drawing 1



Drawing 2



Drawing 3

Affective ambivalence becomes even more potent when each memory captures conflicting affects. Such an example is the event from 2008 when Russia invaded Georgia's region South Ossetia and fear of war intertwined in the reassurance that came from the unity of people in

[8] Third President of Georgia. Drawing is reference to the scene from Rose Revolution when people, led by Mikheil Saakashvili enter the parliament building.

front of the Georgian parliament building. The city of Gori was still under attack[9] on August 12th when the presidents of Estonia, Latvia, Poland, and Ukraine, and the Premier Minister of Lithuania arrived in Tbilisi to join people who were gathered in front of the parliament building against Russian aggression. Giorgi, founder of the political platform "The Avenue[10]" referred to the protest of 2008 as an "important expression of strength and unity, along with huge anger and fear". And Tea, Nugzar's friend and active participant in the latest protests, told me:

"I remember hearing the announcement that the protest would take place on the main avenue, Rustaveli Avenue, in front of the building of course. And leaders of the five countries would come and defend our freedom with us. We were very scared, my mom, my friends and me, we all were there, scared that Russia might invade Tbilisi as well. We waited for the leaders of the five countries, that was our only hope".

The case of 2008 surely is not unique in being affectively ambivalent, as often protests convey opposing emotions that vary from anger to pride, or fear to solidarity (Jasper, 2018), but the affects of fear and hope in this case are so intense that they are recalled through spatialized memories. In some cases, spatialized memories themselves become foundations of affects and that is the following case.

[9] According to Georgian media platform Civil.ge, source: https://civil.ge/ka/archives/218392

[10] The name of the platform refers to Rustaveli Avenue, where the Georgian parliament building is located. As Giorgi explained, founders chose the name because it expresses the unity of people who fight for Georgia's freedom by gathering on Rustaveli Avenue.

Spatialized character of memories was poignantly reasserted in protests of 2019, when a member of a Russian diplomat and member of the Communist Party, Sergei Gavrilov delivered a speech from the Georgian Parliamentary seat. In seconds, the news was all over social media, and many posts mentioned how the space in which Georgia announced its independence in 1991, was now taken up by a Russian politician. One of the online media platforms wrote: "From the space where we declared independence, Sergei Gavrilov, a member of the Russian Communist Party, gazed at the Georgian MPs and addressed them in the language of the occupier country"[11] (Gegidze, 2020) This fact resulted in a massive protest on June 21st, 2019, and continued till spring 2020. At the time, I was conducting qualitative research for my undergraduate studies on anger as an emotion that mobilized the protests, and many of my respondents repeated the article's narrative. In this respect, collective spatialized memory of announcing independence from the same area was one of the foundations of strong anger.

The protest of June 21st, 2019, started peacefully but ended with a police raid, as the government blamed the political forces of the protestors for the plan of entering the parliament building illegally. One of GEUT activists, NinoBebetty, depicted the memory of 2019 on the downside of "the upside-down" (Drawing 4), symbolically painting a girl who lost her eye to the rubber bullet shot by the police. Instead of the eye NinoBebetty, painted small sun, depicting a spark of hope within a negative memory. On the upside, she painted red tulips, which for her are symbols of April 9th and "victory that resulted from a tragic day".

[11] My translation

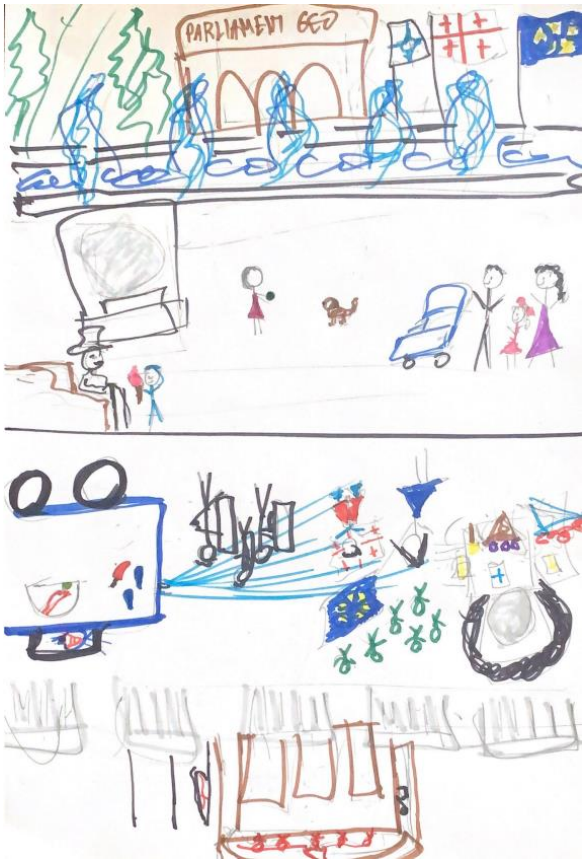
Drawing 4

As we saw above, the memory of April 9th was depicted on the downside by Nugzar and Levan, while for NinoBebetty, this memory bears positive connotations against the negativity of 2019. In this regard, the ambivalent affective character of these spatialized memories is strengthened as many of these memories could easily end up on either side of "the upside-down". Where the memory will go depends on the affective quality of the scenes people remember. Apart from April 9th, a memory that was depicted on both sides of "the upside-down" by my informants was the March protests of 2023.

Protests emerged in response to "Russian Law", which passed the first parliamentary hearing and was aimed against organizations (mainly non-governmental organizations) whose income from foreign countries was larger than 20% of the total income, and it obligated employers of such organizations to register as foreign agents. Gvantsa, an activist from the civil movement

Democracy Defenders, depicted the events on the downside based on the larger political context and memory of the protest's dispersal (Drawing 5):

"I painted 2023 on the downside because as you can see parliament is not a parliament but the puppet house, there's a hand at the top that controls the police and the parliament [pointing at the roof of the building]. I painted the April 9th memorial here on the left side in flowers because people are dying in Ukraine and that is where we bring flowers. People continue to die for freedom. The police are dispersing young people, who are symbols of freedom, love of the country, intelligence and who fight against Russian evil force."



Drawing 5

Drawing 6

On the other hand, Elene painted March 2023 on the upside (Drawing 6) and said: "I remember a man holding a huge flagpole with three flags EU, Georgia and Ukraine; every time I looked at it, I felt touched". On the downside, like NinoBebetty, Elene depicted the memory of 2019 by putting an eyepatch that symbolically refers to 20% of Georgia's occupied territories by Russia and the girl who lost an eye during the 2019 protests.

Drawings of "the upside-down" are visual representations of multiple and simultaneous memories that are revived through the space around the Georgian parliament building. Most of the memories analyzed above are "part of a totality of thoughts common to a group" (Halbwachs & Coser, 1992, p. 52), which allows us to refer to them as collective memories, but their affective qualities differ and sometimes clash with each other, influencing the creation of ambivalent affective space. In this process, the memory of April 9th, 1989, and 1991 plays a crucial role, as it is the most common overlap between multiple layers of spatialized memories and captures ambivalence in itself—the issue to which the next sub-chapter is devoted.

1.2 Dual April 9th: Bloody Pride and Sacredness

It was April 9th, 2023. Media, members of the ruling party, oppositional party, old men in colors of the old Georgian flag, boys in traditional Georgian clothes and dancing shoes, women in flowers, women in guitars, students with banners and Georgian flags – everyone kept coming and leaving flowers by April 9th memorial (Figures 5 and 6), performing national dances, singing the songs that are associated with April 9th, giving public speeches, or just

staying around and then leaving. During the day, I talked to several people who came to the April 9th memorial, some talked about "Georgia's great victory and unity", and some about "blood on the sidewalks". A man who spent all his matches on trying to light up a candle by the memorial told me: "First thing that comes to my mind is flowers, flowers all over the avenue, I have never seen that amount of flowers. What a painful scene that was…". These words already indicate the dualistic character of the date which plays a vital role in the forming ambivalent affects.

Figure 5: April 9th memorial. Taken in the morning of April 9th, 2023.

Figure 6: April 9th memorial. Taken in the evening of April 9th, 2023.

If, in 1989, people were killed by the Soviet military – shaping a day of national trauma. In 1991, on the same day, the independence of Georgia was announced from the parliament building - shaping a day of national triumph. This ambivalent character of the date itself was

thoroughly described by Grandpa Otari, whom I met during the commemorative protest on the evening of April 9th, 2023.

Grandpa Otari is a street vendor whom I can now proudly count as my friend. During the protests of 1988, he was one of the students who went on a hunger strike and who also participated on April 9th, 1989.

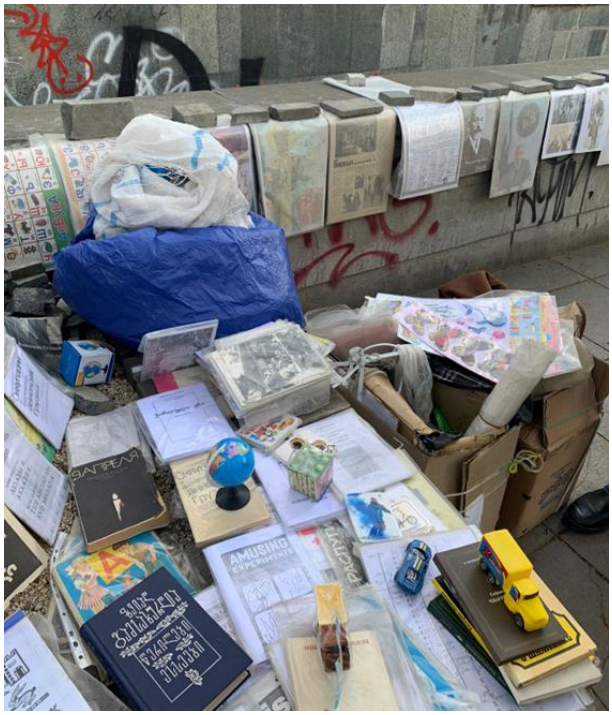


Figure 7: Grandpa Otari's stall.

Figure 8: Books and objects sold by Grandpa Otari.

He has worked in the editorial office of the Georgian newspaper "Social Education," and now he spends his days across the parliament square under the huge plane tree or, as he calls it, "plane office," selling mostly old books but not only (Figures 7 and 8). As I approached him, the first thing that I noticed were the objects that he was selling: a book about April 9th, a plastic car, a collection of essays by Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a small globe, Georgian folk stories, a Rubik's cube, a book about traditional Georgian toasts, butterfly stickers, history of

Abkhazia, calendar with a skier, newspapers on April 9th, more stickers for children, pictures from April 9th, journal on amusing, experiments protests of 1988, small truck toy. I looked at the objects and thought of how well they conveyed spatialized memories and the chaotic affects that exist in the area of the parliament building.

Grandpa Otari showed me pictures of him protesting on the stairs of the parliament, and we went through newspapers as he told me one story after another. We talked about April 9th, President Gamsakhurdia, Georgian politics and media, old newspapers, and his job. By the end of our conversation, I asked Grandpa Otari to describe the area around the parliament building in two words. He turned and looked at the building, then turned back and stared beyond me, somewhere over the horizon, saying with a smile on his face: "Bloody pride". I stood quietly, amazed at how perfectly he just summarized my whole argument of ambivalent affects as he energetically ran to the right side of the tree. “It is a space of severe pain”, – he continued, “but look here [points at the pictures of leaders of independent Georgia and Georgian map]. I would not have had this stuff here if it was not a day of a great victory”.

“Bloody pride” is a metaphor that encapsulates conflicting affects that exist around April 9th and through which “pasts are enacted as part of a national story of heroism and sacrifice.” (Wilson & Anderson, 2020, p. 592). It shows how through or in space, people can recall past events and revive their affective characters. The ambivalent quality of the metaphor “bloody pride” is also echoed in Zaza’s words. During the interview, he told me:

"I remember this horrific scene, where Soviet tanks slowly move with a rumbling loud awful voice. Then protestors back away and huddle near the stairs, and a boy runs forwards with a stick, hitting a Soviet tank with it."

Later Zaza sent me his article about memories of April 9th that ends with the following quote: "I remember April 9th, 1989, with voices, not images. And this voice is the voice of victory, the voice of united Georgia". The metaphor of Bloody Pride for Zaza is retranslated in voices of rumbling tanks on one side (Figure 9)[12] and voices of victory on the other. Conflicting memories that exist about this date and are spatialized in the area of the parliament building show how people relate to space. For example, Tea recalled her mom coming back from the protest with torn clothes, bruises, and scratches and, with tears in her eyes, continued: "Then I saw people bringing in the body of my killed neighbor in the courtyard, I will never forget April 9th, I remember it as if I was there." Here, the affective quality of the memory is so intense that Tea remembers it as if she "was there". Tea's story highlights the "bloody" part of the affective metaphor while, for example, Nugzar elaborated on the "pride "of April 9th, 1991. Nugzar talked about events of this date as his first positive memory from the area of the parliament building:

"I had a friend that always fought for independence, but unfortunately, he died in a car accident, so he never experienced Georgia becoming independent. He would always carry his huge flag around, so on April 9th, 1991, my friends and I went to his parent's house, we took his flag and proudly carried it towards the parliament building. He fought for independence, and his flag needed to be where his wish came true*".*

[12] Source: Radio Free Europe

Figure 9: Soviet tanks in front of the Georgian parliament building after April 9th, 1989. Source: Radio Liberty

For some of my respondents, a dualistic understanding of April 9th led to the conceptualization of the area of the parliament building as "sacred". In the speech I mentioned at the start of the chapter Akia called the area sacred, just before elaborating on ambivalent experiences of pain and happiness. "Sacredness" of the area of the parliament building is another metaphor that encapsulates the intensity of spatialized memories. For all my respondents' the "sacredness" of the area of the parliament building is connected to the memory of April 9th. As one of my respondents, a professor of sociology, Emzar, said: "The space becomes sacred as it is where Georgians sacrifice themselves for the nation". In short "sacredness" of the area of the parliament building indicates that it may be a "site that is imbued with a transcendent spiritual quality" (see sacred and profane space in Johnston et al., 1994), because people's blood was spilt on the area for a better future. Again, through the sacredness of the area, present, past, and future simultaneously coexist in space.

"Bloody pride" and "sacredness" are constructed on spatialized memory of April 9th, but what is also important is that they are preserved bodily, as are other memories analyzed in this chapter. To analyze this process, looking at the continuous practice of protesting in the same area through the lens of "performance" (Taylor, 2003), as Diana Taylor suggests, may be helpful. Instead of developing a new definition of "performance", she suggests that the concept can be utilized as a "methodological lens" (Taylor, 2003, p. 3), which means analyzing resistance as something that is performed in the public sphere repeatedly and as "embodied practice" that transmits memory. In the Georgian case, as people encounter the area of the parliament building or go to the same spots they used to during previous protests, memories become spatialized. Furthermore, these memories and their affective qualities are revived through the embodied act of going to the same area. In Tilly's words, such continuous performance of protesting may be understood as a "repertoires of contention", "arrays of contentious performances that are currently known and available within some set of political actors" (Tilly et al., 2015, p. 52) and that "join shared memories of the past with shared visions of the future" (see Tilly's afterword in Boyarin, 1994). With this, we are back to the importance of understanding space integrally with time as it demonstrates how memories are sedimented in the area (Nelson, 2003) and how space around the Georgian Parliament building is the simultaneity of different time periods, creating a "site of memory" (Nora, 1989) in which memories are spatialized, resulting in the emergence of affective geography.

Chapter 2: Place as Particular Moment in Time

Discussions on space and place in human geography, sociology, and anthropology provide us with different distinctions between these two notions. Often if space is understood to be an abstract sphere, place is described as a lived, experienced and meaningful one (Tuan, 1977). In my research, I use the concept of place to talk about the meanings, affects and attachments that emerge in the area around the Georgian Parliament building in *its contemporary form*.

The place is not bounded, always is under construction and transformation (see Massey, 1994). For example, the name of the parliament building before 1990 was the House of Government of the Georgian SSR. Before the March (2023) protests, its walls were colorless yellow, while now traces of scrubbed graffiti are all over the grey and yellow stone. The meanings that are attached to the area of the parliament building also change with new experiences and events, as do affective qualities transmitted through this place. Thus, defining "place", without acknowledging its temporary character would not be possible.

In this regard, "place" in my research is understood as a pause, or a particular moment in time (Massey, 1994; see also *place* in Freestone & Liu, 2016). Therefore, this notion of place looks at the parliament building as it was during the period of my research, February-April 2023.

With this in mind, this chapter aims to analyze how ambivalent affects coexist around the Georgian parliament building by looking at this place in its present-day context. Towards this

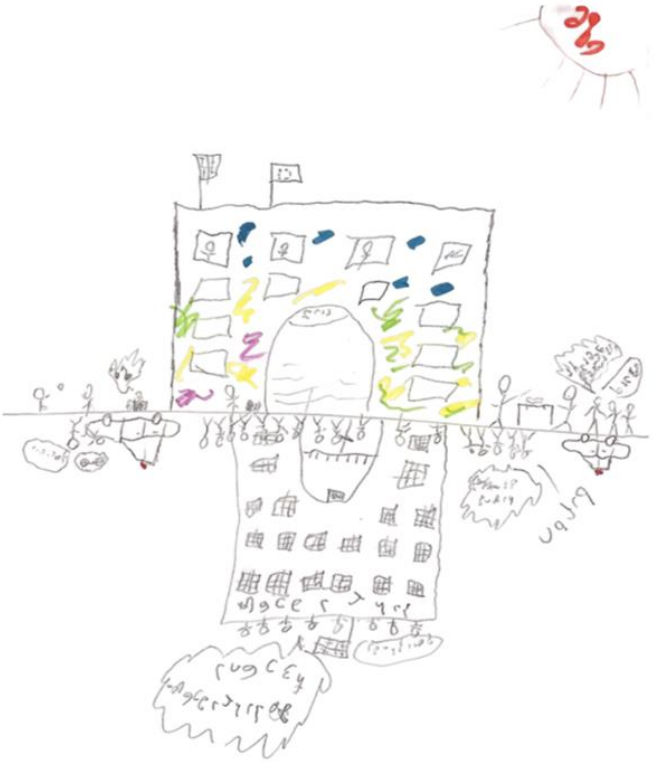
goal, in the first section I start by analyzing how the "identity of place", that is the unity of things that allows a specific place to be differentiated from others (Relph, 1976, p. 45), is constructed by people who actively participate in massive protests. However, following Relph's argument that "identity of place" is not enough for understanding the phenomenological character of place, I end the first sub-chapter with description of how "identity with place", that is relationship or attachment that people hold with places (ibid.) is formed. New types of relations between the place of the parliament building and people emerge as I move my analysis from active participants of massive protests to the discussion of the activist group “GEUTS”. As “GEUTs” encounter this place daily in the second section I focus on what affective metaphors are used to describe the “identity with place” that emerges through daily resistance.

2.1 Ambivalent Identity of and with Place

Tornike and I were standing in front of the parliament building, blank paper rested on the base of the fountain, colorful markers scattered across the grey stone. As Tornike painted “the upside-down” (Drawing 7), the security man was looking over the barricades confusingly. In about fifteen minutes he finished drawing and looked up at me, ready to discuss it:

„On the upside, I painted the parliament building with open gates and transparent windows. You can see people working on the fourth floor. The weather is good, and the sun is peaking into the rooms. On top of the parliament, we have got two flags, the Georgian and European Union. At this point, we are already members of the EU. As you can see, the building is colorful, it's the traces of graffiti made during the protests of March, it makes this building look so much cooler than it really is. It's a

reminder of the protests' success. [He looks up at the actual building and after a brief pause, he continues] If I was in the government, I would never have tried to rub them off. Yeah, anyway, in front of the building, there's a protest, but some are playing with a ball, some playing music, here are the notes as you can see [points at the left corner of the painted building] these people are eating and then on the right corner people are saying that the building is theirs, true democracy. On the downside, people are also protesting, but the police are arresting them. People are confused cause they have done nothing wrong, as usual [adds this in a low voice]. The gate of the parliament building is locked, no one can enter, and the windows are in bars, like in prison. On top of the building, there's a government, shouting that they own the parliament and power. You can also see that there is no European flag, we are very far away from getting into the EU."



Drawing 7

This story poignantly echoes Edward Relph's understanding of the "identity of place", which is constructed through three components: the physical setting, activities associated with the place, and the meanings attached to it (Relph, 1976). In this section, I follow this tripartite division of identity of place to better describe how ambivalent affects are transmitted through the area and qualified by people who participate in different activities and give meanings to the place. Let me start by focusing on the physical setting.

Tornike puts different physical components of the place on opposite sides of the "upside-down". Transparent windows, open gates, colorful walls are on the upside, while closed gates, barred windows and colorless walls are on the downside. Putting these physical details on opposite sides illustrates that they have their own "affective atmosphere" (Anderson, 2014) that is transmitted through the built environment. In this sense, the first component of the identity of place, that is the physical setting creates an atmosphere or in other words "excessive affect" (Anderson, 2014, p. 160).

Affective atmosphere that is discharged by the physical environment may be embodied in various ways, but in any case, architectural components often shape experiences of the body (Buchli, 2013; Tuan, 1977). Answers I got from Gio, 24 years old student, and Tea on the question "How do you feel when imagining the building" are illustrative in this regard:

"If I imagine that I am standing in front of the building alone, without anyone by my side, I feel weak. I can't do anything about the building if I am alone. That's why I need to imagine myself as big, and powerful, and then look at the building. This is only possible if I am there with the "crowd". When

looking at it from this perspective, this building is just walls, nothing much, but the fact that it is locked, or enclosed has its influence. Yes, these pillars create an illusion of seeing the inside part, but it's not really visible. In protests of March [2023], I didn't want to go in that area, no… I wanted them [members of the parliament] to be locked in that building, as long as possible" (Gio)

"If I imagine the building, the first thing I see are the pillars on the front side. I have thought many times about how it might feel to enter that area from the inside. This wish of going in somehow always exists. The yard invites you in somehow. On the other hand, it might be how I imagine the Rose Revolution happening, I wasn't in Tbilisi at that point, but in my mind, that's where people entered from. And now these rats [the members of the parliament] walk around that courtyard. [pauses for a bit and continues with a smile] Yeah, going in would be nice, and establishing our laws" (Tea).

Gio feels weak and excluded from the building, because the inner part of it is not visible enough, while Tea feels motivated to go inside and see more. While affective responses to the physical setting of the identity of place differ, Tuan's assumption that buildings with courtyards “dramatize the contrast of inside and outside” (Tuan, 1977, p. 109) is justified. In this respect, the physical built environment evokes irritability (Navaro-Yashin, 2012) in people who encounter it and the atmosphere "gets into the individual" (Brennan, 2004, p.1).

Ambivalent affective character of place, is well described by some of the activists referred to the physical setting of the building, as being “uadgilo” which directly translates to “out of place”:

"This building **doesn't suit the context** of Tbilisi, it's not beautiful, **it doesn't fit into the terrain**. I don't even know what kind of architecture it is, some kind of Stalinist building, I hate it [she shudders in disgust]. It's full of Stalinist symbolics and patterns. I don't know for sure what kind of Soviet ornaments though, because I never look at it… It even **makes me angry that we are that attached to the building** as if we can't protest anywhere else, as if we can't be angry in other places. The fact that this place has such importance makes me feel small or weak. It gets on my nerves because **we need to rise above it, we need to be freer** [pauses and frowns] but it still empowers me somehow" (Tea)[emphasis mine].

"You know whenever I imagine this place, I can't see the building, I hear the voice of the crowd, that indistinguishable noise of thousands of people coming together during protests. But I don't see the building. **It's out of place ["uadgilo" in Georgian].** Yes, it is huge and monumental, but these metals and grey stones don't express people's aspirations, people's will. Dull, ugly building, yeah, no I don't like it. [After a brief pause, he continues] But go out and announce that we are gathering to protest, and everyone will go there, it has some sort of **magnetic force**. [After a short pause] This kind of attachment is fatal in some sense**, it is obstructive...** Every major event is associated with this place, over and over again, memories get crammed into it and we continue to gather in front of the building. **Maybe it could be worthy to be a bit free from it**" (Nugzar) [emphasis mine].

If we explain "uadgilo" or "out of place" in Mary Douglas' terms we could say that building is out of place because it is anomalous and ambiguous, where "an anomaly is an element which does not fit a given set or series; ambiguity is a character of statements capable of two interpretations" (Douglas, 1966, p. 38). In Georgian case, ambiguous character of the physical setting is encapsulated by both of the quotes above, even though the place is "uadgilo" and

uncanny, it has a “magnetic force”, its own "thing power" (Bennett, 2010) that creates a sense of attachment. As Tea told me, she tries to escape the uncanny atmosphere by physically distancing herself from the building and standing on the other side of the road not to be exposed to the "cold grey stones of the building and awful barricades", but she continues to protest in front of it.

The physical setting of the identity of the place creates its own affective responses. However, so do the activities and events that are associated with it – that is the second component of “identity of place” (Relph, 1976). Tornike puts protest on both sides of the “upside-down”, which indicates that protest (whether dispersed by police for no reason or organized in a peaceful setting) is an important component of the identity of the Georgian parliament building. As Nugzar’s quote shows, the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about the area around the parliament building is not the building itself but the people who stand in front of it. Such an intense connection of protest with the place was repeated by many of my informants. When I asked them to imagine the place of parliament and describe it to me, they started talking about waves of thousands of people, uncountable heads all over the avenue and flags raised in the air. The protest and front area of the parliament building are so intensely linked to each other that when protests are organized at the back entrance of the building, I have seen people going to the front part, thinking that the protest already ended and leaving. Such an intense link annoys Nugzar and Tea and is regarded to be restrictive and limiting in parallel with it being empowering.

Furthermore, protests and activities of resistance that take place in front of the building are often different from each other, people have raved in front of the building (in 2018), they have constructed prison cells instead of the tents (in 2009) or organized public lectures and exhibitions (in 2019). Various types of protest that unfold in the area further influence emergence of ambivalent affects.

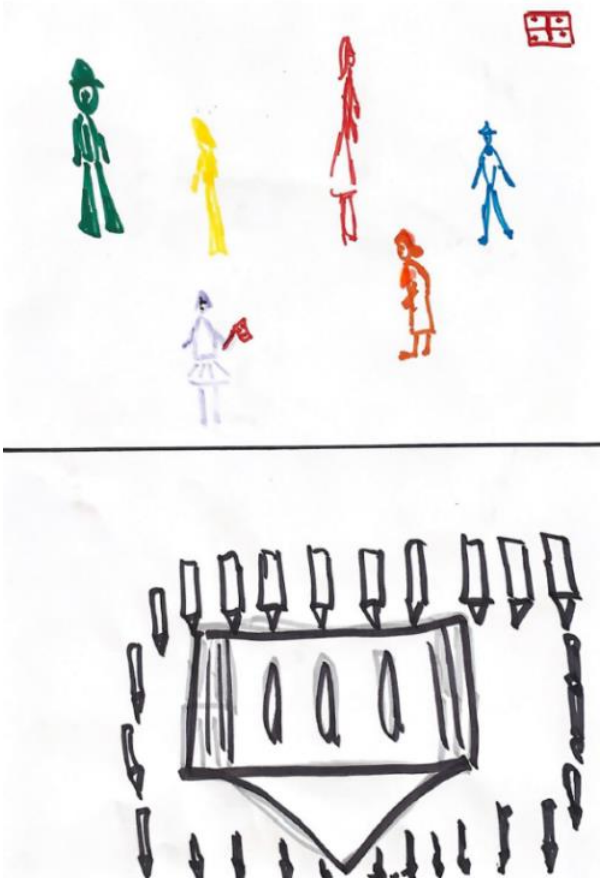
Finally, as Tornike's "upside-down" illustrates various meanings – that is, the third component of "identity of place" - are attributed to the area. In Tornike's case, accessibility to the building and character of the protest around it determines who is in power and what is the bigger political context of the country. On the upside, Georgia is in the EU, and people are in power, indicating "true democracy", while on the downside, Georgia is "far away from getting into the EU", and the government owns the power. Meanings that construct the identity of a place vary as people create and attach them to the place. As Relph argues: "The meanings of places may be rooted in the physical setting and objects and activities, but they are not a property of them—rather they are a property of human intentions and experiences" (Relph, 1976, p. 47). For many of my informants, protesting in front of the parliament building was understood as an act of establishing oneself:

"That's the place where we instinctively gather when something important is happening… that's the place where we enter to say something important, it is a symbol that is engraved in our heart, mind and soul, it's a place in which we always establish ourselves*",* says Akia after referring to the square as "parliament without the walls".

The act of establishing oneself in place takes various connotations and it can be retranslated in the notion of "claiming citizenship" (Das, 2011). The legitimacy of such a translation is echoed in Zaza's words: "Emotions that exist about this place are different from time to time, but one thing is the same, you as a citizen come alive". In this regard, the place around the parliament building becomes a symbolic site where the sense of citizenship comes alive. People protest in this place "to legitimize or delegitimize source of power and to save country's sovereignty" (Giorgi), "to bring people's voice to the ears of the government" (activist of GEUT) and "to fight for democracy, freedom and justice" (Akia). Therefore, being in front of the building symbolically means participating in national decision-making. These continuous acts of citizenship allow people to foresee a better future that unfolds itself from this place, to hope for successful celebrations and anticipate something that has "not-yet become" (Anderson, 2006).

In this respect, belief in the meaning of "identity of place" is what allows people to paint "the upside" of the place in colorful ways, depicting "celebration of integration in EU" against "traumatic memories of April 9th" (Drawing 8), "people enjoying life, playing with dogs, eating ice cream" against "police dispersing protests" (see Drawing 5) and "people of different colors, generations and nationalities freely and happily walking through this place" against "the building that is enclosed with huge, spiky, metallic barricades" (Drawing 9). Belief in the power of the area around the parliament building is what keeps the ambivalent affective atmosphere of the place skewed towards positive and what permits people to refer to it as their "motherland" (Nata) in which "people of Georgia can never be defeated" (Zaza).

Drawing 8



Drawing 9

The identity of place, which is constructed through its physical setting, activities that are associated with it, and meanings that are attached to it creates a certain relationship that exists between people and places. This relationship could be defined in Relph's terms as "identity with place", that shapes different degrees of attachments that people have with places (Relph, 1976, p. 46). Relph discusses seven types of insideness and outsideness which come in various degrees, but as the above analysis has shown such a dichotomous approach can't be applied to the place of the parliament building. Instead, as provided excerpts of the

interviews have illustrated there exists a constant "oscillation between attachment and detachment" (Wilson & Anderson, 2020) that is expressed through conflicting affects.

All interviews through which I discussed the construction of the identity of place were conducted with people who actively participate in protests, but here I wonder how do the affective qualities of this place change due to the everyday "stubborn" practice of standing in this area? How is "identity with place" expressed as the daily encounter with this place is retranslated into resistance?

2.2 Daily encounter: Unhomely Home, Good "Birzha" or Both?

It was a rainy April day, and the clock showed 9 pm, which meant only one thing – time to go to the parliament building for daily one-hour resistance with GEUTs. The area in front of the parliament building looked as usual, two police cars on the sides of the square, and one in front of it. I walked between the fenced bushes and the fountain; passed by the cross that stands behind the barricades in front of the main gate of the building; glanced up at the cameras that hang on the central pillar of the building and smiled at GEUTs. "Hey, our stubborn anthropologist is here" exclaimed one of them as I greeted everyone.

Soon Davit, one of the stubborn activists, approached me. I met Davit during the first week of the fieldwork. He is 30 years old, studied philosophy and now is a teacher of civic education in one of Tbilisi's schools. As he sat next to me, I quickly opened my notebook and quietly went through the notes of the first conversation we had:

"Davit thinks that this area has a weird atmosphere. He explained that this place was always associated with massive protests, but it never was sacred because he does not remember April 9th, he just knows that it took place here and has seen some footage. Davit says that now he is "moshinaurebuli", meaning that he feels at home. Such a feeling arises for him because he made new friends and found kindred spirits among GEUTs. According to him, daily encounters with the area create a public sphere for open conversations. And he calls it a type of good "birzha"."[13]

"Birzha" refers to the Georgian urban practice of continuous "open pit gathering of idle youth" (Bregadze, 2005) at the same place. And as the Georgian parliament is a usual place of routinized gatherings for GEUTs, the term often came up in conversations. On the other hand, as did the other expression that Davit uses - "moshinaurebuli", which in Georgian literally translates to having a feeling that you are at home. As I pondered through my ethnographic notes, I tried to come up with a question that would prompt Davit to elaborate on the expressions of "good Birzha" and "moshinaurebuli". But before I could formulate the question, Davit guessed what I was about to do and, with a wide grin, said: "Go on, ask me". I laughed and quickly asked him to explain how he understood GEUT's daily gatherings as a form of resistance. By taking a glance over the group and the square, he answered:

"You know, at first, I felt distanced from this place. I feel like at the beginning we followed the rules that exist in this area, I never played a game or participated in informal social activity here, before. We followed the rules laid out by this place, as a place of massive gatherings. These rules are exceptionally strict here, but on the other hand, we develop informal, private relations here. Partially

[13] A note from the field, April 3rd, 2023.

we form an apolitical sphere at the historical place, that holds some kind of mystic essence as well. What I mean is that yes, we honor people who were killed on April 9th when we look at this memorial, we see the church that stands across from us, and we remember the blood that was spilt on this stone [he knocks his leg on the sidewalk] but we can't always play a political game, you know? Sometimes activities we engage in are apolitical. From the outsider's point of view, we stand in front of the parliament building, therefore we are protesting. But because of its daily character, time allows us to also be ourselves and establish personal relationships. Look, look behind you [he pokes me on the arm and points behind my shoulder]."

I look back and see two girls from GEUT sitting in front of the barricades and playing cards. Davit continues:

"See, reason, and purpose is political we stand here, and resist the government but we also often engage in activities that are not political. That doesn't mean that it's not a protest, it still is."

Davit's response to the question of resistance illustrates that expressions of "moshinaurebuli" and "good Birzha" are tightly connected to the idea of resistance, and without knowing, I asked a question that prompted Davit to bring these three ideas together. In his response, Davit mentions that previously he felt distanced from the area, but as new relations are formed, such feeling diminishes – a process that can be captured by the affective metaphor of "moshinaurebuli". On the other hand, a continuous encounter with the area allows Davit to socialize and participate in "less" political activities – a practice that echoes the definition of "good birzha". Therefore, in both cases, understanding daily gatherings as a form of resistance takes an important role. And while protest as one of the components of "identity of place" is

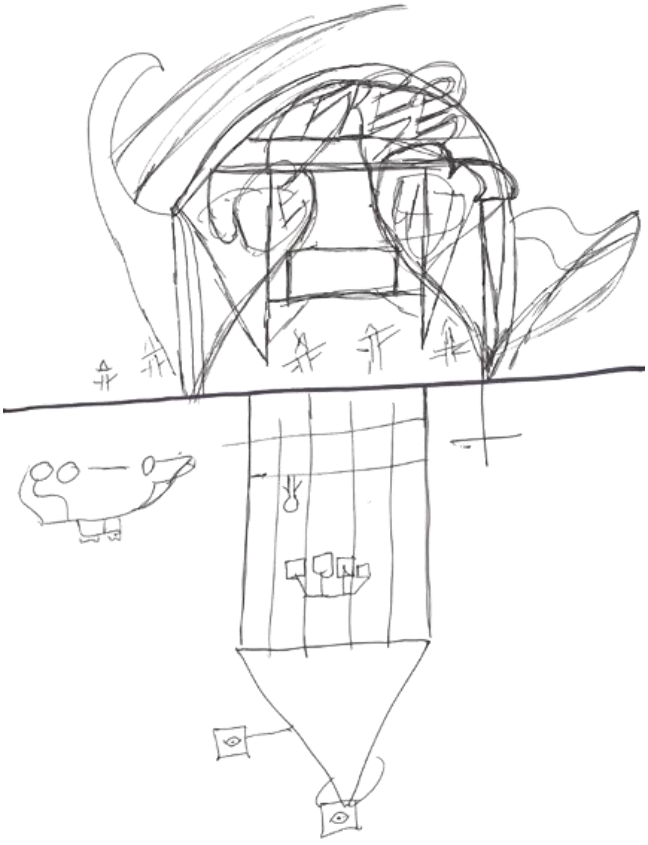
well preserved, it is retranslated in new forms that do not necessarily follow "strict rules of the place". The structure of this section is based on these two affective metaphors of "Moshinaurebuli" and "Good Birzha".

Apart from Davit, as I already mentioned, other GEUTs also often used the concept of "moshinaurebuli" to define their relationship with the place. Moshinaurebuli, as defined above refers to the sense of feeling like at home and “shin" which is at the base of the word, in Georgian means home. Thus, it may strike as peculiar that a sense of homeliness is evoked in the area that is nothing like home. The stairs of the parliament building, surveillance cameras staring from the pillar, or the cold, stony pedestal of the fountain surely can't serve as an actual home in its traditional understanding. But here, Navaro’s concept of “unhomely home” (Navaro-Yashin, 2012) may be useful.

Navaro argues that Freud’s terms of homely and unhomely (Heimlich and Unheimlich in German) shouldn’t be treated as antonyms, rather home can be made from unhomely and uncanny. In this understanding, a new version of the unhomely home emerges, that encapsulates feelings of familiarity, unity, and warmth in parallel to feelings of distance, alienation, and exclusion. Several GEUTs elaborated on the sense of homeliness that emerges in this place, because of relations that are formed, friendships that are made and topics that are discussed. But the physical setting of the place and atmosphere that it creates achieves its job of preserving the sense of uncanniness. The drawing made by 2 years old Lasha, one of the first stubborn activists I met illustrates this argument (Drawing 10).

Lasha's upside-down painting depicts the parliament building as an entertainment site on the upside and as a parliament building that looks like a jail and a house at the same time, on the downside. Here I concentrate on the downside part of the drawing, as it captures the ambivalent sense of an unhomely home. As Lasha explained, it is an unexciting, mediocre building "with lots of cameras as eyes of the state, the police car and security men, who are like GEUTs friends but should not really be there". As Lasha was explaining his "upside-down", Davit jumped in: "But why does it look like a house?". Lasha smiled and continued:

"Well, we are always there, aren't we?! It feels like home at this point, but I still painted the simplest house I could have painted. It's like a Soviet building, with nothing special or exceptional about its shape. It associates to communism and Soviet banal reality."



Drawing 10

"But if it feels like home, why did you paint it on the downside?" – I asked.

"Well, a sense of home emerged after we got used to this building and made friends. But we started coming here with a negative reason, we came here to protest things that go on inside the building, if, metaphorically or physically speaking, it was not like a fortress, a prison that we can't access, we wouldn't be here."

Soviet architecture and the building's inaccessibility can be viewed as unhomely qualities, but the sense of home is still reproduced. As Navaro's (Navaro-Yashin, 2012, p. 184) reconceptualization of the home suggests, constructing a home out of unhomely doesn't come effortlessly. In GEUTs case, the most important effort that goes into making a home is the everyday practice of resistance. Through daily resistance, place is routinely encountered which produces a sense of familiarity, but additionally, it is this form of resistance that results in making friends and engaging in informal activities and conversations. In this respect, the idea of resistance itself can contribute to the creation of a sense of home. The conversation I shared with Nutsa, 19 years old GEUT activist, is instructive in this context.

Nutsa told me that the place of the parliament building evokes a sense of homeliness, as GEUTs who she met in this place provide a sense of security and safety. However, for Nino, not every place where GEUT meets could be understood as home. When I asked her if Dedaena[14] Park, where we were headed at the moment, also felt like home, she responded: "Well, no, but that place [front area of the parliament building] is associated with more serious stuff, we protest there, and I feel like we are doing something very important for our

[14] Dedaena in Georgian translates to "mother tongue".

country". Here, resistance and protest are understood as valuable activities, and a sense of worthiness comes alive. Thus, alienation from the place shrinks, and the front area of the parliament building becomes a place where one *is present* and engaged in an activity that *matters.* As we will see below form of resistance in this case is different, even though it stays an important component of "identity of place".

In this new form of resistance that is performed on daily basis, as Davit's words illustrated, another affective metaphor emerges – the notion of "good Birzha". The first time I heard of this expression among GEUTs was during my conversation with Isako, 25 years old stubborn activist. Isako and I talked about the forms of resistance GEUTs utilized and the conversation ended with a discussion of the Georgian traditional understanding of the notion of protest and activism. Isako argued that activism and protest in Georgian over history have been assimilated with massive protests, shouting demands in the microphone, and holding banners or waving flags. According to him, activism could also emerge from socializing if the idea of it is to resist the state, in this regard, for him, as it was for Davit, GEUT is a "good form of *Birzha*".

While Birzha is defined as an "open-pit gathering of idle youth" in the Dictionary of Georgian Slang (Bregadze, 2005), Costanza Curro, a social anthropologist who researched Georgian Birzha through an ethnographic approach, demonstrates the notion of "Birzha" is disputed and often takes various forms (Curro, 2015, 2018). Curro argues that the multifaceted nature of Birzha is depicted in the literature on the topic (Frederiksen, 2013, 2015; Koehler, 1999;

Zakharova, 2015) as well as in her ethnographic material. Such complicated character of the notion is illustrated in my case as well. GEUTs are aware that the common (negative) definition of Birzha depicts it as a daily gathering of unemployed people, that would often lead to engagement in conflicting or criminal situations. However, as some of GEUTs highlighted the notion of Birzha, does not necessarily have to take such negative connotations. "Good" or "stubborn Birzha" as some called it, involves conversations on important political issues, socialization, and the process of self-identification as an activist. In this manner "good Birzha" is understood as a form of resistance that counters hegemonic, state narratives. This definition of good Birzha opposes Curro's critique that Birzha can't necessarily be understood as resistant informal practice because it plays out vis-à-vis the official system (Curro, 2018). The main idea of the good Birzha is to resist the state power through the daily practice of gathering in front of the parliament building and engaging in activities that go beyond "traditional" forms of activism. Continuous activism as Mirian, 23 years old GEUT told me, battles the sense of nihilism. In this respect, while in the dominant sense, Birzha may have a negative undertone, here "good Birzha" involves feelings of power and unity. The affective metaphor of “good Birzha” describes the relationship that activists have with the place, as it conveys, its continuous and familiar character.

Through daily encounters with place, resistance takes various forms, it's not only resistance to the state power, but as Davit mentioned resistance to "strict rules of the place”. It is a resistance to the dominant identity of a place, as a place of massive gatherings. Acknowledging such an identity of place would not allow GEUTs to play games, because it is

not "beautiful" to play where people have been killed, as one policeman told us. It would not allow the informal talks on topics such as yoga or cooking, because in "Georgian common sense, it's a place where only important decisions are made" (Davit). In GEUT's case, activities that are associated with the place of the Georgian parliament building are not massive, traditional protests. But gathering in front of it is still resistance through which identity with place is expressed in the usage of two affective metaphors: "Moshinaurebuli" and "Good Birzha".

In this chapter, by analyzing the area of the Georgian parliament building as place, I examined three components of the dominant "identity of place": physical setting, activities, and meanings. I showed how based on this division "identity with place" emerges and takes new forms as we move to the discussion of daily encounters with place. At all stages of my analysis, the affect stayed to be ambivalent and entangled with a sense of worthiness, unity, and security on one side, and a sense of nihilism, fear, loneliness, and exclusion on the other. Affective qualities of place influence emergence of ambivalent affective geography and so do affects that are embedded in understanding area of the parliament building as contested site. To this I devote the last chapter of the thesis.

Chapter 3: Territory as Contested Site

The territory is often associated with the area that is under the state's rule or sovereignty of the nation-state, but the meaning of the term can be extended to see how a specific area is managed or controlled by not only the state but also different social groups (see territory in Johnston et al., 1994). In this regard, territory is a type of contested site (see Low & Lawrence-Zúñiga, 2003) where different social or political actors struggle over its control and occupation (Hsing, 2010, p. 15).

In Hsing's conceptualization, the subject of the "territorial" power is not only a state but also different social actors who employ territorial strategies for self-protection and resistance of the state. Hsing uses the term of "territorial strategies" to talk about ways in which different groups try to impose their power or "establish physical presence" (Hsing, 2010) in the area. In the case of the territory around the Georgian parliament building, the state and different political or activist groups are the actors who struggle over the control of the area. In this chapter, I use the terms of "territorial strategy" and "territorial tactic" to differentiate between the state's attempts to control the area and activists' struggles to establish their presence.

In this, I follow de Certeau (de Certeau, 1980), who defines strategy as "manipulation of power" (de Certeau, 1980, p. 36), while other political groups which are "weaker" than the state utilize tactics that is "maneuver, "within enemy's field of vision"" (ibid, p.37).

Territorial strategies and tactics in the case of the area of the Georgian parliament building often take tangible or material forms. For example, barricades or surveillance cameras are understood to be objects through which the state imposes control, while the cross that the far-right groups put up during one of the protests is understood to be the marker of their territory. In the following chapter, I will talk about territorial strategies and tactics, as well as the objects themselves, that by many of the activists are understood as "markers of territory" which foment ambivalent affects and energies.

3.1 Territorial Strategies: Fenced Bushes, Barricades, Surveillance Cameras

"No matter what happens, I am not going to give up

my precious territory to anyone,

even if it costs me my life".

-GEUT Activist

The territory around the Georgian parliament building has always been a central site for the political struggle between the people and the government. In many cases, these struggles are spatialized, and a group that wins around the Georgian parliament building is the winner in the larger socio-political context. Gio, whom I mentioned in the first chapter, during the interview, discussed how protests are centralized in front of the building and how this is connected to understanding the areas as being "sacred": "This sacredness often leads to the fact that for some, protest is not a protest if it's not in front of the Georgian parliament building". Such a degree of localization leads to acknowledging the success of the protest only

if protesters "won" over the territory. Gio's comment about the March protests (2023) is illustrative in this regard. He told me that at night during the protest, some people ran towards the lower streets to flee from the riot police and then decided to walk down towards the public service hall and later continued:

"People started to block the street, and the number of the people increased and increased, but at some point, someone shouted: "What are we doing here? Let's go back to the parliament building. Some of the students are there, occupying the area!". Many agreed, thinking that blocking this street was not important, but suddenly we realized that the area of the parliament building was not supposed to be the only site for protest. In front of the public service hall, police didn't know what to do, from where to approach the protesters while they know the area of the parliament by heart. In that second, the territory of the Georgian parliament building was not as important as it mostly is, but I later discovered that on TV, it was the opposite. Students won the protests because they kept going back to the front area of the parliament building repeatedly, not because some of us blocked the lower street."

In this respect, as Gio's friend Teo later told me, the political struggle between the people and the government becomes centralized in the territory of the Georgian parliament building. One who wins in the area is the winner in the larger context. The Georgian government has often tried to claim the territory by employing what I call "territorial strategies", such as surveillance of the area or its occupation by constructing an entertainment site. Further examples are shown in Zaza's response, who, after talking about the importance of the area within different time periods, said:

"Different governments have tried different ways out of the situation [continuous protests]. Of course, the Government can't block the street without any reason, but for example, the previous Government started putting a Christmas tree just in front of the building. Then this Government continued to do so during very intense protests. Then there was the renovation of the area [in 2019], and there is also a law that people should guard 20 meters from this kind of building. Or for example, before the civil war in 1991, there were tents for the supporters of the Government, and the Government used the area for so-called "informational protests". In reality, it was a method of occupying territory".

The renovation that Zaza mentioned above spurred a huge debate. As activists interviewed for the article "Euro-Renovation in the Sacred Place" (Rekhviashviili, 2020) stated, the construction work was understood as an "occupation of the territory" to keep the protests away from the area. In the following paragraphs, I want to concentrate on the objects that are located in the area right now and could be understood to be "markers of territory": the fenced bushes that were constructed during the renovation, the layers of the barricades and the surveillance cameras on the central front pillar of the building.

Many of my respondents talked about the fenced bushes in front of the Georgian parliament building (Figure 10)[15] as a tool used by the government to make the territory less attractive to the activists. During the interview, Nata, founder member of the activist group "The Wave", stated that the bushes were constructed without any prior consultations with landscape architectures; the mayor of the city decided to build them in the middle of the protests, and therefore, they fenced the whole area. However, ironically, as Nata states, these fences

[15] Image taken by Lasha, GEUT activist on June 9th, 2023.

facilitate blockage of the Avenue: "Now fewer people are needed to fill the square, and it is easier to block the Avenue. According to Georgian law, protests are not allowed to block the streets if people's amount is not enough. So partly they even made things easier". Such understanding brings in ambivalent affects. On the one side, it facilitates blockage of the street, while on the other, it is a tool of territorial strategy. Some of my informants, for example, elaborated on the disturbing appearance of the bushes: "These metallic fences of bushes are so ugly and spiky. I always feel like if I stand anywhere near them, they will cut me and make my skin bleed". This quote illustrates that even though it may facilitate the blockage of the street, its materiality is qualified as bodily threatening.

Barricades are an even clearer example of how the government imposes control over the territory (Figure 11). However, when I asked my respondents to list the objects that they remembered, some, to my surprise, did not mention the barricades. Later saying that they ignore it because they are only temporal, soon to be removed. People hope or believe that the territory of the parliament building can still be saved "from government claws," as one of the activists told me. In this respect, hope is synonymous with the "sense that the present is haunted by the fact that the something good that exceeds it has yet to take place" (Anderson, 2006, p. 743), but for some, hope is longing for something that has already taken place. Some of my respondents were reminded of the time when there were no barricades or bushes and when territory did not feel as limiting and enclosed, indicating the sense of what Carse and Kneas (Carse, 2012) call the nostalgic future, "not a longing for the past, per se, but the

possibilities it once held" (ibid. pg 20). On the other hand, some of the activists understood barricades as a sign of the government's weakness: "These barricades, firstly, express their [government's] fear. They are afraid of free people, of diverse people. Thus, they try to distance themselves from us as much as possible. These fences uncover the government's afraid face" (Lasha). Nevertheless, most of the respondents expressed the same idea and put the barricaded parliament building on the downside (see Drawing 5, 9, 11). In this regard, barricades as well as fenced bushes emanate ambivalent affects and surveillance cameras, analyzed in the following paragraphs, are no different.

Figure 10: The barricades, cross and the surveillance cameras in front of the parliament building.

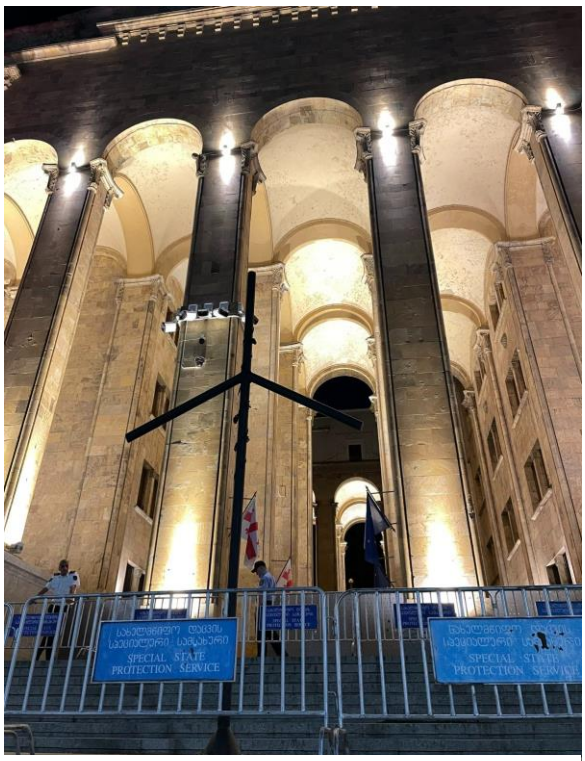


Figure 11: Fenced bushes in front of the parliament building and GEUTs on the background.

During my fieldwork, I realized that GEUTs were always aware of the cameras (Figure 11). Some connected its installation with their own activism, as they started gathering in front of the building in April, and cameras were put up in June. Nutsa, one of the activists, told me:

"When I first saw the cameras, I felt like we were cool. Government was afraid of us, they may not have put up the cameras because of us, who knows, but it surely felt like that". As with barricades, surveillance cameras were understood to be a sign of the government's weakness, a sign that it found GEUT's protest threatening. On the other hand, through the jokes that GEUTs would make about the cameras, it's visible how activists found them intrusive. Some would joke about cameras being able to scan their faces or identify whether a person is healthy or not. And sometimes, GEUTs referred to the cameras as panopticon or "big bro" to highlight the authoritative, dominant, and controlling power that resided behind the lens of the surveillance cameras. One of the GEUTs, Niaz, didn't paint anything on the downside of "the upside-down". He just wrote 1984 in a large font and added: "This is a reference to Orwell's book 1984, our big bro is always here watching us." This echoes Certeau's definition of strategy, that is "mastery of place through sight", and that allows one to proceed a panoptic practice (de Certeau, 1980, p. 36).

Respondents themselves also mentioned, "panopticon" when talking about the surveillance cameras saying: "The whole territory has become panopticon. Observation, control, and discipline, that is what government seeks" (Giorgi). Giorgi's these words echo Foucault's understanding of disciplinary mechanisms (Foucault, 1975, 2007b, 2007a) rather than of security. For Foucault, security is different from discipline as it calculates the costs of the crime against the costs of the repression (Foucault, 2007a, p. 19) and tries to find the balance between these two (ibid, 21). In this respect, security mechanisms concern the "relationship

between components of a given reality, instead of focusing on the singularized entities separately" (Foucault, 2007b, p. 47). For Georgian activists, what happens in front of the parliament building is the latter -the process of "singularizing entities separately":

"Through installing cameras on the building, it is clear that government tries to identify each person who stands in front of the parliament building individually, instead of listening to people's united demand, they are scanning each individual" (Giorgi).

Some activists also noted that such a degree of surveillance exceeds security reasons as there already are barricades, security men and other small cameras. For example, Natia noted that there is no need for surveillance cameras because "no one goes there if they have anything to hide" and later added, "probably they are starting some kind of face control that would be characteristic of Putin's regime". Some even suspected that cameras might not be on, as people have never seen footage of the cameras used in official legal cases. This idea aligns with Foucault's understanding of the panopticon, where surveillance is imposed through the visibility of the tower but unverifiability whether the subject is being observed or not (Foucault, 1975, p. 202).

In this regard, ambivalent affects that are encapsulated by the surveillance cameras, on the one hand, express the weakness of the government's territorial strategies, as it uncovers that the government feels threatened, while on the other hand, creates a sense of constant gaze, limitation, and control. However, here it is essential to state that even though for de Certeau, strategies are actions that own the territory and "space of a tactic is the space of the other" (de

Certeau, 1980, p. 37), my respondents still referred to the territory in front of the parliament building as theirs. Amid surveillance, control, and exclusion, if you ask an activist, "Whose territory is this?", they quickly answer: "People's."

Objects of territorial strategies can be understood as types of vibrant matters (Bennett, 2010) that have capacities "to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories" (ibid. p. vii) and that bear political implications (Knox, 2017). Ambivalent affects are transmitted through the area, influencing how the people perceive the territory and the formation of ideas on the government's political power that uncovers itself through territorial strategies. However, the area around the parliament building is not conflicted and disputed only based on the relationship between the government and the people but also because of different political groups who try to establish themselves through territorial tactics and other constructed objects, that is the topic to which the next section is devoted.

3.2 Territorial Tactics: Flag, Graffiti, Cross

On March 14th, four days after the march protests had ended, the radical far-right political group "AltInfo" took down the EU flag that is located in front of the Georgian parliament building and demonstratively burnt it. Several minutes after hearing this news, I received a message in one of the activist group chats saying that they would wait for the far-right groups to leave and put the new EU flag up as quickly as possible: "We have to do this before the

government does" - said the text. Five minutes later, pictures of another student activist group carrying a new EU flag were seen on social media. But just in several more minutes, one of the media platforms posted a video of police raising the new EU flag. Members of GEUT, during my fieldwork, jokingly referred to this story by saying: "once our flag got stolen". Burning the flag, or attempts to put up the flag, can be understood as a "territorial tactic" through which different activists or political groups try to establish themselves in the area and, in this larger context, reassert their political identity. In this story, the EU flag is used as a tangible object of territorial tactic but is not the only tangible object that can be understood as a marker of territory.

If we understand "tangible" as something "that can be clearly seen to exist" (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2004) as well as something that can be felt and touched, then colorful graffiti that was made on the building by the participants of March protests can also be understood as a tangible sign of "territorial tactics" (Figure 12). Now colorful graffiti on the grey and yellow walls of the parliament building is blurry, encapsulating conflict between the activists and the government, who tried to rub off the graffiti, leaving colorful stains on the walls. For one of the GEUT activists rubbed off graffiti demonstrated that "freedom is in colors" and government that tries to rub it off is against it.

Figure 12: The Georgian parliament building with colorful, rubbed-off graffiti on the walls.

As did objects of territorial strategies, objects of territorial tactics emanate ambivalent affects that are differently embodied and mediated by people who encounter them. The most intense example of the ambivalence produced by an object in the territory around the parliament building is the cross which is located between the Georgian and Eu flags, right at the end of the stairs and behind the first layer of the barricades (see Figure 11). In the following paragraphs, I want to concentrate on the cross as a tangible object of territorial tactic that now produces intensely ambivalent affects.

On July 5th, 2021, various conservative and homophobic groups, including above mentioned AltInfo, violently attacked the participants of Tbilisi Pride. Violent groups beat up and severely injured a journalist who, after several days, passed away. On the same day, after participants of Tbilisi Pride left the territory, members of the radical groups took down the

EU flag[16] and put up a huge metallic cross right in front of the parliament's central gate, saying that before the parliament building, here was a church so cross was supposed to be here. The Next day, the Government put up the EU flag, but the cross continues to stand in front of the parliament without any alterations, except that now one line of the barricades is in front of it. Radical groups didn't have any prior right to put up the cross in front of the parliament, but police didn't resist them, even though previously people have been arrested for putting up stickers on institutional buildings. In January 2023, the mayor of Tbilisi announced that the cross would stay in front of the building before the "new project is implemented" that will be discussed with Georgia's orthodox church. This "marker of territory", as named by my respondent, Nata, foments ambivalent affects and conflicting ideas.

This "marker of territory" is a tangible object of territorial tactic, but in this case, it is not a resistance to the state's territorial strategy. On the contrary, it may serve as a "trap" for other political groups who encounter the area and, in this sense, align with the government's motives. If we follow Hsing's understanding of territoriality (Hsing, 2010, p. 16), territorial tactics can be explained as a way of establishing one's own presence and an attempt to impose social, political, or physical control over the area. In the case of the cross, respondents understood it as a "political trap" beneficial for not only radical but also governmental narratives:

[16] This was the first case.

"Placing a so-called cross in front of the parliament building was a ruthless and "smart" method. Now if someone tries to take down the cross, there are pre-prepared narratives or framings of activists as satanist[17], who are against the church and the faith. It is a deliberate trap, as soon as one enters the trap, they become victims of offensive cliches" (Zaza).

In this regard, the cross becomes a trap that is also beneficial for the government. As Gio explained, people may want to take it down, but they are afraid of the counter-narratives that may come from the state and the radical groups: "If anyone touched that cross [during March protests], it would have been an instant loss of the protests", as participants of the protests would have legitimized the propagandistic narratives that were spurred by members of the leading party, who referred to participants of the March protests as "satanists".

Nearly all my respondents regarded the cross as "out of place" for two reasons. Firstly, the cross is a sacred object, but the territory around the parliament building should be secular as Georgia is a nation where the state and the church are separated entities: "The cross is contradictory to the institution as the parliament is a secular institution" (Gio). Here, it is important to separate the metaphor of "sacred", which was introduced in the first chapter of the thesis, from the "sacredness" of the cross. The area of the parliament building was regarded as sacred by some of my respondents, based on the spatialized traumatic memory of people dying for their freedom, while "the cross" is a sacred symbol for purely religious matters. One of my respondents, Emzar Jgerenaia, a professor of sociology, separated these

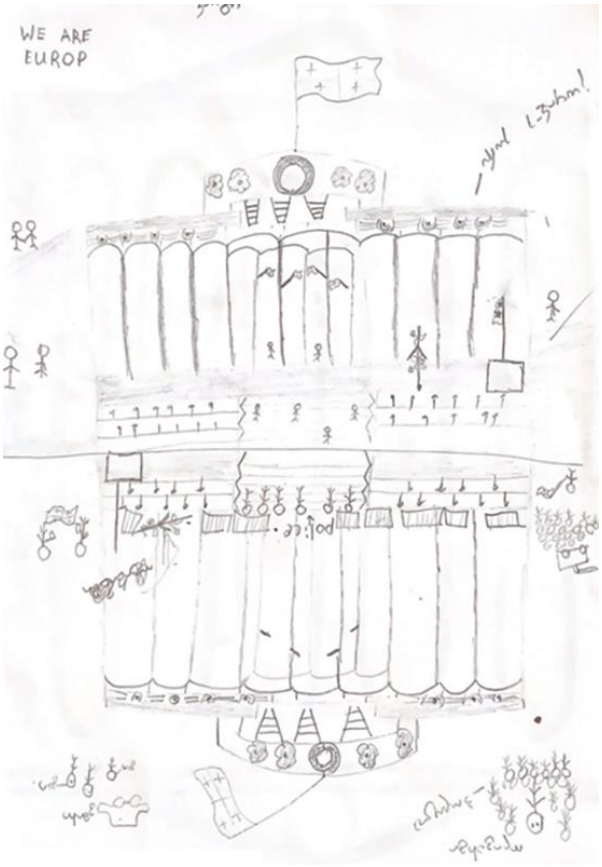
[17] This interview was conducted several weeks after Georgia's Prime Minister, Irakli Gharibashvili referred to the participants of the March protests 2023 as satanists.

two forms of "sacredness" by referring to the first as profane and national and to second as religious. Following this distinction unconsciously, some part of the respondents who referred to the area of the parliament building as sacred still claimed that the cross is out of place because the institution of the parliament building, and the Nation at large is supposed to be secular. Secondly, the cross shouldn't be in his location because of its violent symbolic meaning: "It is a symbol of violence and darkness, nothing else" (Nata). Perceiving the cross as a symbol of violence itself comes with ambivalent affects, as is illustrated by Lasha's comment:

"This cross has nothing to do with Christianity. People who beat up the journalist and brought him to the brink of death, then came out and put up the cross. It is a symbol of violence and Christianity has nothing to do with it. They created a symbol of violence, from what is supposed to be a symbol of confession, love, and freedom".

In the upside-down drawings, some of my informants didn't draw the cross at all, and some put it on both sides, saying that it is in the center of attention and while it should be a symbol of good (thus in the upside), it is also the symbol of violence (thus in the downside). None of the drawings depicts the cross only on the upside, however, one of the GEUT activists, Dachi[18] put the fallen cross on the downside and standing cross on the upside (Drawing 11).

[18] Pseudonym for anonymity



Drawing 11

After describing the different details of the upside down, he said: "On the upside, there's a cross, and on the downside, it is fallen because this government is against the true faith". At this second, another GEUT activist joined the conversation, "But that cross was brought by people who then killed a person". Dachi quickly responded: "Still, it is a cross", and continued by talking about the flag, which is shown on the upside but is missing from the downside.

In midst of such intense ambivalent affects, to my surprise, some of my respondents didn't draw or name the cross when I asked them to list the constructed objects that are around the parliament building. After I reminded them of it, some of them explained that they either don't look at it or don't see it, and others referred to it as a temporal thing that will be taken out of there as soon as the political context changes. Here I find Navaro's interpretation of "abjection" useful. She is not solemnly referring to the abjected as "anti-system (subjective,

social, or political) or as utterly external to the system (a "non-system")" (Navaro-Yashin, 2012, p. 151) but also as something that is "inherent in the system (subjective, social or political) in itself and in its own right". Navaro conceives abjection as "violence (or violation), that which founds and that which is glossed by (legal and political) system" because things or locations that have been abjected in her ethnographic material represented committed violence. In this context, Navaro concludes: "That act of abjecting - ''We don't go there'' - is the ideological gloss, the way in which a memory of violence, as well as a broader reality of abjection, is pushed out and repressed". "We don't go there" may be changed with the words that some of my respondents told me about the cross: "I don't see it", and Navaro's conclusion would be perfectly suitable for explaining why some of my respondents didn't remember (or didn't want to) to name the cross. As a symbol of violence, it is pushed away and neglected, but it is part of the larger political system as well.

The cross is understood to be "inherent in the system", and this can be illustrated by its geographical as well as political context. Firstly, the barricades, the object utilized by the government as its territorial strategy, is in front of the cross, not behind it. Surveillance cameras, yet another tool of the government to impose control over the territory, are right behind the cross. This prompted many of my respondents to group cameras and the cross under one system: "When I see the cross if I see it, I am reminded of the fact that AltInfo is backed up by the government, and cameras and the cross merge into one… If anyone touches that cross, everyone will know who did it because of the cameras (Gio)". Secondly, the

political reason for understanding abjected cross as part of the system comes from interpreting the government's reactions to the cross. Radical groups put up the cross without official permission to do so, but the government did not resist them.

The above analysis shows that the cross becomes a vibrant matter (Bennett, 2010) that produces ambivalent affects based on what it should be (religious symbol) and what it becomes (symbol of violence). In this regard, the cross either gets abjected mentally (by not looking at it or not remembering it) or the affect that is embodied by people who encounter it prompts people to refer to it as "as a threatening symbol" (Nata) and abject it physically: "I fear that cross, and I go to the other side of the street to distance myself from the symbol of murder" (Gio).

In this respect, objects that are either used by territorial strategies and tactics or that are perceived as being part of it create a "chaotic, disturbing and confusing" (Tea) atmosphere that may be so intense that, for example, one of my respondents assimilated contemporary appearance of the territory of the Georgian parliament building to its destroyed form after the civil war. Fenced bushes, barricades, surveillance cameras, the graffiti on the wall, the cross and other objects that may not have been analyzed in this chapter all get embroiled in one another, creating a type of assemblage, "ad hoc groupings of diverse elements, of vibrant materials of all sorts" (Bennett, 2010, p. 23) and influence the emergence of ambivalent affective geography.

Conclusion

The area of the parliament building is affective, and this has been clear to me by experiencing the ups and downs that have unfolded in the area. However, at the beginning of my research, I could not have imagined how complex, multilayered conflicted these affects are. Ambivalence is embedded in every aspect of the area, in memories and activities associated with the building as well as in the physical setting and the objects that are constructed in it. The ups and downs merge in every possible way creating "the upside-down". The realization of such a complex character led me to the core questions of this thesis: How can one geographical area be affectively so ambivalent? Is it the built environment that transmits affect, or is it us who project our subjectivities on it?

To answer these questions, I included participant-based drawings as a research method and structured the theoretical framework of the thesis around the concepts of "space", "place", and "territory". In this regard, I perceive the methodological as well as theoretical dimensions of the thesis as a core contributions of the research that also echoe the "both-and" approach (Navaro-Yashin, 2012). The perspective that allowed me to structure my research around social constructionist, that is subjective analysis, as well as more object-oriented studies, such as non-representational theory.

Methodological contribution to the field consists of participant-produced "the upside-down" drawings. Apart from qualitative research methods, which consisted of semi-structured in-depth interviews and participant observation, I utilized drawing as a research method. In this

respect, I asked my respondents to draw the area of the Georgian parliament building with positive and negative associations on the different sides of "the upside-down." This allowed me to follow the "both-and" approach. On the one hand, I analyzed what meanings are assigned to the area, what memories are reconstructed or how futures are imagined through the practice of drawing. And on the other, it facilitated an understanding of how different aspects of the area affect my respondents and how they navigate between the ups and downs that they have experienced in front of the Georgian Parliament building. In short, "the upside-down" drawings proved to be a valuable tool for understanding ambivalent affective geography, and it can be further developed in research that looks at how ambivalent affect is transmitted through the geographical area.

The two main research questions I raised above operate at different levels. While the first question concentrates on the context of the Georgian parliament building, the second aims to contribute to a larger theoretical debate.

The theoretical contribution of the thesis lies in the suggestion that the emergence of "affective geography" can be analyzed through the conceptual deconstruction of "geography" to look at multilayered aspects of affect. I studied affect that emerges through memories, meanings, and subjective attachments with the area as well as the energy transmitted through the built environment. In such analysis, affect arises through the outer as well as inner worlds - a perspective that Navaro refers to as an "affect-subjective continuum" and is captured by the notion of "affective geography" (Navaro-Yashin, 2012). As mentioned in the introduction,

the notion of "affective geography" has been used to describe peoples' relationships with the outer world, and affect has been conceptualized in various ways. However, the "geographical" part of the term in these works has been neglected. I structured this thesis along three core concepts of space, place, and territory to cover this theoretical gap. In each chapter, I utilized these concepts as entry points to understanding how ambivalent affective geography is constructed.

By applying the concept of simultaneous, heterogenous, and dynamic space to the area of the parliament building, I talked about multiple spatialized memories that exist simultaneously. Memories vary from violent and painful to peaceful and prideful, which influences the formation of ambivalent affects. And this intensifies as some memories convey conflicting affects in themselves, a clear example of which can be April 9th. In this case, "the upside-down" drawings demonstrated that each memory may end up on opposite sides, depending on personal affective experiences.

I utilized the concept of place to look at phenomenological aspects of the area of the parliament building. I acknowledged the fact that the characteristics of the place are dynamic. Therefore, my analysis of the area of the parliament concentrated on its contemporary form. Phenomenological understanding consisted of analyzing the "identity of place" (Relph, 1976), thus the physical setting, activities and meanings that are characteristic of the Georgian parliament building. Analysis showed that ambivalent affects are embedded in all layers of the place. While people find the physical setting disturbing, uncanny and out

of place, they continue to protest there and refer to it as being attractive or having a magnetic force. Activities that take place in front of the area also vary, but protest and resistance stay to be the core activities. And even though protest is associated with anger and grievance, my respondents shared the idea that reinforces ambivalent affects and is articulated in words: "if there is a protest, it means people are fighting for freedom, so things are not as bad as it can be" (Gio). The place of the Georgian parliament building takes up symbolic meaning, based on which protesting in the area is understood as a way of claiming citizenship and fighting for the imagined better future. Such characteristics result in constant oscillation between attachment and detachment, forming an ambivalent "identity with place" (Relph, 1976). This ambivalence is also echoed in affective metaphors that I analyzed in the chapter to describe relations that GEUTs - an activist group that encounters the area every day – have with the area. "Unhomely home" and "Good Birzha" emerge through the routinized practice of gathering in the area and capture conflicting affects.

Finally, by using the concept of territory to talk about the area of the parliament building as a contested site between different activist groups and the government, I analyzed how different objects that can be understood as "markers of territory" foment ambivalent affects. Objects employed through territorial strategies as well as territorial tactics, influence the creation of an affective atmosphere that is threatening, limiting, and controlling, along with it being free and hopeful.

Throughout the research, several further questions arose: How is the nation constructed and the political future imagined through activism in the area of the parliament building? Or, more generally, how does the affective geography become an entry point to bottom-up nation-building? While this may be a topic of further research, this thesis may be read as a suggestion to employ "the upside-down" method and to deconstruct the term "geography" when looking at complex ambivalent affects that transmit in different geographical areas. Through "the upside-down" in space, place, and territory, ambivalent affective geography emerges.

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