Introduction to the Special Issue Anxiety and Change in International Relations

Bahar RUMELİLİ
Professor, Koç University, Department of International Relations, İstanbul
E-mail: BRUMELILI@ku.edu.tr
Orcid: 0000-0002-9974-5074

Despite being the prevailing emotion of our times, anxiety has received scant attention in the international relations discipline. While political theorists and philosophers have long paid attention to anxiety as distinct from and constitutive of fear, international relations theory has assumed that much of international behavior is guided by fears of specific threats to state survival.[1] However, today, the uncertainties surrounding the future of the world order, unanticipated crises like the COVID-19 pandemic that radically change our lives, unforeseeable terrorist attacks, and the unexplainable lure of radical fundamentalist ideologies all evoke a pervasive anxiety about what we do not know and what we cannot control, rather than the fear of a specific and known enemy.

This special issue joins a growing set of recent publications employing a theoretically informed notion of anxiety and highlighting its distinct effects on international politics.[2] This emerging research program shares a number of common premises. The first is the conceptual distinction between fear and anxiety. The second is an interest in how international actors manage anxiety and how various anxiety management techniques and practices affect international outcomes. Thirdly, anxiety research in IR is interested in exploring the distinct potential in anxiety to be a force for emancipatory and /or radical change. Fourthly, anxiety scholarship in IR is interested in theorizing how anxiety is manifest not solely as an individual-level but also as a social and collective phenomenon. Finally, scholars are building on the neglected insights of existentialist and psycho-analytical thought, where anxiety figures prominently and underscoring their relevance for IR.

The following section of this Introduction will briefly introduce these common premises. Subsequently, an overview of the anxiety literature in IR as it has developed up to date will be provided.

1 Bahar Rumelili, "Integrating Anxiety into International Relations Theory: Hobbes, Existentialism, and Ontological Security", *International Theory*, Vol. 12, No 2, 2020, p. 257-272.

2 See among others, Catarina Kinnvall and Jennifer Mitzen, "Anxiety, Fear, and Ontological Security in World Politics: Thinking with and beyond Giddens", *International Theory*, Vol. 12, No 2, 2020, p. 240-256; Felix Berenskoetter, "Anxiety, Time, and Agency", *International Theory*, Vol. 12, No 2, 2020, p. 273-290; Rumelili, "Integrating Anxiety into International Relations Theory"; Bahar Rumelili, "[Our] Age of Anxiety: Existentialism and the Current State of International Relations", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 24, 2021, p. 1020-1036; Christopher S. Browning, "Brexit, Existential Anxiety and Ontological (In)security", *European Security*, Vol. 27, No 3, 2018, p. 336-355; Christopher S. Browning, "'*Je suis en terrasse*': Political Violence, Civilizational Politics, and the Everyday Courage to Be", *Political Psychology*, Vol. 39, 2018, p. 243-261; Emmy Eklundh et al. (eds.), *Politics of Anxiety*, London, Rowman & Littlefield, 2017.

Finally, the contributions to the Special Issue and the ways in which they further anxiety research in IR will be discussed.

The Study of Anxiety in IR: Common Premises

Fear versus Anxiety

Drawing on a conceptual distinction between fear and anxiety, the former depicting a state of aversion from a threatening external entity and latter being a state of inner unease caused by uncertainty, possibility, and change as established in existentialist[3] and psycho-analytical thought[4], anxiety researchers have criticized IR for being unduly focused on fear, and not taking the possible distinct effects of anxiety into account. In particular, anxiety has been theorized as both an individual-level and state-level emotional state arising out of deep uncertainty and unpredictability[5], radical changes and crises[6], and non- or misrecognition[7].

Anxiety Management

Many anxiety theorists in IR have associated anxiety with a state of ontological insecurity, by building on the broader literature on ontological security. Thus, along with Giddens, they have stressed the important role of narratives and routines in keeping existential anxieties at bay. Anxiety theorists have especially highlighted how anxiety is commonly managed inter alia by securitization[8], ideologies that promote clear Self/Other distinctions, such as populism and nativism[9], fantasies that link anxious subjects with various objects of desire,[10] symbolism of home produced via references to borders[11],

3 Rumelili, "Integrating Anxiety into International Relations Theory"; Rumelili, "[Our] Age of Anxiety"; Berenskoetter, "Anxiety, Time, and Agency"; Karl Gustafsson and Nina C. Krickel-Choi, "Returning to the Roots of Ontological Security: Insights from the Existentialist Anxiety Literature", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 26, No 3, 2020, p. 875-95; Brent J. Steele, "The Politics and Limits of the Self: Kierkegaard, Neoconservatism and International Political Theory", *Journal of International Political Theory*, Vol. 9, No 2, 2013, p. 158-177.

4 John Cash, "Psychoanalysis, Cultures of Anarchy, and Ontological Insecurity", *International Theory*, Vol. 12, No 2, 2020, p. 306-321; Jakub Eberle, "Narrative, Desire, Ontological Security, Transgression: Fantasy as a Factor in International Politics", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 22, 2019, p. 243-268.

5 Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 12, No 3, 2006, p. 341-370; Dmitry Chernobrov, *Public Perception of International Crises: Identity, Ontological Security, and Self-Affirmation*, London, Rowman & Littlefield, 2019.

6 Filip Ejdus, *Crisis and Ontological Insecurity: Serbia's Anxiety Over Kosovo's Secession*, Cham, Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

7 Karl Gustafsson, "Routinised Recognition and Anxiety: Understanding the Deterioration in Sino-Japanese Relations", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 42, No 4, 2016, p. 613-633.

8 Bahar Rumelili, "Ontological (In)Security and Peace Anxieties: A Framework for Conflict Resolution", Bahar Rumelili (ed.), *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security: Peace Anxieties*, London, Routledge, 2015, p. 10-29; Catarina Kinnvall and Paul Nesbitt-Larking, "The Political Psychology of (de)Securitization: Place-Making Strategies in Denmark, Sweden, and Canada", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 28, No 6, 2010, p. 1051-1070.

9 Brent J. Steele and Alexandra Homolar, "Ontological Insecurities and the Politics of Contemporary Populism", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 32, No 3, 2019, p. 214-221; Catarina Kinnvall, "Populism, Ontological Insecurity and Hindutva: Modi and the Masculinization of Indian politics", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 32, No 3, 2019, p. 283-302.

10 Eberle, "Narrative, Desire, Ontological Security, Transgression"; Kinnvall, "Populism, Ontological Insecurity and Hindutva"; Umut Can Adisonmez and Recep Onursal, "Governing Anxiety, Trauma and Crisis: The Political Discourse on Ontological (In)Security after the July 15 Coup Attempt in Turkey", *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 29, No 3, 2020, p. 291-306.

11 Catarina Kinnvall, "Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security", *Political Psychology*, Vol. 25, No 5, 2004, p. 741-767; Steele and Homolar, "Ontological Insecurities"; Catarina Kinnvall and Ted Svensson "Exploring the Populist 'mind': Anxiety, Fantasy, and Everyday Populism", *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 2022.

vicarious identification with broader communities, such as nations and civilizations[12], and the certainties sought from risk probabilities and expertise.[13] Thus, they have associated the increasing prominence of such narratives, symbolism, and practices with the anxieties induced by structural conditions of modernity and recurring crises.[14]

At the same time, some scholars have insisted on the qualitative difference between ontological insecurity and anxiety: while the former is an extreme and incapacitating condition that has to be avoided with whatever means possible, anxiety is a matter of degree and lower-level or 'normal' anxiety can be creatively and reflexively managed in ways that avoid the negative consequences of the means discussed above.[15]

Positive Potential of Anxiety

That anxiety can never be fully contained or managed has been one of the most enticing aspects of the notion for IR theorists. Building on the revelatory potential of anxiety highlighted by Heidegger, anxiety theorists in IR have pointed out the potential of anxiety to create awareness about the limitations of existing orders and drive some form of a radical agency.[16] Although the literature is yet to specify how and the ways in which this potential materializes, studies have identified anxiety as playing a mobilizing role in peace processes[17] and protest activity.[18]

Anxiety as a Collective and Structural Phenomenon

IR theorists stress that anxiety affects international developments not solely as an individual level emotion, but also as a collective and structural phenomenon. A distinction is made between contexts where anxiety is managed and evaded and consequently where the effects of anxiety are manifest in the ways in which it is managed, and contexts where one fails to manage and evade anxiety and hence its effects are distinctly and independently manifest. Referring to the former, Rumelili identifies anxiety as a constitutive condition of IR, which gives rise to the power competition in the state of nature,[19] and Hom and Steele consider anxiety management a systemic feature of the international system.[20] Thus, the anarchical structure of the international system, which mainstream IR theory takes as the default condition, is a derivative result of the ways in which international actors manage their anxieties.

12 Browning, "'*Je suis en terrasse*'"; Uriel Abulof, *The Mortality and Morality of Nations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015.

13 Berenskoetter, "Anxiety, Time, and Agency".

14 Catarina Kinnvall et al., "Introduction to 2018 Special Issue of *European Security*: "Ontological (In)security in the European Union", *European Security*, Vol. 27, No 3, 2018, p. 249-265.

15 Browning and Joenniemi 2017; Nina C. Krickel-Choi, *Rethinking Ontological Security Theory: Conceptual Investigations into 'Self' and 'Anxiety'*, Doctoral Dissertation, Stockholm University, 2021; Gustafsson and Krickel-Choi, "Returning to the Roots of Ontological Security".

16 Christopher S. Browning, Pertti Joenniemi, "Ontological Security, Self-Articulation and the Securitization of Identity", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 52, No 1, 2017, p. 31-47; Eklundh et al., *Politics of Anxiety*; Berenskoetter, "Anxiety, Time, and Agency".

17 Rumelili, "Ontological (In)Security and Peace Anxieties"; Bahar Rumelili and Ayşe Betül Çelik, "Ontological Insecurity in Asymmetric Conflicts: Reflections on Agonistic Peace in Turkey's Kurdish Issue", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 48, No 4, 2017, p. 279-296.

18 Eklundh et al., *Politics of Anxiety*; Andreja Zevnik, "Anxiety, Subjectivity and the Possibility of Emancipatory Politics", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 24, 2021, p. 1050-1056.

19 Rumelili, "Integrating Anxiety into International Relations Theory".

20 Andrew R. Hom and Brent J. Steele, "Anxiety, Time, and Ontological Security's Third-image Potential", *International Theory*, Vol. 12, No 2, 2020, p. 322-36.

In analyzing the effects of anxiety when it is independently and distinctly manifest, IR theorists tend to conceptualize anxiety as an affect, a logic, or a mood[21] that affects not only particular actors and their behavior but also circulates and creates an overall atmosphere that shapes collective dispositions in particular contexts.[22]

Existentialism and Psychoanalysis

Anxiety theorizing in IR has drawn on existentialist and psychoanalytical thought, two important bodies of theory, which have so far been neglected by IR theories.[23] A common element in these intellectual traditions is the assumption of anxiety as being integral to the human condition, thus departing from contemporary psychological approaches which regard anxiety as an individual pathology. Hence, these intellectual traditions provide anxiety theorizing in IR with a solid theoretical ground on which to conceive of anxiety as a constitutive and collective condition.

Anxiety Literature in IR: An Overview

It would be myopic to claim that anxiety is just being introduced to the study of IR. The term has certainly frequently appeared in IR texts in various colloquial senses, either as synonymous with fear or to denote intense or pathological fear. The post-structuralist literature of the 1990s also frequently referenced and critiqued the presence of a 'Cartesian anxiety', a modernist epistemological unease that without an ultimate foundation to knowledge, there would be a plunge into the void of relativism and arbitrariness.[24] The production of anxiety has also been widely seen as a critical instrument of the politics of security in the various strands of the critical security studies literature.[25] While these accounts, to some degree, have adopted a theoretically informed notion of anxiety -as without an object-, they have not reflected on how anxiety as a distinct condition is affecting international politics

The recent surge in interest in anxiety builds on previous explorations of the significance of this concept within the much larger field of ontological security studies. Among the founding works of this field, Brent Steele's *Ontological Security in International Relations* has employed the fear/ anxiety distinction to differentiate between traditional and ontological security and enriched the notion of ontological insecurity with existentialist insights.[26] Jennifer Mitzen has associated ontological security with anxiety/uncertainty management and highlighted the role of narratives and routines in the management of anxiety.[27] Subsequently, in the edited volume, Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security, Bahar Rumelili has drawn further on Kierkegaard and Tillich to specify how conflicts contain anxieties by defining objects of fear and a framework of certitude in meaning systems and morality, and to highlight the positive potential in anxiety to drive the leap of faith

21 Rumelili, "[Our] Age of Anxiety".

22 Ty Solomon, "Ontological Security, Circulations of Affect, and the Arab Spring", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 21, 2018, p. 934-958.

23 Steele, "The Politics and Limits of the Self"; Cash, "Psychoanalysis".

24 Jim George and David Campbell, "Patterns of Dissent and the Celebration of Difference: Critical Social Theory and International Relations," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No 3, 1990, p. 269-293.

25 Jef Huysmans, "Security! What Do You Mean?: From Concept to Thick Signifier", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 4, No 2, 1998, p. 226-255; David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1992.

26 Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2008, p. 52.

27 Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics".

toward peace.[28] This positive potential in anxiety has also been underscored in the edited volume, *Politics of Anxiety*. There, anxiety has been identified as 'a logic', and a potentially 'mobilizing force' which 'conditions the political subject of modern politics' and opens up the possibility of replacing the 'status-quo oriented politics of risk society.[29]

Subsequently, a symposium published in 2020 in International Theory has identified anxiety as 'the key emotion central to the constitution of subjectivity in ontological security research.'[30] The contributions to this symposium clarified that despite its varying meanings-in-use, anxiety is to be distinguished from fear foremost by the lack of an object to which it is directed. Different contributions traced the theoretical origins of this conception alternatively to existentialist[31] and psycho-analytical thought[32] and highlighted its under-appreciated manifestations in Hobbes.[33] The contributions to the symposium also analyzed the different forms of political agency realized in anxiety, arguing that anxiety, unlike fear, carries the potential to unleash an emancipatory and radical agency, which defies the anxiety-stabilizing mechanisms of the existing social order.[34]

Additionally, in a stand-alone article, Gustafsson and Krickel-Choi also delved into the theoretical origins of the notion of ontological insecurity in existentialist psychology, distinguished between normal and neurotic anxiety, and stressed that while the latter is characteristic of the incapacitating state of ontological insecurity, the former allows for adaptation and creativity under changing circumstances.[35] Eberle, on the other hand, has advanced a Lacanian conception of anxiety, as arising from the inescapable lack of an essence or foundation to our identity beyond the unstable categories given by the social order.[36]

Subsequently, these discussions were further developed in a forum published in the Journal of International Relations and Development around Rumelili's 2019 keynote address at the Central and Eastern European International Studies Association's Convention in Belgrade. To conceptualize the condition and context of 'Age of Anxiety', which was also the Convention's organizing theme, Rumelili advanced a theorization of anxiety as an episodic public mood that has emerged and affected international relations intermittently.[37] In response, Steele underscored that today's age of anxiety is distinct in that the sources of anxiety, such as COVID-19, are proving resistant to established ways of anxiety management, and the latter, as in the case of populist responses, are in turn becoming sources of anxiety themselves.[38] Gustafsson pushed the discussion into the exploration of how, instead of being avoided, anxiety can be used constructively to pave the way for creative change;[39] and Zevnik

28 Rumelili, "Ontological (In)Security and Peace Anxieties".

29 Eklundh et al., *Politics of Anxiety*.

30 Kinnvall and Mitzen, "Anxiety, Fear, and Ontological Security".

31 Rumelili, "Integrating Anxiety into International Relations Theory"; Berenskoetter, "Anxiety, Time, and Agency".

32 Cash, "Psychoanalysis".

33 Rumelili, "Integrating Anxiety into International Relations Theory".

34 Berenskoetter, "Anxiety, Time, and Agency"; Rumelili, "Integrating Anxiety into International Relations Theory".

35 Gustafsson and Krickel-Choi, "Returning to the Roots of Ontological Security".

36 Eberle, "Narrative, Desire, Ontological Security, Transgression".

37 Rumelili, "[Our] Age of Anxiety".

38 Brent J. Steele, "Nowhere to Run to, Nowhere to Hide: Inescapable Dread in the 2020s", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 24, 2021, p. 1037-1043.

39 Karl Gustafsson, "Why is Anxiety's Positive Potential so rarely Realised? Creativity and Change in International Politics", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 24, 2021, p. 1044-1049.

discussed how anxious political action and transformation materializes through identification of lacks in existing orders and the construction of new fantasies around them.[40]

Going beyond Giddens, the new wave of anxiety theorizing in IR draws on a rich intellectual heritage. Given the increasing popularity of the term 'anxiety', it will be of utmost importance for anxiety theorizing in IR to distinguish itself through its theoretical grounding. Despite the literature being recent, a diversity of approaches is already appearing among scholars who draw on the anxiety conceptions of different thinkers, such as Heidegger, Lacan, and May. Any claim to a distinct approach to anxiety in IR should, however, be tempered with the awareness that the intellectual traditions that currently inform IR theorizing on anxiety often evolved in dialogue with one another. Additionally, as Faruk Yalvaç recently underscored in a critical essay, certain traditions are yet to be engaged by IR theorists of anxiety, such as the Marxist-existentialist thought represented most notably in the works of Erich Fromm.[41]

Following this brief overview of the trajectory of anxiety theorizing in IR to date, the next section will situate the contributions to the Special Issue within this trajectory and specify their contributions.

Overview of the Special Issue

This special issue extends anxiety theorizing in IR in new empirical as well as theoretical directions. The articles by Buhari Gulmez and Budyrtė and by Belder shed light on the intense anxieties experienced by specific groups, diaspora communities and the Haredi minority in Israel, respectively. This furthers the emphasis made in the extant literature on the distinct ontological (in)security states of different actors, such as minorities in conflict, small states, and post-colonial subjects. Subsequently, the three articles by Ejdus, Adisonmez and Onursal, and Gustafsson move the discussion to the state and supranational level to discuss the complex relationship between anxiety, inner contradictions, and change. Ejdus analyzes how the EU manages the anxiety resulting from the dissonance between its self-narrative and foreign policy behavior by collective amnesia about its imperial past. Adisonmez and Onursal, on the other hand, show how an inherently contradictory narrative is mobilized by Turkish political elite to contain anxiety. Gustafsson discusses how, in 19th century Japan, anxiety about the country's international status was creatively channeled into a process of identity change. The following two articles by Kayhan Pusane and Ilgit and Kočan and Zupančič analyze how ontological insecurity adversely affected the bilateral relations between Turkey and the Kurdish Regional Government and the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina respectively, making very valuable additions on how anxieties are managed and instrumentalized by political actors. The final article by John Cash addresses an overarching normative concern of anxiety theorizing in IR, which is the question of how anxiety can be managed without resorting to the reproduction of friend/enemy distinctions and instead be mobilized in the direction of a progressive transformation of subjectivity and cultural norms.

Through their empirical focus on two historical films produced by the Lithuanian-American and Crimean-Tatar diasporas, Buhari Gulmez and Budyrtė connect anxiety theorizing with diaspora

40 Zevnik, "Anxiety, Subjectivity and the Possibility of Emancipatory Politics".

41 Faruk Yalvaç, "Alienation and Marxism: An Alternative Starting Point for Critical IR Theory", *E-International Relations*, 2022.

studies and cultural diplomacy. They assert that in terms of their needs for and pursuits of ontological security, diasporas are similar to states in that the "creation of a biographical story drawing on one version of the past (such as memory of deportation as the 'chosen trauma') is essential" for their identities and ontological security. Utilizing the anxiety typology of Paul Tillich, previously used in the IR literature on anxiety by Rumelili and Browning in separate studies,[42] Buhari Gulmez and Budyrtė analyze how the films both trigger and contain the anxieties about death, meaninglessness, and moral condemnation in the two diasporic communities. The authors thereby also demonstrate how anxiety framework can be used as a cultural-analytical tool. The conceptual framework of anxiety and ontological security also allow them to emphasize how the publicization of past traumas through cultural diplomacy serve the dual function of "both consolidating a sense of Self and delegitimizing the political narratives of rival powers (such as Russia)". Thereby linking their study to the IR literature on mnemonic security,[43] Buhari Gulmez and Budyrtė underscore that the "trauma stories created by diasporas to tame their own anxieties became part of biographical narratives" of Lithuania and Ukraine and "potential triggers for new mnemonic conflicts" with Russia.

Through a case-study of the Haredi community's response to the pandemic restrictions in Israel, Belder also shows that ontological security becomes the primary concern of minority communities if and when the narratives and routines that are essential to their societal and cultural reproduction are threatened. Similar to the reproduction of the 'trauma stories' by the two diasporic communities analyzed by Buhari Gulmez and Budyrtė, the continuation of various routinized community practices, such as non-stop Tora learning and other religious rituals, remained of prime importance to the Haredi community during the pandemic and overrode the concrete and immediate physical risks posed by communal interaction. Belder discusses how despite the criticism and stigmatization they faced from the rest of Israeli society, the Haredi leaders objected to the closing of their religious schools and pressured community member to continue sending their kids to Tora instruction. Joining a number of very recent studies investigating the impact of the pandemic from an ontological security perspective,[44] Belder rightly underscores that "the potential consequences of state interventions, such as the closures of educational and religious centres and reorganization of the public space, especially in countries where the pre-pandemic socio-political status quo had already been securitized by the societal actors", merit further investigation.

While, for the two diasporic communities studied by Buhari Gulmez and Budyrtė, anxiety stemmed from the traumatic historical experience of deportation, and, for the Haredi community studied by Belder, from the pandemic restrictions on communal life, Filip Ejdus focuses on the 'dissonance' between the EU's anti-imperial self-understanding and imperial-like foreign policy practices. After detailing the imperial-like characteristics in the EU's enlargement, neighborhood, and foreign policies, Ejdus identifies the dissonance they create with the EU's anti-imperial self-understanding as a source of anxiety that the EU strives to manage through collective amnesia about its imperial past. Defining collective amnesia as a "whole-sale repression of memories" Ejdus analyzes how Europe's ancient, medieval, and modern imperialisms are largely omitted in the House of European History, a

42 Rumelili, "Ontological (In)Security and Peace Anxieties"; Browning, "'*Je suis en terrasse*'".

43 Maria Mälksoo, "'Memory must be Defended': Beyond the Politics of Mnemonical Security", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 46, No 3, 2015, p. 221-237.

44 Steele, "Nowhere to Run to"; Christine Agius et al., "Populism, Ontological Insecurity and Gendered Nationalism: Masculinity, Climate Denial and Covid-19", *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, Vol. 21, No 4, 2020, p. 432-450.

museum opened in 2017 in Brussels, representing the first major EU attempt to institutionalize European history. By identifying anxiety management as the underlying psychopolitical motive, Ejdus' study connects the otherwise disparate critical literatures on EU foreign policy and memory politics.

Similar to Ejdus, Adisonmez and Onursal make a central 'dissonance' and/or contradiction in Turkish identity narratives their starting point, the fact that they depict Turkey both as strong and facing a continuous anxiety about 'state survival'. While most analysts of Turkish politics and foreign policy trace the preoccupation and constant worry about state survival in Turkey to the historical trauma of defeat and partition by Western powers at the end of the 1st World War,[45] Adisonmez and Onursal analyze how it functions and serves as part of a fantasmatic narrative in contemporary Turkish politics. Underlining that "fantasmatic narratives provide anxious subjects with clear-cut and comforting answers to their ontological insecurities", they argue that while anxiety about state survival constitutes the horrific side of the dominant fantasmatic narrative in Turkey, simultaneous references to Turkey's strength and power constitute the beatific side. Explaining the contradiction in Turkish identity narratives in this fashion, the authors analyze how the fantasmatic narrative has been mobilized by the AKP leadership in Turkey as a coping mechanism and justification of securitized policies during the dislocatory moments experienced in Turkey since 2015.

The following article by Gustafsson also focuses on the ontological insecurities of a non-Western power, Japan. However, unlike the previous articles, which focused, to varying degrees, on actors maintaining existing self-narratives to cope with anxiety, what interests Gustafsson is Japan's process of identity change in the 19th century. Gustafsson characterizes this period as one of tremendous anxiety in Japan, triggered by its encounter with its backwardness in the eyes of the West. Yet despite a strong traditionalist position, this period of anxiety paved the way for Japan's adoption of a Western-centric worldview. Countering analyses where ontological insecurity and anxiety are found to promote rigid attachment to existing routines and narratives, as in the case of the Haredi community analyzed by Belder, Gustafsson explains how anxiety may enable change by drawing on existentialist psychologist Rollo May's work. Drawing a distinction between 'normal' and 'neurotic' anxiety, Gustafsson argues that by "reducing certainty about who "we" are", the former can drive "reflection about other ways of being" and "can enable new ideologies that redefine national identities".

The following two articles carry the discussion to the intergroup level, focusing on the effects of anxiety in conflict settings. The article by Kayhan Pusane and Ilgit analyzes how "anxiety interacted with other emotional dynamics" in the context of the "striking shifts in Turkey's policy toward the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) from a mostly militarist and disdainful approach to gradual rapprochement and then to strained interactions all in the last twenty years." Parallel to Adisonmez and Onursal's observation that references to 'strong Turkey' are employed to manage societal anxieties in Turkey, Kayhan Pusane and Ilgit analyze how "hubris" or 'excessive pride' accompanied the elite and societal anxiety that resulted from Turkey's rapprochement with the previously securitized KRG in mid 2010s and served to (partially) contain it. The authors show how hubris expressed by positioning itself as the 'big brother' to KRG allowed Turkey to legitimize its changed approach during the period of rapprochement, but also paved the way for the emergence of rage and sense of betrayal

45 Umut Can Adisonmez, "When Conflict Traumas Fragment: Investigating the Socio-psychological Roots of Turkey's Intractable Conflict", *Political Psychology*, Vol. 40, No 6, 2019, p. 1373-1390.

when the KRG organized an independence referendum in 2017. By bringing the literature on anxiety into closer conversation with the broader literature on emotions in IR, Kayhan Pusane and Ilgit chart a path for the study of the management of anxiety via other emotions.

Kočan and Zupančič study the effect of anxiety in the post-conflict context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The authors find through an analysis of elite speeches that the ethnopolitical leadership of Republika Srpska mobilized anxiety about the relative effect of EU's post-conflict interventions on the status of the Serbs vis-à-vis the Bosniaks. Building on Rumelili and Çelik's analysis of the effects of ontological asymmetry in conflict resolution[46], Kočan and Zupančič stress that the EU failed to position the relevant parties in a state of ontological security in Bosnia and Herzegovina because the ethnopolitical Serbian leadership constructed a perceived ontological asymmetry, where EU interventions are represented and perceived as serving the Bosniak cause. Consequently, the resulting anxiety about EU interventions empowered the ethnopolitical elites' attempts to spoil the state-building processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The final contribution by John Cash focuses on a concern that is common to all contributors to the volume: How to respond to ontological insecurity in ways that avoid the production of friend/enemy distinctions? The author draws on the possibilities identified in the works of Ulrich Beck, Julia Kristeva, Judith Butler, and Slavoj Žižek, who, while not explicitly using the term ontological security, engage with issues and dilemmas that are integral to its discussion by drawing, to varying degrees, on psychoanalytical theory. John Cash's main argument is that "ontological insecurity is so destabilising that it must be defended against with whatever means are either already available or can be created". By putting these four theorists into dialogue with one another, he outlines the various psychic and cultural defenses they propose against ontological insecurity, such as reflexive doubt, dwelling in ambivalence, and countervailing norms of recognition.

Bibliography

Abulof, Uriel (2015). *The Mortality and Morality of Nations*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Adisonmez, Umut Can (2019). "When Conflict Traumas Fragment: Investigating the Socio-psychological Roots of Turkey's Intractable Conflict", *Political Psychology*, Vol. 40, No 6, p. 1373-1390.

Adisonmez, Umut Can and Recep Onursal (2020). "Governing Anxiety, Trauma and Crisis: The Political Discourse on Ontological (In)Security after the July 15 Coup Attempt in Turkey", *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 29, No 3, p. 291-306.

Agius, Christine, Annika Bergman Rosamond and Catarina Kinnvall (2020). "Populism, Ontological Insecurity and Gendered Nationalism: Masculinity, Climate Denial and Covid-19", *Politics, Religion & Ideology*, Vol. 21, No 4, p. 432-450.

Berenskoetter, Felix (2020). "Anxiety, Time, and Agency", *International Theory*, Vol. 12, No 2, p. 273-290.

Browning, Christopher S. (2018). "Brexit, Existential Anxiety and Ontological (In)security", *European Security*, Vol. 27, No 3, p. 336-355.

Browning, Christopher S. (2018). "'*Je suis en terrasse*': Political Violence, Civilizational Politics, and the Everyday Courage to Be", *Political Psychology*, Vol. 39, p. 243-261.

Browning, Christopher S., Pertti Joenniemi (2017). "Ontological Security, Self-articulation and the Securitization of Identity", *Cooperation and Conflict*, Vol. 52, No 1, p. 31-47.

Campbell, David (1992). *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

46 Rumelili and Çelik, "Ontological Insecurity in Asymmetric Conflicts".

Cash, John (2020). "Psychoanalysis, Cultures of Anarchy, and Ontological Insecurity", *International Theory*, Vol. 12, No 2, p. 306-321.

Chernobrov, Dmitry (2019). *Public Perception of International Crises: Identity, Ontological Security, and Self-Affirmation*. London, Rowman & Littlefield.

Eberle, Jakub (2019). "Narrative, Desire, Ontological Security, Transgression: Fantasy as a Factor in International Politics", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 22, p. 243-268.

Ejdus, Filip (2020). *Crisis and Ontological Insecurity: Serbia's Anxiety Over Kosovo's Secession*. Cham, Palgrave Macmillan.

Eklundh, Emmy, Andreja Zevnik and Emmanuel-Pierre Guittet (eds.) (2017). *Politics of Anxiety*. London, Rowman & Littlefield.

George, Jim and David Campbell (1990). "Patterns of Dissent and the Celebration of Difference: Critical Social Theory and International Relations," *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No 3, pp. 269-293.

Giddens, Anthony (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity*. Cambridge, Polity Press.

Gustafsson, Karl (2016). "Routinised Recognition and Anxiety: Understanding the Deterioration in Sino-Japanese Relations", *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 42, No 4, p. 613-33.

Gustafsson, Karl (2021). "Why is Anxiety's Positive Potential so rarely Realised? Creativity and Change in International Politics", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 24, p. 1044-1049.

Gustafsson, Karl and Nina C. Krickel-Choi (2020). "Returning to the Roots of Ontological Security: Insights from the Existentialist Anxiety Literature", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 26, No 3, p. 875-95.

Hom, Andrew R. and Brent J. Steele (2020). "Anxiety, Time, and Ontological Security's Third-image Potential", *International Theory*, Vol. 12, No 2, p. 322-36.

Horwitz, Allan V. (2013). *Anxiety: A Short History*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press.

Huysmans, Jef (1998). "Security! What Do You Mean?: From Concept to Thick Signifier", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 4, No 2, p. 226-255.

Kinnvall, Catarina (2004). "Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security", *Political Psychology*, Vol. 25, No 5, p. 741-767.

Kinnvall, Catarina (2019). "Populism, Ontological Insecurity and Hindutva: Modi and the Masculinization of Indian politics", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 32, No 3, p. 283-302.

Kinnvall, Catarina and Jennifer Mitzen (2020). "Anxiety, Fear, and Ontological Security in World Politics: Thinking with and beyond Giddens", *International Theory*, Vol. 12, No 2, p. 240-256.

Kinnvall, Catarina and Ted Svensson (2022). "Exploring the Populist 'mind': Anxiety, Fantasy, and Everyday Populism", *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, doi:10.1177/13691481221075925 (Accessed 8 March 2022).

Kinnvall, Catarina, Ian Manners and Jennifer Mitzen (2018). "Introduction to 2018 Special Issue of *European Security*: "Ontological (In)security in the European Union", *European Security*, Vol. 27, No 3, p. 249-265.

Kinnvall, Catarina, Paul Nesbitt-Larking (2010). "The Political Psychology of (de)Securitization: Place-Making Strategies in Denmark, Sweden, and Canada", *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol. 28, No 6, p. 1051-1070.

Krickel-Choi, Nina C. (2021). *Rethinking Ontological Security Theory: Conceptual Investigations into 'Self' and 'Anxiety'*. Doctoral Dissertation, Department of Economic History and International Relations, Stockholm University.

Mälksoo, Maria (2015). "'Memory must be Defended': Beyond the Politics of Mnemonical Security", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 46, No 3, p. 221-237.

Mitzen, Jennifer (2006). "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma", *European Journal of International Relations*. Vol. 12, No 3, p. 341-370.

Rumelili, Bahar (2015). "Ontological (In)Security and Peace Anxieties: A Framework for Conflict Resolution", Bahar Rumelili (ed.), *Conflict Resolution and Ontological Security: Peace Anxieties*. London, Routledge, p. 10-29.

Rumelili, Bahar (2020). "Integrating Anxiety into International Relations Theory: Hobbes, Existentialism, and Ontological Security", *International Theory*, Vol. 12, No 2, p. 257-272.

Rumelili, Bahar (2021). "[Our] Age of Anxiety: Existentialism and the Current State of International Relations", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 24, p. 1020-1036.

Rumelili, Bahar and Ayşe Betül Çelik (2017). "Ontological Insecurity in Asymmetric Conflicts: Reflections on Agonistic Peace in Turkey's Kurdish Issue", *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 48, No 4, p. 279-296.

Solomon, Ty (2018). "Ontological Security, Circulations of Affect, and the Arab Spring", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 21, p. 934-958.

Steele, Brent J. (2008). *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State*. Abingdon, Routledge.

Steele, Brent J. (2013). "The Politics and Limits of the Self: Kierkegaard, Neoconservatism and International Political Theory", *Journal of International Political Theory*, Vol. 9, No 2, p. 158-177.

Steele, Brent J. (2021). "Nowhere to Run to, Nowhere to Hide: Inescapable Dread in the 2020s", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 24, p. 1037-1043.

Steele, Brent J. and Alexandra Homolar (2019). "Ontological Insecurities and the Politics of Contemporary Populism", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 32, No 3, p. 214-221.

Yalvaç, Faruk (2022). "Alienation and Marxism: An Alternative Starting Point for Critical IR Theory", *E-International Relations*. Available at: https://www.e-ir.info/2022/01/27/alienation-and-marxism-an-alternative-starting-point-for-critical-ir-theory/ (Accessed 12 March 2022).

Zevnik, Andreja (2021). "Anxiety, Subjectivity and the Possibility of Emancipatory Politics", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol. 24, p. 1050-1056.