

Andrey Makarychev,
Thomas Kruessmann (eds.)

EUROPE IN THE CAUCASUS, CAUCASUS IN EUROPE

Perspectives on the Construction of a Region



European Studies in the Caucasus, vol. 1

AESC

Association of European
Studies for the Caucasus

ibidem

Andrey Makarychev,
Thomas Kruessmann (eds.)

EUROPE IN THE CAUCASUS, CAUCASUS IN EUROPE

Perspectives on the Construction of a Region

Please visit ibidem.eu for further information.

EUROPEAN STUDIES IN THE CAUCASUS

Edited by Thomas Kruessmann

1 *Andrey Makarychev and Thomas Kruessmann (eds.)*
Europe in the Caucasus, Caucasus in Europe
Perspectives on the Construction of a Region
ISBN 978-3-8382-1328-6

Andrey Makarychev,
Thomas Kruessmann (eds.)

EUROPE IN THE CAUCASUS, CAUCASUS IN EUROPE

Perspectives on the Construction of a Region

ibidem
Verlag

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über <http://dnb.d-nb.de> abrufbar.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

ISBN-13: 978-3-8382-1328-6

© *ibidem*-Verlag, Stuttgart 2019

Alle Rechte vorbehalten

Das Werk einschließlich aller seiner Teile ist urheberrechtlich geschützt. Jede Verwertung außerhalb der engen Grenzen des Urheberrechtsgesetzes ist ohne Zustimmung des Verlages unzulässig und strafbar. Dies gilt insbesondere für Vervielfältigungen, Übersetzungen, Mikroverfilmungen und elektronische Speicherformen sowie die Einspeicherung und Verarbeitung in elektronischen Systemen.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior written permission of the publisher. Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

Printed in the EU

The editors and contributors of the volume express their sincere gratitude to Ryan Haggard for assistance with language editing of individual chapters.

Table of Contents

<i>Andrey Makarychev & Thomas Kruessmann</i> Introduction	9
<i>Camilla Edemann Callesen</i> External Belief-Systems in Intractable Conflicts	15
<i>Susanne Szkola</i> Identities—Emotions—Security and the ‘In-Between’: Ontological Security Seeking and Emotional Othering in the South Caucasus	43
<i>Adam Lenton</i> Creating <i>de facto</i> States: Narrative Frameworks and State Autonomy in Abkhazia and South Ossetia	79
<i>David Matsaberidze</i> Controversial Representation of Russia in the Georgian Political Public Sphere (The Post-Soviet Period)....	109
<i>Shota Kakabadze</i> Poststructuralist Study of “Christian Stalin” in Contemporary Georgian Public Discourse	133
<i>Dali Osepashvili</i> The Print Media News in the Era of Media Convergence— The End of Traditional Media or Future Development as a Global Challenge? (Comparative Analysis of Georgian and Lithuanian Media)	155
<i>Victoria Hudson</i> The Georgian Orthodox Church and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate: “Tools” of Russian Soft Power?	175
<i>Vasif Huseynov</i> Similar Perceptions, Dissimilar Practices? Russian and Western Soft Power in the South Caucasus	205

<i>Givi Gigitashvili</i> Mapping the European Union Bilateral Development Cooperation with South Caucasus Countries and Evaluation of its Effectiveness.....	231
<i>Sara Alexander & Michael Long</i> The Juxtaposition of Cultural Identity and Tourism Development among the Svan in Upper Svaneti, Georgia	255
<i>Olga Dorokhina</i> European Experience for Development of Cross-Border Cooperation in Georgia.....	281
<i>Andrey Makarychev</i> The EU in the South Caucasus and the Black Sea Region: Between Technical Support and Political Engagement	305
<i>Alexandra Yatsyk</i> Non-Russian Non-backyard. Remarks for the Expert Conference “China and Russia in the EU’s Neighborhood: A Threat for Integration and Democracy?”, Brussels, October 9, 2018.....	313
<i>Anna Beitane</i> Teaching with the MOOC: Opportunities and Good Practices of Teaching European Studies Online.....	321
<i>Ansgar Joedicke & Heidi Erbsen</i> Book Interview.....	333

Introduction

Andrey Makarychev & Thomas Kruessmann
University of Tartu / University of Graz

This edited volume is one of the results of a Jean Monnet network entitled “Developing European Studies in the Caucasus” (DESCnet) that from 2016 to 2018 was carried out by a consortium of EU-based Universities (Tartu and Graz) and their partners from Turkey, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia. The principal aim of this network was to foster novel approaches towards promoting European Studies in the Caucasus in both academic and educational realms. One of DESCnet’s main deliverables was the establishment of the Association of European Studies for the Caucasus (AESC), along with a special issue of the journal “Region: Regional Studies on Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia” (Slavica Publishers, Indiana University, US).

Though DESCnet was initially meant to project and expand the discipline of European Studies into Caucasian countries, the title of this first volume in the series “European Studies in the Caucasus” reflects a more nuanced approach to the subject, implying mutually beneficial movements of ideas in both directions—from Europe to the Caucasus and from the Caucasus to Europe. This double-track frame boosted discussions on a variety of issues requiring reciprocity and intersubjectivity, including rivalries between different integration systems in the southern and eastern fringes of Europe, various dimensions of interaction between countries of the South Caucasus and the EU in a situation of the ongoing conflict with Russia, and different ways of using European experiences for the sake of domestic reforms in the South Caucasus. As it usually happens with successful projects, at the point of fruition DESCnet triggered a snowballing effect, recruiting new authors and new topics. This volume nicely reflects the extended agenda of the project that embraces a wide range of themes—from identities to foreign policies, and from memory politics to religion.

Looking at the South Caucasus from an academic perspective of European Studies, one may assume that the portrayal of the three

South Caucasian countries as a region is mainly due to the legacy of Western geographic categorisation. Endogenous approaches make the picture more variegated and complicated, since each of the members of the Caucasian trio has its own deeply rooted identities, political systems and foreign policy orientations. Institutionally, the South Caucasus does not exist at all, since no regional organization embraces all three regional actors, and there is very little that external actors with a long record of region-building initiatives (the EU included) can do about it. This makes the South Caucasus significantly different from the Black Sea region with a weak yet existent Black Sea Economic Cooperation, and even from the Caspian Sea region where a common agenda—dividing up the seabed of the Caspian Sea—is binding the littoral countries together.

Against this background, the Caucasus was always—and remains—a space (rather than a region in a strict sense) dependent on imaginary frameworks it is deployed in. From the EU viewpoint, the South Caucasus is an indispensable element of the post-Soviet area looking for more autonomy vis-à-vis Russia and reluctant to accept and submit to Moscow's spheres of influence. From the Russian imperial perspective, the Southern Caucasus appears to be a colonized and civilized periphery always tending to revolt against the core and thus displaying permanent security challenges. From a Georgian national perspective, negative security-ridden connotations make self-identification with the South Caucasus less appealing than branding Georgia as a Black Sea country, which the concomitant symbolization of proximity to Europe. Armenia's positioning vis-à-vis Europe is more ambiguous, being usually more cultural than political or security-ridden. For Azerbaijan too, Europe is an important reference point when it comes to cultural identification, yet becomes much less relevant in political and institutional terms.

However, EU-South Caucasus and South Caucasus-EU relations are an important component in the structural dynamics of the much-discussed transformation from the liberal to post-liberal international order. Oftentimes Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan are objects of normative investments from the part of the EU and its member states, yet the integration of the countries of this region with the Western / Euro-

Atlantic core has always been precarious and ambivalent. Only one regional country—Georgia—more or less consistently defines its foreign policy priorities as directly linked with the EU and NATO as pivotal institutions of the post-Cold War international order, while two others are much less committed to direct forms of association with the West, either institutionally or security-wise, and perceive themselves more linked with other international poles—Russia (in the case of Armenia) and Turkey (in the case of Azerbaijan). Consequently, speaking in terms of centrality and marginality, countries of the South Caucasus are peripheries of different centers, which make them highly dependent on—and vulnerable to—clashes and conflicts between key power holders. For example, Georgian political elite was fearful of the Russian-Turkish confrontation in 2015 and its potential consequences for countries located in-between. By the same token, the EU-Russia conflict erupted after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 became a serious challenge to Armenia's foreign policy that had to maneuver between economic benefits offered by Brussels and security guaranteed provided by Moscow.

The great power rivalry might be particularly consequential for the Caucasus, since many elements of the liberal international order—such as multilateralism, the primacy of institutions and rule-based policies, or human security concerns—are not at the heart of the regional agenda. The prevalence of bilateral relations (Baku-Ankara, Yerevan-Moscow, Tbilisi-Brussels) over multilateral and institutional policies underscore the importance of security dimensions for promoting European Studies in the Caucasus. In the meantime, there are plenty of other analytical vistas helpful for understanding various layers and tiers of local polities, and deploying them in a broader international perspective. The contributions to this volume are instrumental in elucidating these analytical perspectives and thus opening new avenues for studying the region as part of Europe's eastern neighborhood.

This first volume is largely based on the analysis of Georgia, its break-away territories and major international actors—first of all the EU and Russia—playing key roles in shaping Georgian foreign policies. The book is divided into several parts. It starts with several arti-

cles discussing issues pertinent to identities, discourses and perceptions that shape political loyalties and allegiances in the South Caucasus. *Susane Szkola* looks at the region's engagements with the EU and Russia from the viewpoint of "emotional turn" in international relations, and interprets emotions as a key element of national identity discourses. One of the conclusions to be drawn from her analysis is that—apart from their cultural rooting—emotive discourses play an explicitly political role of filling certain cognitive gaps in collective identities with vernacular narratives, including populist, mythologized and conspiratorial storylines.

Camilla Callesen, staying within the Russia-EU-South Caucasus "triangle", offers a socio-psychological outlook at Georgia's conflict with South Ossetia. For her, the key category is "belief systems" that drive actors' policies perhaps even stronger than material or other interests. Beliefs are a particularly pertinent category of analysis in situations of well-established and deeply rooted discourses embedded in ethnic or national traditions, of which Georgia might indeed be a good example.

Adam Lenton on the basis of rich empirical material showed the prevalence of endogenous narratives shaping discursive milieus in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and their distinction from each other. Using interpretative approach, he explains how these discourses unfold and how instrumental they are for constructing local perceptions about independence, autonomy and statehood.

David Matsaberidze in his analysis explicates how different factions of Georgian political elites politically appropriate and manipulate the broad set of meanings associated with and attached to Russia. He bases his approach on the concept of representation that is used with a certain degree of flexibility in the sense that the represented / signified political object—namely Russia—lacks one single semiotic foundation and comes in a variety of forms, all being contextual and narrator-dependent.

Shota Kakabadze in his article explores an interesting paradox of Georgian memory politics, namely the widely spread references to Stalin as an Orthodox believer. The author, being inspired by a post-structuralist theorizing of split and incomplete identity, proposes an

interesting approach to untangle this controversy, which might significantly contribute to understanding the intricacies of the illiberal mindset in Georgia.

From a communication studies perspective, *Dali Osipashvili* compares with each other Georgian and Lithuanian media milieu, which is an important element of the two countries' political systems, especially in the context of the concept of information wars. The comparative analysis shows how divergent the political trajectories of countries are that were parts of the Soviet Union, and how little sense it makes to label them as "post-Soviet".

Articles collected in the second part of the book dwell upon policy practices, policies and institutions. *Victoria Hudson* in her contribution discusses the Georgian and Ukrainian Orthodox Churches of the Moscow Patriarchy through the lens of their connections with the Russian Orthodox Church. She uses the concept of soft power to describe the nature of connections between these two religious institutions and the Moscow officialdom, with all duly understood limitations of projecting this power onto Russia's neighbors, which became particularly evident with the recognition of the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Church by the Constantinople Patriarch in 2018 and the concomitant panic reaction in the Kremlin-controlled media.

Vasif Huseynov also uses the idea of soft power for his analysis of Russian and Western approaches to the South Caucasus region. As in the previous articles, one should definitely keep in mind serious limitations of Russia's soft power projection, especially after the annexation of Crimea in 2014; what is equally important is to see deep gaps between Russian and EU's understandings of soft power as a concept, for which the article might be quite helpful.

Giorgi Gigitashvili discusses practicalities of EU policies in the South Caucasus, with a particular attention paid to the efficiency of EU development assistance programs. Based on his practical experience in this field, he shares his insights on the existing experiences of measuring the results of EU-sponsored projects, which might be of some interest to many grant-making institutions, especially in such countries as Germany, Sweden and the United States.

Sara Alexander and *Michael Long* turn to a topic that explains how the concept of identity might be used for practical policies of

tourism development in one of the most authentic Georgian regions. The authors base their research on anthropological and ethnographic data of Svaneti and its inhabitants. With the growing cross-national mobility Georgia becomes one of the well-branded destination points for international tourist flows, and this article is helpful for looking at how locals see the development of tourism industry and its infrastructure.

Olga Dorokhina's article refers to various societal initiatives as a means of reconciliation and peace making across the post-conflict borderlines. The author assumes that in the Georgian context European experiences of cross- and trans-border connectivity might be instrumental and inspirational, and have an ample room for replication in the whole South Caucasus.

The last section of the book collects several research notes. *Alexandra Yatsyk* looks at the economic, financial and political roles of China in the South Caucasus; *Andrey Makarychev* shares his insights on the opportunities and limitations of EU's depoliticized strategy towards Eastern Partnership countries, and *Anna Beitane* explicates how new web technologies of educational projects might be highly relevant for this region. In this section we also publish an interview by *Heidi Erbsen* with *Ansgar Joedicke* on a recent edited volume titled "Religion and Soft Power in the South Caucasus" that became a meaningful contribution to the international scholarship on this region.

The articles and research notes collected in this volume are meant to fill some gaps existing in the academic scholarship on the South Caucasus in general and Georgia in particular, and offer new insights into regional studies, both from within and from outside. The plurality of topics covered by the team of authors duly reflects the diversity of political, cultural and societal dimensions of Georgian and Caucasian transformations. Some of them might look differently from Europe, as opposed to local perspectives, but this is exactly what makes academic debates in this realm so intense and rich in meaning.

