

## Newsletter Issue 07/January 2017

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*CASCADE Closing Event in Paris © Irina Lamour*

## CASCADE Working Papers & Recent Publications by CASCADE Researchers

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## Editorial

When I first came to Georgia some twenty years ago, I never threw an empty bottle into a trash bin, but rather deposited it visibly somewhere on the street. Generally, bottles were taken almost immediately. In other cases, I was directly asked



**Florian Mühlfried**, Professor in the Caucasus Studies programme at the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena

for the bottle of water, coca cola or beer I was drinking, for example sitting on a bench in the park. By that time, there was (and actually, there still is) no centralised system of returning deposit bottles in Georgia as it exists in most countries of the European Union. Yet, glass and plastic bottles had a value that was convertible in grocery stores.

My expectation by that time was that, sometimes soon, this practice would vanish, as people would earn enough money not to depend on practices like collecting bottles. I also expected hygiene, tax or property regulations like those applied to prevent street sales to significantly downscale the size of bottle collectors. In other words, I expected Georgia to become more like my home country Germany in the near future.

However, when I returned from Georgia to Germany after a year of fieldwork in the mid-2000s, I realised that things had worked out the other way round. Having taken a local train from the airport to my neighbourhood, I noticed a bunch of people quickly entering the train and searching for empty deposable bottles. In the end, I thought, it is not Georgia becoming more like Germany, but rather Germany becoming more like Georgia.

What does this tell us about societal and political transitions? Who is moving where? Is there a teleology of bottle collecting? What is the beginning, what is the end? Is the journey really that of departing from dictatorship and ending up in open society? Or from relative social security to widespread precariousness? Or maybe both? What kind of journey is this, then, if it has multiple destinations? And who is moving towards whom? The

European Union to the Caucasus or the Caucasus to the European Union? From whom to learn?

According to funding schemes and programmes for the development of civil society, this question is easy to answer. The kind of knowledge needed for social engineering is located in institutions based in Berlin, Paris, London, or Brussels, but not in Tbilisi, Yerevan or Baku, let alone Nalchik, Grozny or Makhachkala. The transfer of expertise is a unidirectional process, “excellence” is to be bred, but not expected to already exist in the Caucasus.

Generally, post-Soviet citizens such as those from the Caucasus are depicted as notoriously deficient. In other words, they were alienated from the state due to the Soviet past that still haunts them by incapable of creating a genuine civil society, unwilling to follow the rule of law, relying on personal networks and relations rather than the state apparatus, predisposed to corruption. The most pressing question thus seems to be how to restore trust in the state, and how to foster trust in civil agents and free markets.

In vein, widespread lack of trust and concomitant sentiments of mistrust are taken to be symptomatic for failing states or sick societies. In his influential book on “Trust: The Social Virtues and The Creation of Prosperity” published in 1995, Francis Fukuyama declares the quantifiable existence of trust as a yardstick for societal, political and economic success. Post-Soviet societies, along with China, Korea, France [!] and Italy, appear as the biggest losers in this game.

However, trust seems to become a scarce resource in Fukuyama’s “high trust” societies since several years. In 2013 when Edward Snowden revealed to which extent people worldwide are surveyed by NSA\* and their partners, the following NSA spying crisis was often said to undermine the trust of the citizens in the state – a trust said to be a prerequisite to its functioning, at least if it is conceptualised as a democracy.

Germany has recently been hit by another crisis that triggered similar concerns. In 2011 after the detection of a terrorist right wing group, the ensuing investigations indicated that state officials have been deeply embedded in the structures of violent neofascism in Germany. Either they had been a part of the movement themselves or state institutions had been aware of the crimes committed in this scene without intervening. This scandal, too, was believed to put the trust of the citizens in the state at risk by many commentators in numerous articles. Finally, a large-scale scandal referred this time to the trust of consumers in the automobile industry: the German-based Volkswagen company has manipulated the emissions of their cars in a way that less pollution would be noted under testing conditions.

Instead of reflexively discarding mistrust as a problem and focusing our attention solely on efforts to restore trust, why don't we take a break and accept mistrust as a legitimate reaction to the above-mentioned crises? After all, mistrust is not passivity but usually results in a multifaceted, complex stance of confronting the world – albeit a world one doesn't fully subscribe to. As the sociologist Niklas Luhmann has elaborated, the opposite of trust is not mistrust, but “undetermined anxiety, paralysing horror”. Hence, the often-feared passivity of citizens in the face of political scandals, resulting in a withdrawal of engagement in the political or civil society sector, is not a result of mistrust, but rather an indicator of its lack.

Digesting this lesson may alter our perspective on those living in the Caucasus. Instead of notoriously deficient citizens, they are experts – experts in mistrusting. We may take this “expertise” seriously and try to empirically invest how mistrust actually “works” – something that hasn't been done yet. We may also try to learn from them. Maybe, who knows, there are better or worse ways of mistrusting? ▪

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ring socio-political cohesion on the background of existing preconditions and legacies of 90s and 2000s. It examines conflicting threat perceptions from majority and minority leading to considering minority question through the prism of national security rather than human rights from one side and from another viewing a State as a source of threat vs. provider of security.

In addition the article discusses regional dynamics in the South Caucasus, divergent integrative projects of the region translated into different foreign policy priorities and domestic reform processes of the three South Caucasian States and how these diversities influence minority communities. Role of a formal imperial master and soft power it exercises on the post-soviet space on the background of the changing international environment is also touched upon having influence on existing conflicting threat perception of the remote province of Javakheti and hindering nation-and hence state building process. Read the full version here: [CASCADE Paper Eka Metreveli](#).

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**Issue of "Connexe"** directed by CASCADE researcher [Aude Merlin](#) and Ekaterina Gloriozova

## CASCADE Working Papers and Recent Publications by CASCADE Researchers

**Conflicting Threat Perceptions and Securitization of Minority Issue: The Case of Javakheti, Georgia**  
Article by Ekaterina Metreveli, December 2016

New CASCADE paper by [Eka Metreveli](#), President, [Georgian Foundation Strategic and International Studies](#)



The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between the Georgian state and its ethnic Armenian minority community of Samtskhe-Javakheti. Specifically, the article considers Georgian State's approach to the national question involving challenges of the state building efforts in the context of ethnic diversity and democratization, current issues and challenges hampering

**Introduction "Sotchi 2014 : des (en)jeux internationaux aux dynamiques locales"** by [Aude Merlin](#) and Ekaterina Gloriozova

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**Sport-related investment plans after Sochi in the North Caucasus : economic, political, and interethnic challenges** by [Jean Radvanyi](#)

This article expounds the different stakes that Russia had in organizing the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi. The author reviews the numerous challenges of that Russia had to face, including security and economic dimensions, and the legacy and the management of multi-ethnicity in a region fraught with historical traumas and numerous recent conflicts. The article underlines the complexity of these challenges and the ability of the Russian state to manage them, at least partially, in an international tense context. While supporting his argument with elucidations on the link between internal mechanisms of power and investment strategies, the au-





thor establishes ample outlooks on regional economic development.

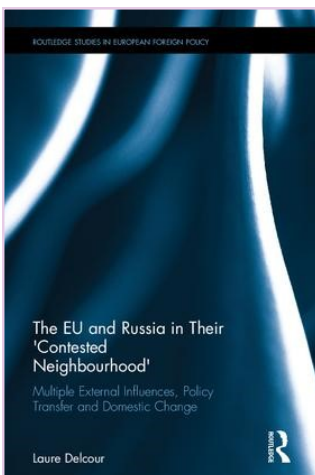
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### **Southbound Russia : processes of bordering and de-bordering between 1993 and 2013 by [Giulia Prelz Oltramonti](#)**

This article traces the trajectories of Russia's projection of its external power in its neighbourhood through the analysis of its bordering and de-bordering practices. It looks specifically at what happened in Abkhazia between 1993 and 2013, focusing on its role in managing the international border along the Psou River and on its impact on the Georgian-Abkhaz ceasefire line along the Inguri River. It argues that, while the appreciation of borders is often limited to symbols of sovereignty, Russia aptly employed bordering and de-bordering practices as policy tools to expand its clout much further than its national external borders. It also illustrates the importance of the implementation component of border regimes. By looking at macro- and micro-dynamics, as well as underlining the gap between official discourse and practice, this article explicates some of the mechanisms underpinning Russia's cycles of retreat and expansion in the Caucasus. [Read the articles](#)

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### **["The EU and Russia in Their 'Contested Neighbourhood'" - Book by \[Laure Delcour\]\(#\)](#)**



The literature on the European Union influence's in its Eastern neighbourhood has tended to focus on EU-level policies and prioritize EU-related variables. This book seeks to overcome this EU-centric approach by connecting EU policy transfer to the domestic and regional environment in which it unfolds. It looks at the way in

which the EU seeks to influence domestic change in the post-Soviet countries participating in the European Neighbourhood Policy/Eastern Partnership and domestic receptivity to EU policies and templates. It seeks to disentangle the various dynamics behind domestic change (or lack thereof) in Eastern Partnership countries,

including EU policy mechanisms, domestic elites' preferences and strategies, regional interdependences and Russia's policies. Based upon extensive empirical investigation on EU policies in four countries; Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – and in two pivotal policy sectors - the book provides systematic and nuanced understanding of complex forces at work in the policy transfer process. ▪

## **Conferences & Workshops**

### **Interaction with the Policy Making Community**

[Nino Kemoklidze](#) ([University of Birmingham](#)) was invited to participate in the round-table discussion on "Border Security in Eastern Europe: Lessons for NATO and Partners" in Berlin in December 2016. This event was organised by the German Marshall Fund of the United States through its office in Warsaw in cooperation with the Canadian government and the NATO SPS programme. Nino contributed to the discussion as a member of the CASCADE team.

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[Nino Kemoklidze](#) and [Stefan Wolff](#) (Member of CASCADE's External Expert Council) were invited to attend the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Hamburg in December 2016. During this visit Nino also presented their co-authored paper "Trade as a Confidence-Building Measure: Cases of Georgia and Moldova" at the Institute for Peace Research and Security at the University of Hamburg (IFSH). This event was organised by the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions.



**Dr Nino Kemoklidze** (University of Birmingham) at the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Hamburg

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## CASCADE Closing Event in Paris

On 27 January 2017, CASCADE partners gathered for the project's closing event in Paris. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the project's outcomes and to present to the public Caucasus research network. ■



**Closing Event in Paris.** Presentation of the Atlas of the Caucasus by Jean Radvanyi, INALCO



**Post Conflict: Between Perpetuation/Protraction of Rationales of Violence, and Peacebuilding Initiatives** by Anne Le Huérou, University Paris 10 and Aude Merlin, Université

## Past fieldwork

### Fieldwork in Armenia and Abkhazia

In January 2017 [Aude Merlin](#) conducted a fieldwork in Armenia and Abkhazia to analyse the situation of war veterans. This research trip was embedded in her participation in [WP7](#): "Conflict, Violence and Peacebuilding". It consisted mainly of taking interviews with war veterans. This fieldwork was the continuation of a fieldwork in Abkhazia provided earlier in January 2015 and of a joint [fieldwork provided together with Taline Papazian in Armenia in June 2016](#).



Photos from the fieldwork in Armenia and Abkhazia  
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## CASCADE successfully completed

On 31 January 2017, CASCADE successfully finalised its activities.

The project was selected under the EU FP7 call for proposal "Security and democracy in the neighbourhood: The case of the Caucasus" and funded by the European Union (€ 2.5 million).

We would like to thank our followers for participating in public workshops, visiting our [website](#), following us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) and reading our newsletters. We will be happy to continue our cooperation as part of the upcoming network of Caucasus researchers.

CASCADE Team

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**This project has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration under grant agreement no. 613354.**

**CASCADE** is an international EU-funded research project led by [the Fondation Maison des Sciences de l'Homme](#).



CASCADE was selected under the EU FP7 call for proposal "Security and democracy in the neighbourhood: The case of the Caucasus." The duration is 3 years (2014-2017).