

# CAUCASUS UNDER REVIEW\* - RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS

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While the Caucasus is a region of enormous diversity and potential, it is also a region about which relatively little is known. However, during the last decade, numerous publications on the region have expanded both regional and international understanding of this diversity and potential. This overview of recent publications provides an up-to-date reading list for anyone interested in the region.



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\* The Book Review was prepared by Dr. Özgür Tüfekçi Ph.D., Senior Editor of Caucasus International

This issue presents eight recently published books offering a deeper understanding of key topics including Gumilev's vision of the structure of Eurasian nationhood, ethno-political and cultural history of Karabakh, the application of international legal principles in regional conflicts, European policies towards the region, Russian geopolitics, and energy security in Eurasia.

*The first book, **The Gumilev Mystique: Biopolitics, Eurasianism, and the Construction of Community in Modern Russia*** has been deemed by far the most authoritative account in English on the ideas and life of a scholar whose star is still rising in Eurasia. Mark Bassin, Baltic Sea Professor of the History of Ideas at Södertörn University in Stockholm, explains the popularity of Gumilev and explores the process by which a somewhat repressed figure in the Stalinist period became a guru of the post-Soviet period.

*The second book, **Ethno-Political and Cultural History of Karabakh in the Light of Armenian Claims*** is a newly released book co-written by Dr. Eldar Amirov, Azerbaijani scholar who has authored numerous researches on history and political anthropology of Azerbaijan during Middle Ages, and Maxim Mayorov, Ukrainian scholar and expert on political history of XX century. The book, which is the first volume of the three-volume research is an excellent account of historical development in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan which thoroughly examines questions regarding the political history, culture, as well as the ethnic picture of the region against the background of Armenian claims to the Albanian heritage.

*The third book, **Territorial Integrity of States: Firm Basis of International law. Examination in the Context of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan*** is a cogent account of territorial integrity by Hans-Joachim Heintze, Professor of International Law and the Head of the Institute for International Law of Peace and Armed Conflict at the University of Bochum. Published in the German language the book consists of theoretical and empirical parts, in which the author comprehensively examines the application of the legal principle of territorial integrity in the context of inter-state armed conflict in the South Caucasus.

**The European Neighbourhood Policy – Values and Principles** is collection of essays, edited by Sara Poli, Associate Professor and Jean Monnet Chair of European Union Law at the University of Pisa, Italy. Coming at a crucial juncture, the various contri-

butions critically examine the principles underpinning the ENP – such as conditionality, differentiation and coherence – and the way they have evolved.

*Stefan Engert* divides his book, **EU Enlargement and Socialization: Turkey and Cyprus**, into two main sections: EU enlargement, and the socialization of Turkey and Cyprus. The first half of the study deals with the dual questions of EU enlargement and membership, first considering “Why expand?” from the perspective of international organizations. It then asks the question ‘Why join?’, this time from the applicants’ perspective. The second half of the book focuses on international socialization and compliance. From the specific viewpoint of the candidate states, Engert asks, “Why comply?”. Here he considers the different aspects of adapting to the EU’s fundamental norms and rules.

The next book is **Euro-Atlantic Discourse in Georgia: The Making of Georgian Foreign and Domestic Policy After the Rose Revolution**, by *Frederik Coene*, currently Head of Operations Section in the Delegation of the European Union to Belarus. He has previously worked in Chechnya, Abkhazia, Tajikistan, Georgia and Belgium for different non-governmental organizations and EU institutions. The book is a very timely, scholarly contribution on the ‘Europeanness’ of Georgia, and as such is of the utmost importance to both Georgia and the European Union itself. It provides valuable insights into the under-explored dynamics behind the Euro-Atlantic discourse in terms of its impact on Georgian identity and on the constantly evolving geopolitical challenges of the region.

**Eurasia 2.0: Russian Geopolitics in the Age of New Media** deals with Russian geopolitics. This wide-ranging and challenging collection brings together some of the world’s leading scholars to provide a series of powerful insights into contemporary Russia and Eurasia. Edited by *Mikhail Suslov* and *Mark Bassin*, the first section of the volume deals with representations of space and power in the post-Soviet context. The second part discusses the contemporary geopolitical ideologies that less well known than those of prominent ideologues such as Aleksandr Dugin and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. The third part elaborates on the concept of ‘great-poweriness’ in geopolitical discourses, while the fourth section addresses the migration of geopolitical ideologies onto digital media platforms, including social networks.

The last book, **Energy Security and Cooperation in Eurasia**, is written by Ekaterina Svyatets, a lecturer at the University of Southern California, US. The book offers a systematic approach that incorporates three main aspects of energy security decisions: economic potential, geopolitical rivalry, and the interests of domestic groups. This study concludes that if the economic potential is very high, states can overcome geopolitical rivalries and historical enmities in favor of energy cooperation. However, if the economic potential is relatively low, then geopolitics prevails.

## **The Gumilev Mystique: Biopolitics, Eurasianism, and the Construction of Community in Modern Russia**

*By Mark Bassin*

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the legacy of the historian, ethnographer, and geographer Lev Nikolaevich Gumilev (1912–1992) has attracted extraordinary interest, not only within Russia but also more widely. The son of two of modern Russia's greatest poets, Nikolai Gumilev and Anna Akhmatova, Gumilev spent thirteen years in Stalinist prison camps, and after his release in 1956 remained officially outcast and professionally shunned. Out of the tumult of perestroika, however, his writings began to attract attention and he himself became a well-known and popular figure.

Despite his highly controversial (and often contradictory) views about the meaning of Russian history, the nature of ethnicity, and the dynamics of interethnic relations, Gumilev now enjoys a degree of admiration and adulation matched by few - if any - other public intellectual figures in the former Soviet Union. He is freely compared to Albert Einstein and Karl Marx, and his works now sell millions of copies and have been adopted as official textbooks in Russian high schools. Universities and mountain peaks are named in his honor, and a statue of him adorns a prominent thoroughfare in a major city. Leading politicians, President Vladimir Putin very much included, are unstinting in their deep appreciation for his legacy, and one of Moscow's most important foreign policy projects is clearly inspired by his particular vision of how the Eurasian peoples formed a historical community.

In *The Gumilev Mystique*, Mark Bassin presents an analysis of this remarkable phenomenon. He investigates the complex structure of Gumilev's theories, revealing how they reflected and helped shape a variety of academic as well as political and social discourses in the USSR, tracing how his authority has grown even greater throughout the former Soviet Union. The themes he highlights while untangling Gumilev's complicated web of influence are critical to understanding the political, intellectual, and ethno-national dynamics of Russian society from the age of Stalin to the present day.



## **Ethno-Political and Cultural History of Karabakh in the Light of Armenian Claims**

*By Eldar Amirov and Maxim Mayorov*

In the first volume of the three-volumes historical research (published in the Russian language) the authors examine questions regarding the political history, culture, as well as the ethnic picture of the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan during the era of Caucasus Albania - the first state formation emerged in the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The questions are examined against the background of multiple claims by Armenian ideologists and historians to the heritage of ancient Albanians. In this context, authors pay special attention to the crucial issues of Azerbaijani history such as the history of the emergence of the first civilizations and cultures in the territory of Karabakh, spread of Christianity, formation of Albanian Apostolic Church and the role of Karabakh region in establishment and strengthening of Albanian statehood. Wide range of archive documents, a number of first hand resources, as well as the works of well-known Azerbaijani, Armenian, Russian, Georgian, Turkish and Western scholars have been used for uncovering the answers to the questions put forward in the research. The book also includes various historical maps and photo materials to give the better understanding to readership about the historical development of Karabakh region of Azerbaijan.



## **Territorial Integrity of States: Firm Basis of International law. Examination in the Context of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan**

*By Hans-Joachim Heintze*

The application of the legal principles of territorial integrity of states and right to self-determination of peoples has long been a topic of hot political and legal debates in the context of 'frozen' conflicts in the post-Soviet area. The book sets forth the key tenets of the debate, and comprehensively analyzes the abovementioned international legal principles together with relevant judgments and opinions by international bodies. Heintze then states that Russia's annexation of Crimea in spring 2014 has made it clear that 'frozen' conflicts pose a very serious threat to international peace and order, as they can flare up at any moment,

with increased levels of violence and third party involvement. Given that the prohibition of violence is a basic norm of modern international law, the international community must concern itself with these conflicts, and take all possible measures to reach a sustainable solution within the international legal framework.

By examining of the legality of the principle of territorial integrity and the right to self-determination in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh province of Azerbaijan, the author concludes that based on international law, Karabakhi Armenians do not have the right to self-determination in the broader sense. This is due to the fact that they are not a separate 'people' but a rather national minority in Azerbaijan, and their 'nation' (people) has already exercised the right to self-determination in their own territory, i.e. the Republic of Armenia. The author also notes that Azerbaijan's right to territorial integrity has been repeatedly supported by the international community, including Europe and the United Nations. It is now time to ensure the practical implementation of this right.



## **The European Neighbourhood Policy – Values and Principles**

*Edited by Sara Poli*

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is a key part of the foreign policy of the European Union (EU). It is through the ENP that the EU works with its southern and eastern neighbors, with a view to furthering its interests and achieving the closest possible degree of political association and economic integration. The policy is underpinned by a set of values and principles that the EU seeks to promote.

*The European Neighbourhood Policy – Values and Principles* provides a legal analysis of the values and principles that form the basis of the European Neighbourhood Policy: respect for human dignity; freedom; democracy; equality; the rule of law; and respect for human rights (including the rights of minorities); together with the principles of conditionality; differentiation; and coherence.

This collection explores the instruments that the EU has deployed within the ENP in order to spread its values and secure its interests. It assesses the extent to which the EU has been (and is) con-

sistent in upholding its values in its relations with neighboring countries, and examines how those values have been received. The book looks in particular at EU-Russia relations, seeking to identify areas of common interest as well as those of actual and potential disagreement.



## **EU Enlargement and Socialization: Turkey and Cyprus**

*By Stefan Engert*

The European Union's enlargement has been considered a success story – apart from Cyprus and Turkey. This book looks at the EU's expansion and examines its effectiveness in terms of international socialization and compliance, focusing specifically on the socialization of Turkey and Cyprus into the Western community. Although NATO-member Turkey submitted its membership application long before the end of the Cold War, the Kemalist state is still struggling to become the first Muslim EU member state. Cyprus was allowed to join the organization in 2004, but the island remains politically and territorially divided.

Providing a comprehensive theoretical perspective, the book is divided into three parts and investigates three questions:

- Why expand? From the perspective of the EU / international organizations.
- Why join? From the applicants' perspective.
- Why comply? Exploring why a state would choose to adapt to the EU's fundamental norms and rules, from the perspective of candidates.

Countering the impression that the latest round of EU enlargement has been a model of smooth and effective socialization from top to bottom, this book will be of interest to students and scholars of the EU, European politics, international relations and particularly those interested in Turkey and Cyprus.





## **Euro-Atlantic Discourse in Georgia: The Making of Georgian Foreign and Domestic Policy After the Rose Revolution**

*By Frederik Coene*

How have discourses of Euro-Atlanticism been used in domestic and international affairs by the political elite in Georgia? After the 2003 Rose Revolution, as relations with Russia soured, Euro-Atlantic orientation was portrayed as a single and coherent strategy, becoming the cornerstone of Georgian foreign policy as well as a model for domestic reforms. This promise of a prosperous future offered new hope to the Georgian population.

Skepticism or critical thinking in regard to President Saakashvili and his government were equated to pro-Russian sentiment (treason), while pro-Western orientation and impressive reforms emerged, accompanied by outspoken rhetoric and active symbolism. References to Europe and the Euro-Atlantic structures became ubiquitous.

Addressing a gap in the existing literature, the author examines a large volume of data extracted from news items from 20 different Georgian and international media outlets over a ten-year period. Through this comprehensive analysis he identifies patterns in the discourse to explain the intentions of the Georgian elite, and examines the effectiveness of the rhetoric.



## **Eurasia 2.0: Russian Geopolitics in the Age of New Media**

*Edited by Mikhail Suslov and Mark Bassin*

This book discusses the return of geopolitical ideas and doctrines to the post-Soviet space with special focus on the phenomenon of digital geopolitics, which is used as an overarching term for different political practices, including the dissemination of geopolitical ideas online, use of the internet by political figures and diplomats for legitimation and outreach activity, and the viral spread of geopolitical memes.

The book's different chapters explore the new possibilities and threats associated with this digitalization of geopolitical knowledge and practice. The authors consider new spatial sensibilities and new identities of global as well as local Selves, the emergence of which is facilitated by the internet. They explore recent

reconfigurations of the traditional imperial conundrum of center versus periphery. Developing Manuel Castells' argument that social activism in the digital era is organized around cultural values, the essays discuss new geopolitical ideologies aimed at reinforcing Russia's spiritual sovereignty as a unique civilization, while at the same time seeking to rebrand Russia as a greater soft power by utilizing the Russian-speaking diaspora or employing traditionalist rhetoric.

Great Power imagery, enemy-making, and visual mappings of future Russia are traditional means for the manipulation of great power pleasures and geopolitical fears. In the age of new media, however, this is being done with greater subtlety by mobilizing the grassroots, contracting private information channels, and de-politicizing geopolitics. Given the political events of recent years, it is logical that the Ukrainian crisis provides the thematic backdrop for most of the contributors.



## **Energy Security and Cooperation in Eurasia**

*By Ekaterina Svyatets*

Why are bilateral relations, especially in the area of energy security, so different in the cases of US-Russia, US-Azerbaijan, and Russia-Germany energy deals? Why do some states find common ground despite differences, while others, despite apparently favorable conditions, are sinking into animosity?

*Energy Security and Cooperation in Eurasia* explores the varying outcomes of energy cooperation, defined as diplomatic relations, bilateral trade, and investment in oil and natural gas. The book explores economic potential, geopolitical rivalry, and interest groups in the cases of US-Russia, US-Azerbaijan, and Russia-Germany energy ties. It looks at major projects in each case (Sakhalin and Arctic oil and gas production, Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan and Nord Stream pipelines) and the activities of international oil companies. The book also provides a detailed analysis of the situation in Ukraine since 2014 and Russia's annexation of Crimea, and the impact on European energy security. *Svyatets* takes an innovative approach, exploring the dyads of states (bilateral relations) along the economic, geopolitical, and domestic lobbying dimensions.

This book is a valuable resource for graduate and undergraduate students, academics and researchers in the areas of Security, Political Economy, Comparative Politics, post-Soviet studies, as well as the general public.