

The EU's framing of perceptions of security in Georgia – a dilemma between assumed security promises and adverse reality?

Abstract

This paper tries to highlight security and its perceptions in Georgia in the context of the EU's provision of the main framework of interaction in the common neighborhood: the interaction between Russia and the EU. In order to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of the conflict configuration and its meaning for the security outcome for the South Caucasus and Georgia, this work combines the *EU's outsider vision* on the one side and *Georgia's insider point of view* on the other side.

Drawing upon the extensive research on regional security complexes, it offers a theoretical scheme which incorporates material as well as ideational aspects of theories of International Relations in order to provide a variety of explanatory variables for obtaining 'the whole story' of mutually constituting and constructing realities of security and its perceptions. Therefore, three levels of analysis deconstructing these realities will be under scrutiny: The output level, representing the political programmes, asks whether compatibility of or competition between the EU's and Russian policies towards the neighborhood is prevailing. Coming from that, the second level analyses the material outcomes of these policies on the ground – whether they are contributing to conflict settlement or an increasing intensity level. To arrive at the full picture, the last level of "impact" turns towards Georgian security perceptions. The overall question, thus, is subdivided: whereas the first and second level shall provide answers to the question "*How are perceptions of security framed in Georgia and why?*", the third level refers to the question "*What are the perceptions of security in Georgia and how are they constituted?*".

Keywords: EU-Russia relations, shared neighbourhood, Georgia, security studies, perceptions

1. Introduction

“Russia has been reticent towards the broadening and deepening of EU policies to the East, understanding these as a form of the EU’s gaining leverage and influence over these states, a development viewed in Moscow as contrary to Russian interests” (Kanet and Freire 2012:3)

“Therefore, the primary geopolitical paradox of the Eastern Partnership is that while the EU is not seeking to establish spheres of influence in its neighborhood, it can neither afford to concede such spheres to others.” (Tamsaar in Made and Sekarev 2011:233)

“Security matters. It is impossible to make sense of world politics without reference to it.” (Williams 2013:1)

Reconsidering security in light of an ever closer entanglement of spheres considered to be in the interest of Russia as well as of the EU is more than necessary. Highlighting various aspects constituting and contributing to the security framework in which Georgia is located is a fruitful way to show that neither only neorealist approaches to International Relations nor solely constructivist explanations are sufficiently providing assumptions and explanatory variables for obtaining ‘the whole story’ of mutually constituting and constructing realities (Sorensen 2008:25). Realities in which both the security dilemma is of great concern as well as perceptions matter and shape the actions undertaken by actors, thus creating the structure in which the power game of security can take place.

After the Cold War and the breakup of the Soviet Union (hereinafter: SU), a reconsideration of loyalties and orientations was necessary given the collapse of old structures of enmity and amity - thus, the obsolescence of old perceptions and images.

Current events in Ukraine as a major upheaval in the neighborhood of both Russia and the EU made a strong case that the framing of security, hence the provision of a policy framework in which various aspects of security are realized, as well as of its perceptions is a crucial topic of EU-Russia relations and for the countries in between.

The 2008 War between Georgia and Russia as a major disruption has not only brought up the underlying complex regional conflict configuration but also the overarching question of relations between the EU and Russia and their proceedings within “their” neighborhood given the active pro-western orientation of Georgia. Thus, Georgia, as it seeks further integration into western organizations, is one of the primary examples to elucidate the complex interdependence of systems of security created by the EU’s and Russian foreign policies towards the South Caucasus in general and Georgia especially.

2. Georgia's socio-political environment

As a strategic transit-country connecting Central Asia with Europe, Georgia experienced a lot of foreign dominance and was torn between east and west, being a fragile state between the large surrounding powers.

In this context, Russia is a recurrent theme: Firstly, Georgia became a protectorate of the Russian Empire in 1783 and was, then, annexed in 1801. In the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, Georgia only regained independence from 1918–1921: however, from 1922 to 1936 Georgia was part of the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.

Until the dissolution of the SU, Georgia then was represented by the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic. European identity had been the complete opposite of Russian omnipresence ever since, founded by the interpretation of being European by common religion and history.

This dissolution was pivotal for Georgia since it led to territorial imbalances, too: the dimensions of the successional Russian state and its definitions of spheres of influence in the post-soviet space always had implications for the Georgian state – now even more so since policies by both the EU and Russia overlap there, constituting and contributing to a sphere of contested claims and demands.

Domestic conflicts in Georgia, 2003-2013											
year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Abkhazia (Abkhazian seperatists vs. Government) conflict item: secession. Start: 1989											
intensity	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	2
change	+	=	=	=	=	+	-	=	=	=	-
Ajaria (Ajarian minority vs. Government) conflict item: autonomy. Start: 1989											
intensity	1	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
change	=	+	ended	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Armenian minority (Armenian minority vs. Government) conflict item: autonomy. Start: 2004											
intensity	.	.	.	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1
change	.	.	.	new	-	=	+	=	-	=	=
Azeri minority (Azeri minority vs. Government) conflict item: autonomy. Start: 2004											
intensity	.	.	.	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
change	.	.	.	new	-	=	=	=	=	=	=
Coup (Georgian central government vs. opposition) conflict item: national power. Start: 2003											
intensity	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
change	new	ended	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Opposition groups (UNM vs. GD, various opposition groups) conflict item: system/ideology, national power. Start: 2007											
intensity	.	.	.	.	3	2	3	3	3	3	3
change	.	.	.	.	new	-	+	=	=	=	=
South Ossetia (South Ossetian seperatists vs. government) conflict item: secession. Start: 1989											
intensity	1	3	3	3	3	4	3	2	2	2	2
change	-	+	=	=	=	+	-	-	=	=	=

Since then, Georgia faced several internal conflicts, mostly around various degrees of autonomy. Most pressing were the conflicts around secession in South Ossetia and Abkhazia whose separatist movements started in 1989 and were supported by Russian peace-keeping troops in these regions in order to underline regional power aspirations (cf. Allison 2013). These troops are perceived as occupants under false legitimization by the central Georgian government.

The Rose Revolution in 2003 demanded a fundamental change of the political circumstances and lead to a peaceful overthrow of the old regime. A massive reform program was brought on the way to revise the old structures of prolonged socialism in Georgia and to complete the transition to a full democracy with a market economy, the latter streamlined by a radical opening of the country. But not only purely domestic problems were on the reform agenda: *“the government [was] trying to move Georgia’s unresolved conflicts to the forefront of international attention, insisting that the issue cannot be postponed indefinitely.”* (Nodia and Scholtbach 2006:20) These ambitious goals have constituted a direct challenge of Russian predominance in the region, trying to overcome it by regaining control over the renegade regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, consequently adding to an escalation of the situation which found its realization in a limited war in 2008.

Political and socio-economic environment													
year		2003		2006		2008		2010		2012		2014	
Status index		4,1		5,73		6,6		6,03		5,88		6,16	
Democracy	Market economy	2,2	1,9	6,1	5,36	6,85	6,36	6,05	6	6,15	5,61	6,5	5,82
Management index		2,3		5,91		6,36		5,68		5,38		5,78	
Poverty		-		2,7		25,3		30,4		32,6		35,6	
GDP		2680		2588		2994		4662		5073		5991,5	
Corruption		#85		#130		#79		#66		#64		#55	
Unemployment		10,4		11,6		13,3		16,4		15,1		-	
HDI		0,748		0,732		0,740		0,780		0,733		0,745	
Gini-Coefficient		38,9		36,9		40,4		40,8		41,3		42,1	
Fractionalization		ethnic: 0,289 | religious: 0,285 | language: 0,474											

2: cf. BTI and TI

3. Theory

The underlying assumption of this paper is that *“a reflexive, critical science of international politics needs every kind of knowledge it can get”* (Wendt 1998:117) - in this way rejecting the idea that one theoretical strand is able to explain and exhaustively analyze empirical cases.

Agreeing with Wendt’s rationale that the distinction between “Explanation and Understanding” within the Third Debate is rather an artificial one, it tries to combine the *“outsider’s focus on causal explanation”* with *“the insider’s focus on actors’ understandings.”* (Wendt 1998:102)

In this context, *“the distinction between Explanation and Understanding is not one between explanation and description, but between explanations that answer different kinds of questions, causal and constitutive.”* (Wendt 1998:104)

These differences can be illustrated by examples related to this work: Causal questions comprise ‘why?’ questions, subsuming answers which have been obtained by deduction and ‘how come?’ questions which highlight the causal mechanisms and processes of causation (Wendt 1998:104). The subquestion related to this logic can be formulated as follows: *“How are perceptions of security framed in Georgia and why?”*

Constitutive questions account for the properties of things by reference to the structures in which they exist (Wendt 1998:105). The subquestion relating to this latter epistemological strand can be articulated like this: *“What are the perceptions of security in Georgia and how are they constituted?”*

Security and regional security complexes

“[...] At an abstract level, most scholars within International Relations work with a definition of security that involves the alleviation of threats to cherished values [and interests]” (Williams 2013:1)

Thus, security is here understood as the relationship and its quality between different actors rather than a fixed commodity (Williams 2013:16). It is noteworthy that *“what constitutes the threat for one is not necessarily the referent object for the other.”* (Buzan et al. 1998:45).

Not only the bridge between the two regional policies of the European Union and Russia, respectively, has to be established (Casier in Kanet and Freire:32), but even more so has the interaction between different levels of interaction to be taken into account.

Recalling the premises of Buzan’s and Waever’s theory of regional security complexes allows us to integrate those different levels of analysis.

Therefore, a Regional Security Complex (RSC hereinafter) describes *“regionally based cluster”* composed of *“a set of states whose major security perceptions and concerns are so interlinked [security interdependence] that their national security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another.”* (Buzan et al. 1998:11)

Within these regional security complexes “*security interdependence is markedly more intense*” (Buzan et al. 1998:11), fostering reciprocal sensitivity and vulnerability towards changes in material and ideational arrangements of these complexes and thus defining actors’ security.

Deduced from that, the relative intensity of interstate security relations and the outcome is shaped by “[1] *the distribution of power and [2] the relations of amity and enmity*” (Buzan et al. 1998:12, Buzan and Wæver 2003:45).

“Outcome of security relations” in this context is defined as the level of conflict formation within this complex (Buzan et al. 1998:12).

This theoretical outcome of security relations, thus, has to incorporate two ideal ends of a spectrum: Whereas the negative end is conflict formation (fear, rivalry, reciprocal perception of threat), at the positive end there are pluralistic security communities to be found in which states no longer expect or prepare to use force in their relations with each other. In the middle of this spectrum, there are security regimes in which states treat each other as potential threats but have made reassurance arrangements to minimize the security dilemma among them.

Moreover, the interactions within a RSC can be interpreted in the logic of a national role conception framework which “*seeks to understand how actors **fashion their role in the international system**, navigating between domestic sources of identity and/or cultural heritage, **taking advantage of the material resources at their disposal**, circumnavigating as best as possible **the obstacles imposed by their position in the international structure.***” (Breuning in Harnisch 2011:22)

These national role conceptions, being “*the notions of actors about who they are, what **they like to be with regard to others, and how they therefore should interact** in (international) social relationships, are at the intersection between those two levels of analysis [...]*” (Breuning in Harnisch 2011:22), can be understood as information providers regarding security threats due to cognitive shortcuts (Maier and Rittberger 2008)¹ of friendship and enmity.

Hence, the *performative aspect* of this system can be defined as the actual act or deed whilst the *interpretative aspect* connects these performances with their respective meanings (cf. Natorski in Korosteleva et al. 2013:260): in this context the material environment with the relevant perceptions of security deriving from them.

“*My larger point is that the ideas and shared knowledge which are in focus in constructivist analysis never operate outside a specific material context.*” (Sorensen 2008:21)

A combination of both approaches allows for analyzing the interaction, outcome and resulting perceptions (Smith 1997 in Sorensen 2008:12). However, this should not be misunderstood as a

¹ Most of the time features of a distant object are unknown: hence, a positive correlation between two objects – of which one is known and close - is sought to obtain information. Amity and enmity are here information proxies for security and threat, respectively.

synthesis of theories but as an attempt to further develop the analytic potential and to widen a too narrowed scope and angle of both theories applied solitarily (Sorensen 2008:13).

Levels of analysis	Variables		Underlying logic	Relationship between variables		
Output	EU-Russia relations		Complementarity or competition?	Causal deduction 'international structure' performative aspect	Co-Constitution	
	EU policies towards NH	Russian policies towards NH				
Outcome	Regional and military interdependencies		Consequences			
	Georgian security policies					
Impact	Perceptions of security of political elites and society in Georgia		Cognitive evaluation	'national role conception' interpretative aspect	Co-Constitution	security outcome

3: Research design. Output: political programmes and operative decisions; Outcome: consequences of this output in terms of material, concrete reactions to the policies; Impact: effects of the outcome o the political elite and society in terms of immaterial reactions (perceptions/assessments)

Working Hypothesis
H1 <i>EU and Russian policies as a framework for political output, outcome and perceptions of security in the neighborhood are likely to be competitive, thus, to be contributing to increasing intensity levels of conflicts (as they would, then, induce non-compatible security systems for Georgia.).</i>
H2 <i>A negative security outcome is likely to be constituted if regional as well as overarching security organizations related to EU and Russia are adhering to the logic of offensive realism due to clashing policies.</i>
H3a <i>Patterns of amity and enmity constructed by the competitive EU-Russia output and outcome imposing material threats to Georgia will induce clear adherence to one of these actors – thus, adding to a negative security outcome if one actor feels being left aside.</i>
H3b <i>Positive perceptions in Georgia about further integration into EU structures will have a negative impact on the security outcome.</i>

4: Working hypothesis

4. Analysis

4.1. Security outcome

Georgia's international conflict environment											
year	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Russia (Russia vs. Georgia), conflict item: international power. Start: 1992											
intensity	3	3	2	2	2	5	2	2	2	1	1
change	=	=	-	=	=	+	-	=	=	-	=
Abkhazia (Abkhazian separatists vs. Government), conflict item: secession. Start: 1989											
intensity	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	2
change	+	=	=	=	=	+	-	=	=	=	-
South Ossetia (South Ossetian separatists vs. government) conflict item: secession. Start: 1989											
intensity	1	3	3	3	3	4	3	2	2	2	2
change	-	+	=	=	=	+	-	-	=	=	=
Caspian Sea (Armenia vs. Azerbaijan vs. Georgia vs. Iran vs. Kazakhstan vs. Russia vs. Turkey vs. Turkmenistan), conflict item: borders, resources (oil and gas), international power. Start: 1993											
Intensity	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
change	=	=	=	-	=	=	=	=	=	=	+

5: cf. HIIK

The security outcome is flanked by a multitude of overlapping regional conflicts and non-present regional cooperation, adding to the contestation of borders.

The main threat to security and reason for conflict for Georgia is the prolonged presence and active engagement of Russia since the breakup of the SU (Hallbach and Smolnik 2014:8). After the Rose Revolution, the intensity remained on the level of a violent crisis leading to a high intensity war in 2008 – after which the conflict could be calmed. Nevertheless, the outlook is rather negative: Russian engagement in Ukraine affects the relations with Georgia and contributes to a more tense relationship characterized by growing suspicions.

In addition, the slight détente of the conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia in 2013 is not of a stable nature: too long have they remained on a high level challenging security by imposing non-traditional security threats, military imbalances, fragile regional constructions and mutual mistrust.

Another protracted conflict on the international level involving Georgia is the conflict about borders, resources and international power around the Caspian Sea - again with the participation of Russia - which has gained momentum under the impression of the increasing importance of secure energy supplies and contested hegemony in the region.

All in all, no general détente can be identified when looking at the protracted conflicts involving Georgia. Having experienced a decrease in the intensity level of the main conflict with Russia after the War in 2008 under help of the Geneva talks, further détente is not to be expected: rather the

underlying conflicts in South Ossetia and Abkhazia as well as of the highly contested Caspian Sea will contribute to a more tense and precarious security environment (Hallbach and Smolnik 2014:1) in which Russia is perceived as main conflict party.

The EU's engagement in the neighborhood and relations with Russia									
	Relations with Russia on protracted conflicts			Relations with Russia on the Eastern Partnership			Relations with Eastern Neighborhood on protracted conflicts		
	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013	2011	2012	2013
Unity	3/5	4/5	4/5	3/5	4/5	4/5	3/5	3/5	4/5
Resources	3/5	3/5	3/5	2/5	3/5	4/5	2/5	2/5	2/5
Outcome	4/10	3/10	3/10	3/10	3/10	3/10	3/10	2/10	3/10
Total	10/20	10/20	10/20	8/20	10/20	11/20	8/20	7/20	9/20
Grade	C+	C+	C+	C	C+	B-	C	C	C+

6: cf. ECFR

“EU’s direct role has been fairly peripheral until quite recently, despite the proximity of the Caucasus to EU territory.” (Mankoff 2012:18)

Having this in mind, the assessment of the EU’s engagement in the region and active resolution of the protracted conflicts there is obviously unfruitful and disappointing. Not only has the intensity level of most of the conflicts remained on the same level, but conflicts are to gain impetus.

This is underlined by the poor performance of the EU in the Eastern Neighbourhood regarding the solution of protracted conflicts – and especially important for this paper – the tense relations between the EU and Russia on them as and the Eastern Partnership, which remain on a disappointing level of non-cooperation experiencing even growing potential for (violent) conflict.

4.2 Output

1. EU policies towards the neighborhood and Georgia

After the collapse of the SU, the European Communities (EC) granted assistance towards Georgia in form of financial, humanitarian and technical help already in 1993.

After complicated negotiations, the EC encompassed Russia (1994) and Georgia (1996) with bilateral agreements. However, because of the first Chechen War and the Abkhaz and South Ossetian uprisings (Mankoff 2012:18), the Partnership and Cooperation agreements (PCA) could only enter into force in 1997 (Russia) and 1999 (Georgia). Security aspects played a role insofar as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Georgia “[would] contribute to the safeguard of peace and stability and Europe” (European Communities 1999:4). Provision of security, however, wasn’t perceived as the EC’s main task, thus, they were outsourced to the CSCE.

“Our mindset was determined by Francis Fukuyama’s ‘The End of History’. We had a peaceful Europe, and we believed we were entering a new era of common values where everything would be different from the past.” (Caplan 2005:157)

This attitude was backed by the fact that the PCA invoked *“increasing convergence of positions on international issues of mutual concern thus increasing security and stability in the region and promoting the future development of the Independent States of the Transcaucasus”* (European Communities 1999:4). No one foresaw frictions resulting out of that approximation and association of the Caucasus and Georgia particularly. Essential security interests were excluded (European Communities 1999:24). It is noteworthy that it was in the EU’s interest to have Moscow playing a constructive role in the Newly Independent States, since it was the former ruler of these countries having plenty of experience, stable relations and geographic closeness (Kanet and Freire 2012:82). 1999 was an important year for Georgia since not only the PCA was put into action but ‘the Caucasian summit’ was held in Luxemburg, urging the Caucasus states to expand regional cooperation in order to strengthen stability and security through the active support of the European Union (RFE 1999). In the same year, the first EU-Georgia Cooperation Council was held indicating the future direction of EU-Georgia relations.

On the same time as the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) (Prodi 2002) was established in order to avoid new dividing lines in Europe, fostering stability and mutual understanding in the wake of the Big-Bang enlargement in 2004, in 2003 a EUSR for the South Caucasus was appointed (EEAS 2011). The European Security Strategy (ESS) which was brought on the way in 2003 as first EU white paper on security, however, didn’t deal explicitly with the EU neighborhood in general or Eastern partners in particular: the EU-15, too divided about the Iraq war, granted no importance to the region with protracted – but allegedly stable – conflicts.

One year later, Georgia also joined the ENP with the two other South Caucasus countries (MFA of Georgia a). In the same year, the EU launched EUJUST THEMIS (EU Council Secretariat 2005) - the first ESDP mission ever deployed until then was concluded successfully after one year.

After the far eastern neighborhood has only been of peripheral interest (Casier in Kanet and Freire 2012:49), in 2003, the awareness that things could change increased after the Georgian Revolution and the one in Ukraine in 2004 (Tamsaar in Made and Sekarev 2011:238).

The EU, in 2006, then engaged in the resolution of the protracted conflicts of Georgia, stating that it recognized its territorial integrity and the peaceful settlement of the conflict in South Ossetia. ENP action plans eventually were signed, installing an EU fact finding mission (cf. Hubel 2004). This was the first mission targeted at pure security concerns analyzing the possibilities for the EU in the conflict zones of Georgia: border control, confidence building and possible instruments for conflict resolution.

However, it was only in 2008 when the short war between Georgia and Russia broke out (Nygren 2008:182) that the EU engaged in conflict resolution: under the auspices of Nicolas Sarkozy, the ceasefire agreement was signed (Council of the European Union 2008), thereby transforming the EU in a party of the conflict since Georgia's western orientation towards the EU but especially NATO had contributed to the escalation of the latent Georgian-Russian conflict.

The EU set up two instruments afterwards in order to restore security and settle the conflict: firstly, the EU Monitoring mission in 2008 (EUMM) – an unarmed civilian monitoring mission (EEAS 2013) – controlling the compliance with the Six-Point Agreement of Georgia and Russia and, secondly, the Geneva Talks which, then, faced various difficulties.

In light of growing instability and various difficulties challenging security in the neighborhood, two policies were revised in 2008 and 2009: firstly, the *'Report of the Implementation of the European Security Strategy: Providing Security in a Changing World'* as a review of the 2003 ESS emphasized the importance of building stability (not security!) in Europe and beyond: more capabilities, more coherence and more activeness were identified as main goals as well as greater engagement with the Eastern Neighbors (EU 2008). Secondly, after six years in action, the ENP was revised, adding the Eastern Partnership initiative (EaP) as eastern, more differentiated and thus more efficient branch of the neighborhood policy stressing the European commitment (Korosteleva 2011). Also in 2009, first negotiations were held on EU-Georgia Visa Facilitation and Readmission agreements and Georgia's cooperation within the Mobility Partnership, drawing Georgia closer to the EU. In addition, the ESDP welcomed the EUMM's involvement in establishing an Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (OSCE 2009), trying to gain leverage in conflict resolution on the ground (Council of the European Union 2009), in parallel extending the mandate of the EUMM's mission (Simao in Freire and Kanet 2012:168). Another step in drawing Georgia closer to the EU was the initialing of an Association

Agreement (AA) in 2010 which has been concluded in 2013 (EEAS 2014). Targeting at accelerating the deepening of political and economic relations between the EU and Georgia, the security aspect was nearly completely left aside only mentioning *“the strengthening of political dialogue, promoting and preserving peace and stability, promoting cooperation on peaceful conflict resolution, enhancing Justice, Freedom and Security cooperation [...]”*(EEAS 2013). The focus lay on the agreement on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA). At the Vilnius summit in late November 2013, this AA should have been signed not only with Georgia, but with Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan.²

2. Russia’s policies towards the ‘near abroad’ and Georgia

“At the heart of Russian policy towards the ‘near abroad’ resides the desire to have friendly regimes in neighboring state that are accommodating to Russian interests, and minimally influenced by foreign powers” (Simao in Freire and Kanet 2012:173)

Due to this reasons, the Caucasus always was of main interest for Russia, especially since Georgia was integral part of the SU. There have been strong ties historically, ethnically and geographically. Yet, Russia’s security interest isn’t only founded on a ‘near abroad’-reasoning but on a projection of potential spill-overs of security threats posed by the proximity to Chechnya (Mankoff 2012:6). Moreover, beside domestic security reflections, international and geopolitical ones have dominated the agenda: acquiring access to warm-water ports and developing a *“network of client states in eastern Europe as means of strengthening the country’s defence against the other continental powers”* (Bellamy et al. 2010:264).

The long-standing conflicts under Russian participation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia highlight the overall Russian strategy towards Georgia: coercion (Nygren 2008:11). This incorporates two types of instruments: hard power in form of military strength and regular armed forces, border guards and peacekeepers and soft power in form of state-owned and controlled oil, gas and electricity production and ownership of transit capacities and investments (Nygren 2008:9).

Military and foreign policy concepts offer important insights on Russia’s self-perception and location in the international system, thus generating main security arguments (Monaghan 2013:2). Already the foreign policy concept (FPC) of 2000 acknowledged *“the military-political rivalry among regional powers, growth of separatism, ethnic-national and religious extremism. Integration processes, in particular, in the Euro-Atlantic region are quite often pursued on a selective and limited basis.*

² However, Belarus opted-out earlier, Armenia - under the impression of massively increasing Russian pressure - moved away from a positive decision on the AA, too, and the refusal of Ukraine’s President led to a to one of the major conflicts the European continent has experienced: with uncertain results for the territorial integrity and configuration of a future Ukrainian political system.

Attempts to belittle the role of a sovereign state as the fundamental element of international relations generate a threat of arbitrary interference in internal affairs.” (President of the Russian Federation 2000) The new Russian FPC from 2013 fosters these regional priorities and perceptions of insecurity by directly referring to the National Security Strategy to 2020 and the Military Doctrine (Monaghan 2013:3). Key principles of the 2008 FPC have been adapted, but a major shift in priorities can be observed: progressive development of the Russia-NATO relationship is neglected - it's even emphasizing its dangerousness - and emphasizes the importance of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) integration process as counter-project (President of the Russian Federation 2008). Whereas no reference is made towards Cold-War mentality, the world is perceived as increasingly turbulent with the impact of a re-ideologization of international relations (Monaghan 2013:6). A re-prioritization of regional relations can be identified, shifting the attention to the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and to have common security ensured by the *“CSTO as key element of the modern security system in the post-Soviet space”* (President of the Russian Federation 2008). Georgia is mentioned once: relations should be normalized to a possible extent, although the sustained security and strengthening of the international position of the Republic of Abkhazia and the Republic of South Ossetia will remain important (President of the Russian Federation 2008). However, this seems rather randomly injected into the FPC (Polikanov 2005).

3. EU-Russia relations: security only as a marginal phenomenon?

“Russia in Europe’ or ‘Russia and Europe?’” – the title of an article by Roy Allison (Allison in Allison *et al.* 2006:) illustrates the challenges and the fundamental underlying question for EU-Russian foreign policy conceptions in relation to each other. Throughout the history, Europe and the EU, respectively, wasn't a constant place, but an evolving process inducing boundaries to shift over the European continent – always contesting the role of Russia in this process (Haukkala in Hopf 2008). However, these relations are underdefined so far, rushing from one initiative to the other without having a significant outcome. The signature of the PCA with Russia was framed by long and difficult negotiations with Russia pressing for a better deal and the EU as norms shaper insisting on conditionality and norms convergence.

“Looking back at the history of EU-Russia relations since 1991 it is possible to observe a gradual increase in Russia’s identification of the EU’s position as a power politics actor in its immediate neighborhood.” (Made and Sekarev 2011:16)

However, strategic interaction has been fairly limited under the impression of the first Chechen war and the Russian debt crisis. Despite this, the EU's Common Strategy on Russia in June 1999 reaffirmed the importance of Russia and the post-sovereign principles (Haukkala in Hopf 2008).

Russia's Mid-Term-EU strategy 2000-10 can be regarded as a direct answer to that, already opposing the mentioned principles, emphasizing sovereignty and interest-based cooperation. (*Simao in Freire and Kanet 2012:177*)

Trying to establish EU-Russia relations in the first place, various aspects of common duty in the neighborhood were neglected in the policy documents, leaving behind fundamentally different interpretations of security and the way of implementing them - economic aspects always played a major role in this relationship.

Putin's presidencies initially including a "European Choice" and Russia's cooperative role in the post 9/11 developments in combination with first signs of domestic liberalization boosted the cooperation and emphasized equality in interstate relations (Allison in Allison *et al.* 2006:173), but eventually just contributed to a more fuzzy constellation of EU-Russia relations with only virtual progress: the Four Common Spaces (2005) in light of the Big-Bang enlargement and Russia's rejection of the ENP, the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council because of Russia's insistence of a special strategic partnership, not ranking it amongst the other eastern countries, and the Modernization partnerships (2009/10) in the light of the Caucasus crisis and thus the necessity to reestablish relations.

"Cooperation on security issues between Brussels and Moscow has been rather limited." (*Simao in Freire and Kanet 2012:158*). Despite all efforts, the implementation was slow and inconsistent: the external security pillar was under constant contestation without being able to find consensus on a denomination for the "common neighborhood", thus revealing, again, fundamental differences and abstention from cooperation in security issues (Haukkala in Whitman and Wolff 2010).

"At the same time, Russian leaders consider that NATO enlargement has reinforced 'old dividing lines', despite cooperation under the NATO-Russia Council." (Allison in Allison *et al.* 2006:173)

The 2008 war in Georgia was a turning point for EU-Russian security relations (Simao in Freire and Kanet 2012:170): both Russia and Georgia were blamed for having been the aggressor with the EU trying to mediate - on the same time NATO enlargement was off the table with the EUMM as a "freezing exercise" (Haukkala in Whitman and Wolff 2010), having in mind the failed proposal of a New Security Treaty for Europe by Medvedev (Lavrov 2009)³.

Hence: *"A cooperative security approach can only emerge when the EU and Russia would share a meaningful set of views and interests."* (*Simao in Freire and Kanet 2012:158*)

This couldn't be observed so far in EU-Russia relations persisting of fundamentally different interpretations of (security) actorness and different modes of cooperation.

³ *"Many of the institutions already in place are primarily concerned with the security of their own members; the [OSCE] as the summer crisis in the Caucasus demonstrated lacks the rules and accountability to be effective. [...] that prompted President Medvedev to propose a new treaty on European security: we believe it would establish a truly united area of collective security in the Euro-Atlantic region and put right what we together so far failed to manage."*

4. EU and Russian policies: complementary or competitive?

“In this light, both the EU and Russia are mired in a dilemma as how to see each other’s presence on the post-Soviet sphere, which both consider an area of their legitimate influence. [...] Both can neither ignore nor reject each other, nor can they envisage how a mixed system of alternatively exclusive values and norms could exist in this buffer zone between the EU and Russia, called Eastern Partnership in Brussels, and ‘near abroad’ in Moscow.” (Made and Sekarev 2011:17)

This highlights the specific patterns of insecurity and instability in Georgia being kept in a sphere where the impact of opposing perceptions and policies of the EU and Russia constitute a test environment of precisely those actors’ relations (Antonenko in Huxley and Nicoll 2008:77ff). Whereas the EU sees itself as a security community, favoring consensus, international institutions and a cooperative approach to security, Russia privileges high politics, militarist power projections and capabilities, and an understanding of absolute sovereignty (Simao in Freire and Kanet 2012:157). Russian and European policies imposed to the neighborhood have been fairly competitive regarding all these aspects in the last years, fostering the fear of an alienation of the CIS countries from Russia (Izotov and Khudoley in Made and Sekarev 2011:224) exemplified by Lavrov’s assessment of the EaP as an attempt to extend the EU’s sphere of influence opposing Russian interests (Freire and Kanet 2012:3) and by the fact that both actors weren’t able to find a common denomination for those countries.

In this context, Russian and European strategies have placed limits on the policy choices available to Georgia (Engelbrekt and Nygren 2010:175), indicating a zero-sum paradigm as policy outcome. Approaches to design complementary policies – as seen above – were rather limited in scope, coherence and support.

“While the policies between Brussels and Moscow may be varyingly conflicting or compatible, the dominant political perception is one of competition. [This] is most likely to move to the heart of the EU-Russia agenda – to develop from a latent into a manifest conflict- when Russia feels threatened in the recognition of [its regional] key role.” (Casier 2008:48f)

The deepening constitution of the ENP in form of the EaP and an AA for Georgia, thus, exactly manifestes a pivotal point for EU-Russia relations.

4.3 Outcome

Patterns of international membership (2014)											
	CIS	EurAsEC	CU	CSTO	GUAM	BSEC	NATO	ENP	BSS	TRACECA	INOGATE
Russia	x	x	x	x		x	NRC	#	x		
Georgia	#				x	x	NGC	x	x	x	x
Armenia	x	#		x		x	IPAP	x	x	x	x
Azerbaijan	x				x	x	IPAP	x	x	x	x
Kazakhstan	x	x	x	x			IPAP			x	x
Turkey						x	x		x	x	x
Ukraine	#	#			x	x	NUC	x	x	x	x

7: own figure, based on White 2011:152

Regional dynamics and patterns of memberships in institutions are constantly contested and fragmented in the wider South Caucasus region (Kogan 2013). A multitude of stakeholders is directly engaged in the region and maintains multifaceted relations with Georgia, thus adding to a multi-level and multi-issue environment in which overlapping or diverging membership patterns have a direct effect on enmity and amity by identifying ideological groups according to equal interests and/or values related to these memberships (cf. Wendt 1992). These relational cognitive shortcuts can be decrypted:

Whereas the relations with Russia, and subsequently with Armenia, always were complicated for Georgia, relations with Azerbaijan and Turkey flourished (Mankoff 2012:10). On the same time, Georgia refused to join most of the organizations led or initiated by Russia (White 2011:293). Turkey has been of interest due to four reasons: as NATO member as gatekeeper to NATO membership and regional security provider, as EU accession candidate as EU contact facilitator (Mankoff 2012:25), as main trading partner - in particular for energy (Raszewski 2013) - and as neutral regional negotiator maximizing its own leverage by working with Russia and the West (Mankoff 2012:12). Armenia as member of the CSTO and conflict party in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Georgia's friend Azerbaijan and as becoming an ever closer ally of Russia in terms of military engagement and membership in the EurAsEC, is a bordering obstacle.

Moreover, it is interesting to see that both TRACECA and INOGATE as EU initiatives are conceptualized without Russia - beyond that, they were initialized as projects facilitating transport cooperation and minimizing European energy dependence on Russia, thus directly competing with Russian energy delivery systems.

Moreover, the hard security configuration of the South Caucasus depicts an alarming trend: whereas 2012/13 on average military expenditure in the world has decreased in relative terms (but has risen in absolute terms since the mid-90s) (SIPRI 2013a), the expenditure for military products has increased significantly in Eastern Europe: the South Caucasus together with the neighboring countries is found under the most rearminging regions in the world. Military expenditure there has more than doubled and for some cases more than quadrupled.

This draws attention to these countries, rearming extensively in order to guarantee its security which they feel threatened by its neighbors: rearmament as means to be secure again – a standard reflex of a logic of consequences.

Military expenditure change by country, 2002-2012		
	change in military expenditure 2002 to 2012, in %	Military expenditure 2002-2012, share of GDP in %, average
Russia	226,1	4,09
Georgia	548,7	4,13
Armenia	260,6	3,32
Azerbaijan	845,0	3,15
Turkey	-11,6	2,66

8: own figure, based on SIPRI

The assumptions of Mearsheimer's offensive realism are all met in the South Caucasus: whereas Russia increased its military expenditure by 226,1% in a decade (2002-2012), Georgia spent 528,7% more on its military. Even more alarming is Azerbaijan's increase in military expenditure by 845% in 2012 compared to 2002 levels. However, these are not the only immense efforts in rearmament: Armenia more than doubled its budget for military expenses, too. Turkey is the only country in the region, being NATO member, which on average decreased its military expenditure in the time frame under scrutiny. The share of GDP used for military expenditure was the highest in Georgia and Russia, being at a constant 4% level in comparison to GDP shares dedicated to military spending by the other countries of around 3%. Georgia and Azerbaijan exemplify the perceived balance of threat and lack of security in the region and the fear of being attacked by Russia and thus they are especially willing to upgrade and modernize their military complexes.

Military expenditure by country, 2002-2012												
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2002-2012 in total
Russia	[14994] [4.4]	[15951] [4.3]	[16595] [3.8]	[18886] [3.9]	[21096] [3.8]	[23118] [3.7]	[25422] [3.7]	[26761] [4.6]	[27267] [4.3]	[29291] [4.1]	[33896] [4.4]	226010
Georgia	33.9 1	39.7 1.1	55.4 1.4	147 3.3	250 5.2	495 9.2	470 8.5	287 5.6	215 3.9	[193] [3.3]	[186] [2.9]	2372
Armenia	64.1 2.7	73.8 2.7	81.5 2.7	99.7 2.9	118 2.9	138 3	160 3.4	167 4.2	174 4.3	160 3.9	[167] [3.8]	1403,1
Azerbaijan	[140] [2.2]	[174] [2.4]	[211] [2.6]	247 2.3	508 3.4	553 2.9	744 3.3	656 3.3	622 2.8	1183 4.9	1183 4.6	6221
Turkey	9051 3.9	8168 3.4	7455 2.8	7057 2.5	7375 2.5	7113 2.3	7200 2.3	7717 2.6	7583 2.6	7902 2.3	7998 2.3	84619

9: own figure, based on SIPRI

Figures: constant US\$ in millions of US\$ at constant (2002) prices and exchange rates; figures for [share of GDP] are for military expenditure as a percentage of GDP; [] = SIPRI estimate;

A comparison in absolute terms, however, shows the difference in the base level: whereas Russia spent 226010 Mio.US\$ in the military complex, Georgia spent only 2372 Mio.US\$. Starting from a very low level of military and security sector development, a robust relative increase in expenditure rates can be interpreted as a try to catch-up with the environment. Although these attempts were especially fostered before the 2008 war by increasing the used GDP share from 1,4% (2004) to a peak of 9,2% (2007), this share remained at a relatively constant level of 3,5% since then, with a slight decreasing tendency.

Georgia's clear orientation towards western security providers, especially NATO, has consequences for the balance of power and security of the region: in light of ever so increasing military expenditure, Georgia seeks an umbrella organization which could provide comprehensive security. These security-related organizations can be classified to be adherent to two groups by overlapping memberships: on the one side the EU, the OSCE (although Russia is also a member) and NATO, on the other side the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Warsaw Treaty Organization - an illustrious combination of organizations with different self-understandings, means, purposes and founding reasons (Braun 2009) 'meeting' in the wider Caucasus region.

change in military expenditure by institution/ideological group 2002-2012			
	change in military expenditure 2002 to 2012, %	change in military expenditure 2002-2012 by ideological group, average %	Military expenditure 2002-2012 by ideological group, in total \$
European Union	-1,9	21,73	18.207.024
Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe	34,7		
North Atlantic Treaty Organization	32,4		
Commonwealth of Independent States	235,7	219,83	877.635
Collective Security Treaty Organization	229,6		
Warsaw Treaty Organization	194,2		

10: own figure, based on SIPRI

Figures: in millions of US\$ at constant 2002 prices and exchange rates

Comparing the overall military expenditure, all western organizations have spent significantly more on this sector than their counterparts. At absolute levels, even the EU has spent six times more than the Warsaw Treaty Organization which is the front runner of total military expenditure of the three organizations under Russian predominance. Illustrating the low level of expenses, the EU's amount of spending between 2002 and 2012 is twice the amount of the counterparts taken together in this time period. For this time frame, the OSCE and NATO were the security organizations investing most in military complexes by far.

Looking at the hard capabilities of military apparatuses, Russia is by far the most capable military force in the region (SIPRI 2013b). Besides the fundamental dominance by active and available personnel, the most important aspect of Georgian perception of threat is to be found in the developed strategic deployment of Russian forces throughout the whole region of former soviet republics. Two Russian administrative military districts with a high share of modern military equipment are deployed in close proximity to Georgian borders. Especially the Southern Military District has been an arch of insecurity (Snetkov 2011) for both Russia and Georgia. The Black Sea Fleet on Crimea has added to fears of being surrounded by Russian forces, too: Russian military sea headquarters at the Georgian coast, bearing in mind South Ossetia and Abkhazia, fueled the discourse about Russian military deployment in the region, its purpose and Georgian security recently.

Hence, Georgia has been steadily seeking security guarantees of NATO as counterweight to Russia. This was emphasized by a strong commitment to supply forces to Afghanistan as well as cooperation meetings and common military training activities with NATO member states, trying to improve Georgian military's interoperability (Hackett 2014).

On-going tendencies illustrate the perceived lack of security and confrontation between ideological groups: whereas the average on military expenditure increased by 21,73% in the western organizations, the expenditure of the other ideological group increased by 219,83%, starting from a significantly lower level. 18.207.024 Mio.US\$ of total spending of western allies are contrasted by 877.635 Mio.US\$ of the others. Although this can be interpreted as a catch-up effect, the implications are worrying:

- an enormous built-up of arms indicates a need of being prepared for actions of the other actors found in the compound of the South Caucasus security complex
- thus, the South Caucasus is caught in an arms race threatening the security of the countries in the area
- thus, Georgia as a party of the conflicts around the occupied territories of South Ossetia and Abkhazia is still in direct confrontation to Russia – hence, being part of one of the most volatile conflicts in the area besides Nagorno-Karabakh
- This clearly indicates that, still, each country pursues the logic of consequences in the light of mutual distrust, upgrading armies and countervailing powers supporting single countries in the South Caucasus, dividing interests, values and goals: this adds up to insecurity and instability.

4.4 Impact

1. Georgian security policies

Under the impression of these severe security threats and of having experienced and still experiencing Russian troops on the ground, Georgia has developed decided security policies: *“Georgia is part of the European and Euro-Atlantic space. Therefore, the expansion eastwards of NATO and of the European Union is important for Georgia.”* (Government of Georgia 2012)

Fast integration into NATO is sought with the largest contribution to ISAF being undertaken by a non-NATO country and by the provision of transit routes for ISAF supplies (NATO 2014).

Whereas in September 2008 the NATO membership road was closed for the time being because of Russian intervention, the NATO-Georgia Commission was set up to facilitate cooperation.

The National Security Concept explicitly mentions *“peaceful co-existence”* as reference to Russian

occupation which is seen as the main threat to security. Particularly emphasized, thus, is the non-violation of borders. However, besides Euro-Atlantic integration and ensuring sovereignty, ensuring energy security, regional stability and strengthening cyber security are important points of the main policy documents (*Government of Georgia 2012*). Moreover, the Ministry of Defence of Georgia continuously develops its interoperability with NATO and emphasizes the important role of a well-trained, modernly equipped army whose capabilities should be further improved (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2013). Basic assumptions of all these policies are a “renewal of Russian military aggression”, a “spillover of North Caucasus conflict into Georgia” as well as an “escalation of regional conflicts” (Ministry of Defence of Georgia 2012). Georgian policy outcome is, thus, rather pessimistic, adding to a negative security outcome by also pursuing the logic of ‘maximizing mutual threat’.

2. Georgian political elites

"The vast majority of Georgian citizens and all of our major political parties support European integration as the cornerstone of our foreign policy. [...] We need and rely on the EU's support, engagement and visibility to support our independent foreign policy in the face of external pressure." (President of Georgia 2013a)

Independence is a key of Georgian politics and policies. The de facto occupation of South Ossetia and Abkhazia is perceived very negatively by all political elites in Georgia, revoking the fear of not being capable of pursuing politics independently. Thus, external pressure – in form of Russian engagement in the region as well as of the de facto occupation of both territories with increasing conflict intensities by processes of borderization and separation – is the most pressing security concern. The EU is nowadays perceived as main security provider for Georgia, thus depicted as counterpart of Russian foreign policy in the South Caucasus and especially in Georgia.

"[...] closing the post-Soviet era and starting to build a modern, European state [...] Based on these very values, with new inspiration we should form a new, modern, European Georgia." (President of Georgia 2013b)

Hopes and wishes of the political elites concerning the EU include further commitment to EU integration in form of the signature of an AA in combination with a DCFTA. Particularly highlighted is cooperation in the field of Common Security and Defense Policy.

"I note that we also welcome the EU's dialogue with Russia, explaining that the Eastern Partnership is not a policy directed against Russia but a win-win-solution that will increase economic prosperity, security and stability in our region, and will also benefit Russia."(President of Georgia 2013a)

There's an understanding amongst elites deciding on foreign policy that EU and NATO alignment and integration can lead to increasing irritations with Russia (Minister of Defence 2013). Although there's

consent of continuing along this path, there's also the insight that Russia won't approve this. In order to avoid further conflicts and diminish the level of currently ongoing ones, a pragmatic approach towards Russia is sought – to *not give any pretext for Russian attacks* (Minister of Defense 2013). Nevertheless, the European orientation is repeated and a differentiation of identity and culture from Russia is a main theme of political discourse. Common European values are emphasized, creating a shared space of understanding from which – according to Georgian political elites – Russia is excluded by nature.

Hence, even more aggressive behavior of Russia confirms Georgian assumptions of being different from its large northern neighbor, of Russian dangerousness to the own country and underlines the need of quick rapprochement towards western institutions in order to defend Georgia from Russia.

In line with this is the strong favoritism of NATO which shall guarantee Georgian security even more. Since Russian authorities are still more opposed to NATO than to the EU, this is a striking move to secure security in Georgia. Taking into account the growing awareness of Russia in terms of the EU being perceived as a threat to regional order and influence in Russian spheres of interest, Georgia's foreign and security policy is trapped in a security dilemma.

The impact of the ongoing crises on the Georgian foreign policy and security discourse

"We feel there is a sense of urgency in Europe due to this new environment in which Russia is flexing its muscles. Combined with its performance, when a country like Georgia has 75-80 percent approval rate for European and NATO aspirations, the EU needs to seriously consider the performance we are showing in moving forward. So I think, in strange ways, Russia helped us in advancing our integration into Europe and NATO." (Minister of Defence 2013)

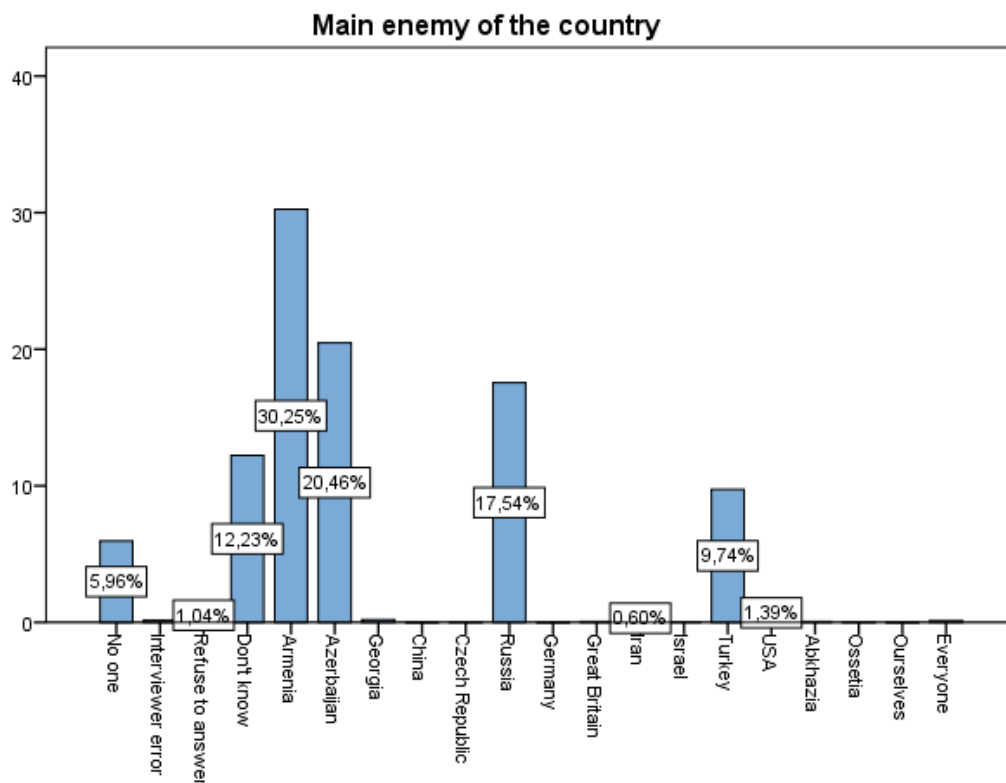
Whereas the framing of the security outcome by the EU is perceived as very efficient and as stabilizing the situation, paradoxically Russia's has, on the one hand, strengthened Georgia's feeling of being threatened and, on the other hand, led to a reassurance of the orientation towards western organizations by confirming perceptions of western amity and Russian enmity as the actions in Crimea were particularly comprehensible for Georgia (*President of Georgia 2014*).

The tendency of the security outcome to shift towards the negative end is reflected very negatively in the Georgian elites. The overarching EU-Russian clash about Ukraine is seen to have a severe impact on Georgian security.

"The Eurasian Union is Putin's instrument against the European integration of Russia's neighboring states; it aims to undermine their sovereignty and statehood by turning them into Russian satellites. [...] ultimately, advance Russia's aggressive policy against us." (Secretary of the National Security Council of Georgia 2013)

3. Security perceptions of the Georgian society in 2013⁴

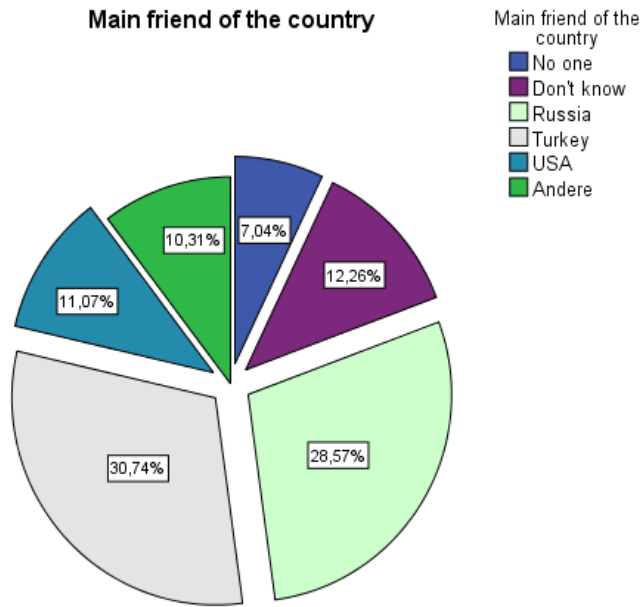
1. Amity and enmity



11: own figure, based on The Caucasus Research Resource Centers 2013

Having a look at the cognitive map of who is „friend and enemy“ provides a more differentiated insight into Georgian self-identification and who is perceived as a security threat. Most noteworthy is that not Russia (17,54%) is the main enemy of Georgia but Armenia (30,25%). Azerbaijan with 20,46% is perceived as a more threatening country than Russia – an interesting finding, not corresponding to Georgian policies and statements of politicians. These findings underline the complex security interdependencies between the countries of the South Caucasus which would never dare to speak of themselves as a region, perceiving each other as hostile. This fragmentation of the South Caucasus leads to an unstable configuration of security preferences and add to a negative security outcome, regionally.

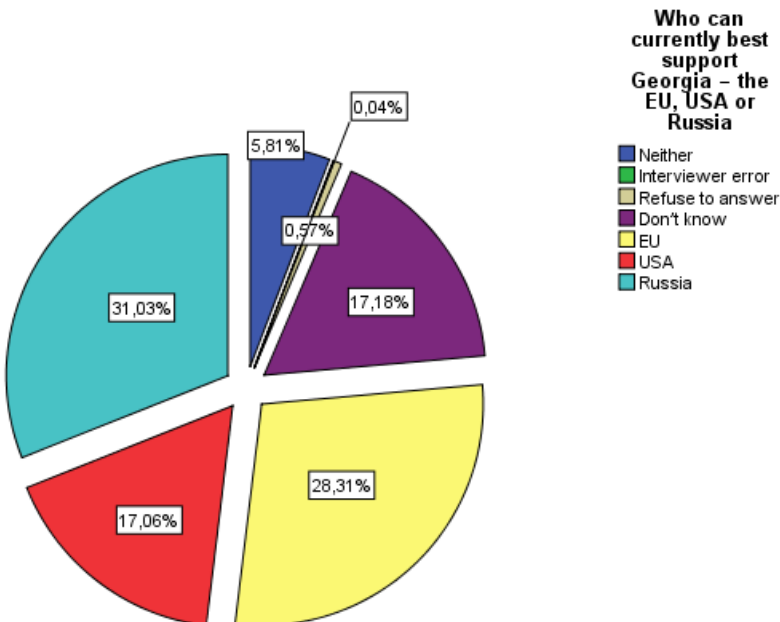
⁴ All representative statistics analysed here are based on the surveys of the Caucasus Research Resource Centers (The Caucasus Research Resource Centers 2013a+b). It has to be taken into account that the cognitive mobilization towards politics in general is very low (27,92% indicate that they would never discuss politics with friends or close relatives and only 15,81% would express a certain interest) and that an even larger majority of respondents isn't interested in the foreign policy of Georgia (53,38%). Another important indicator is the respondents' familiarity with the cornerstones of EU-Georgia relations: there, an inverse trend can be observed: the more recent and the more specific on Georgia the EU policies are, the less known they are – with 35,3% as maximum of knowledge (PCA).



12: own figure, based on The Caucasus Research Resource Centers 2013

The Georgian society's negative evaluation of nearly all neighboring countries except Turkey and Iran isn't the only striking observation: although material outcomes would suggest a negative perception of Russia, in contrast to the Georgian political elite Russia is perceived as main friend by 28,57% of respondents. A nearly equal share of 30,74% identifies Turkey as regards this question. The U.S. lies far behind those countries. Georgians identify much more strongly with the region(al powers) than with abstract western ones.

2. Assessment of the EU's impact on the security outcome



13: own figure, based on The Caucasus Research Resource Centers 2013

In line with this are the replies to the question who could support Georgia best: whereas 28,31% think that this is the EU, 31,01% attribute this ability to Russia and only 17,06% believe the US' role. These conflicting assessments of actors' abilities to support Georgia reflect the controversial perceptions of security threats, of ways of solving them and of partners being able to do so. These

blurred attributions of to whom which positive or negative ability is ascribed lead to controversial perceptions of security in which no awareness of potential political conflict can be identified.

Two types of answers have to be classified: the impact of the policy/initiative on EU and NATO closeness⁵ and answers related to security topics⁶. The relative share of those two variables implies a tendency of how perceptions of security are perceived to change due to the EU's engagement.

Respondents are divided over the question whether clashes between the EU and Russia are more likely to happen: 9,34% indicate that a closer cooperation with the EU will have very negative consequences on the relations with Russia - 24,25% agree on that with a slightly less negative evaluation. On the other hand, 20,23% express a positive stance on the impact of deeper cooperation with the EU on the relations with Russia, with 11,45% in the opinion that deeper cooperation with the EU would not change anything. Hence, amongst the Georgian citizens, there's no consent about how the EU will impact Georgia-Russia relations. However negative predictions prevail slightly whilst one third of the population – about the equal share as both other groups represent – doesn't take up a stance. This leads to the assumption that there is just limited awareness of the EU's impact on Georgia-Russia relations and possible security threats.

The EU's ENP is mainly perceived as an instrument bringing Georgia efficiently closer to the EU (36,2% political closeness and tight economic integration and 20,39% EU membership), NATO membership is less important in the context of the ENP (11,6%). Looking at assessments of security, only 14,94% think that the ENP will bring a restoration of territorial integrity and only around 10% can imagine an improvement of relations with Russia because of this EU policy.

Whereas the Eastern Partnership Initiative is perceived as having an even stronger positive impact on EU and NATO closeness (18,39% NATO membership, 32,34% political closeness to the EU and 11,08% EU membership), the share of Georgians thinking that the EaP will bring improvement of relations with Russia (7,81%) and a restoration of territorial integrity (14,11%) diminishes. Very interesting in this scenario is that the deeper the integration into the EU is perceived and the more specific the policy is, the more connected NATO membership is – since with the EaP the hopes for that have increased by 6,79%.

⁵ NATO membership, political closeness and tight economic integration with the EU and EU membership as maximal realization of this integration process

⁶ Improvement of relations with Russia and restoration of territorial integrity

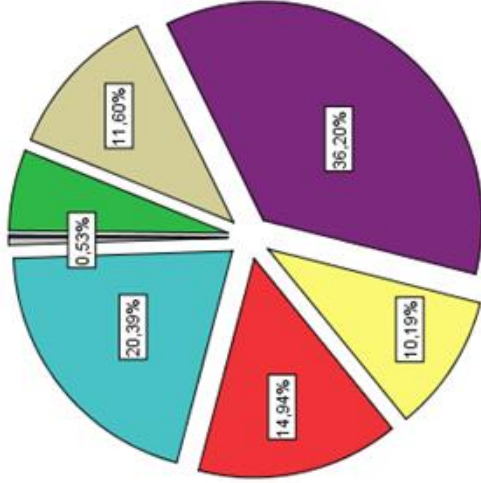
How will deeper cooperation with the EU impact Georgia's relations with Russia?

- Break-off
- Interviewer error
- Refuse to answer
- Don't know
- Very negatively
- More negatively than positively
- Not at all
- More positively than negatively
- Very positively



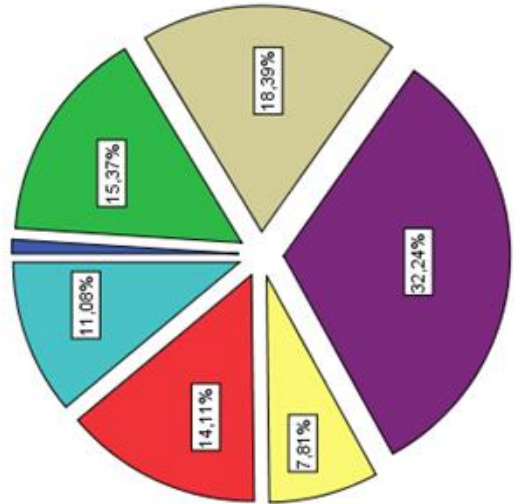
What result will the European Neighbourhood Policy bring for Georgia?

- Refuse to answer
- Don't know
- NATO membership
- Political closeness and tight economic integration with EU
- Improvement of relations with Russia
- Restoration of territorial integrity
- EU membership
- Other



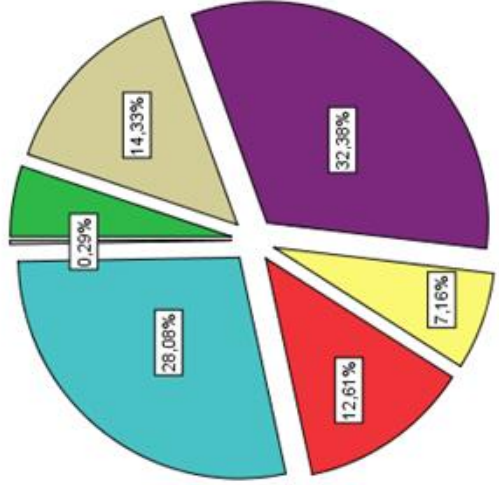
What result will the Eastern Partnership initiative bring for Georgia?

- Refuse to answer
- Don't know
- NATO membership
- Political closeness and tight economic integration with EU
- Improvement of relations with Russia
- Restoration of territorial integrity
- EU membership



What result can forming the EU Association Agreement bring for Georgia?

- Refuse to answer
- Don't know
- NATO membership
- Political closeness and tight economic integration with EU
- Improvement of relations with Russia
- Restoration of territorial integrity
- EU membership
- Other



These findings are supported by the answers to the question related to the AA: NATO membership remains on the average level of 14,33%, whereas in turn the proportion of answers related to main security issues further decreases: now only 12,61% think that a restoration of territorial integrity is still on the agenda and only 7,16% see better relations with Russia.

However, the EU's economic attractiveness is still the main factor for its support: with EU membership, poverty will be significantly reduced (49,4%) and the level of corruption will decrease significantly (43,7%), too. Nevertheless, security issues and their solutions by the EU are important positive outcomes of the membership: the possibility of restoration of territorial integrity (49,7%) and an increased national security (56,9%) are perceived as main benefits. The EU is perceived as a coherent and efficient provider of security for Georgia – which is, again, a conflicting finding.

What will be the result of EU membership?	level of corruption	poverty	possibility of restoration of territorial integrity	national security	respect of Georgian traditions
refused answer	1,7	1,5	2,1	1,4	1,4
don't know	34,6	25,6	31,5	25,7	29,3
will decrease significantly	11,7	11,9	1,5	1,7	3
will decrease	32	37,5	2,4	2,7	9,4
(rather) decrease in total	43,7	49,4	3,9	4,4	12,4
will stay the same	14,7	14,7	12,6	11,3	27,7
will increase	4	6,8	38,7	43,3	23,2
will increase significantly	1,1	1,6	11	13,6	6
(rather) increase in total	5,1	8,4	49,7	56,9	28,2

15: own figure, based on The Caucasus Research Resource Centers 2013

5. Conclusion

This work has tried to integrate material as well as immaterial aspects into one theoretical scheme (Sorensen 2008:12). However, more research must be conducted to comprehensively elaborate on mechanisms, processes as well as on causal and constitutional aspects within a full-fledged theoretical body. Nevertheless, some interesting insights could be achieved.

“How are perceptions of security framed in Georgia and why?”

Security perceptions in Georgia are heavily influenced by the EU’s framing: actions of the EU influence the security outcome by standing in direct competition to the Russian ones. As Georgia is turning more and more westwards and thus tergiversates from Russia, Russia’s reservations about the EU’s policies are confirmed - by Georgia making the example of being drawn into a competitive sphere of influence.

These policy clashes lie at the core of current EU-Russia relations with an alarming tendency to appear at the surface due to the non-willingness and inability of both actors to find a lasting mediation framework – rather shortcoming initiatives are established not penetrating the core problems.

The main paradox of this is that although new dividing lines should have been avoided by designing the ENP and its fellow initiatives, exactly those arrived: whereas the debate, particularly about the common neighborhood and security relations, stagnated between the EU and Russia, the EU’s framing of security and security perceptions in Georgia has been based on approximation and partial integration (Rinnert in Ratka 2012), thus, contributing to Russian animosities.

The outcome for Georgia is, thus, discouraging: the intensity of conflict levels – despite EU engagement – remained high on average, contributing to one of the largest-scale arms races in the world with no sign of being stopped – rather the opposite is the case because all actors follow the logic of maximizing their threat potential.

This is also embodied by the clear dividing lines observable in membership patterns in international organizations: whereas Georgia only allies to western ones, Russia institutionalized different ones trying to reestablish its ring of friends.

“What are the perceptions of security in Georgia and how are they constituted?”

Bearing in mind those insights, it is interesting to see how ambivalent Georgia’s perceptions of security are: whereas the political elite cohesively pursues the way of Euro-Atlantic integration and clearly identifies Russia as the main enemy – being highly worried about the security outcome and mostly blaming Russia for it – Georgian society has a more differentiated opinion on that and sees

Russia as its best friend. Most interestingly, there's a certain feeling within the population that with the deepening EU integration, relations with Russia could be affected very negatively, and could pose an obstacle to territorial integrity and its restoration. Hence, it's rather surprising that still such a huge majority supports EU integration: although in many aspects Russia isn't perceived as hostile as by the elites, the perspective of a Russian alternative isn't that persuasive – so far.

But with the return of the neighborhood to the top of the agenda, new dynamics are to be envisaged:

- The EaP countries will remain in a vulnerable position – particularly Georgia with its pro-western course
- The clash between EU and Russia in its neighborhood, firstly, limits Georgia's possibilities to choose foreign policy options and, secondly, creates an atmosphere of insecurity
- There's so no sign that the arms race will stop, rather that it'll accelerate to fight for strategic positions which reassures the perceptions of already diverging clusters of enmity and amity with an uncertain role for Russia in them.
- It is not clear how an improvement of relations with Russia could be integrated into Georgia's foreign and security policy (Hallbach and Smolnik 2014)
- Georgia's presupposed pro-western attitude could change rather quickly under these new impressions with an uncertain outcome

However, the political interaction in the neighborhood neither can be reduced to a simple chessboard of geopolitics (Gänzle in Whitman and Wolff 2010), nor to take place within the epistemological filter of the distinction between values and interests (DeBardleben 2008). But there is more to this story: not only foreign policy issues will play an important role for Georgia in the years to come, but its very domestic constituency with all its problems will be on top of the agenda.

References

- Allison, R.,2013. *Russia, the West, and military intervention*.
- , Light, M., and White, S.,(eds.),2006. *Putin's Russia and the enlarged Europe*.
- Bellamy, A.J., Williams, P.D., and Griffin, S.,2010. *Understanding peacekeeping*.
- Braun, A.,2009. *NATO and Russia: Post-Georgia Threat Perception*.
- BTI, *Georgia Country Report 2003/2006/2008/2010/2012/2014*.
<http://www.bti-project.org/fileadmin/Inhalte/reports/2003/pdf/BTI%202003%20Georgia.pdf>
<http://www.bti-project.org/fileadmin/Inhalte/reports/2006/pdf/BTI%202006%20Georgia.pdf>
<http://www.bti-project.org/reports/country-reports/pse/geo/2008/index.nc>
<http://www.bti-project.org/reports/country-reports/pse/geo/2010/index.nc>
<http://www.bti-project.org/reports/country-reports/pse/geo/2012/index.nc>
<http://www.bti-project.org/reports/country-reports/pse/geo/2014/index.nc>
- Buzan, B., and Wæver, O.,2003. *Regions and powers. The structure of international security*.
- , and Wilde, J.d.,1998. *Security. A new framework for analysis*.
- Caplan, R., 2005. *Europe and the recognition of new states in Yugoslavia*.
- Casier, T.,2008. The New Neighbours of the European Union. In: *DeBardeleben 2008*.
- EU Council,2005. *EU Rule of Law Mission to Georgia - EUJUST THEMIS*.
- ,2008. *Press Release*.
http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/gena/102338.pdf
- ,2009. *Conclusions on European Security and Defence Policy*.
http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/articles/en/article_8733_en.htm
- DeBardeleben, J.,(ed.),2008. *The boundaries of EU enlargement. Finding a place for neighbours*.
- Delcour, L.,2013. Meandering Europeanisation. *East European Politics*,29(3), 344–357.
- ECFR,2010-2013. *European Foreign Policy Scorecard*.
http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR_SCORECARD_2010_PDF.pdf
http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR_SCORECARD_2012_WEB.pdf
http://ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR73_SCORECARD_2013_AW.pdf
- Engelbrekt, K., and Nygren, B.,2010. *Russia and Europe. Building bridges, digging trenches*.
- European Communities,1999. *Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Georgia*.
- EEAS,2011. *Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia*.
http://eeas.europa.eu/policies/eu-special-representatives/philippe-lefort/index_en.htm
- ,2013a. *Common Security and Defence Policy: EUMM Georgia*.
- ,2013b. *Georgia and Moldova one step closer to enhanced political and trade relations with the EU*.
http://www.eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131202_01_en.pdf
- ,2014. *EU-Georgia Association Agreement*.
http://eeas.europa.eu/georgia/pdf/eu-ge_aa-dcfta_en.pdf
- European Union,2008. *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy*.
http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/documents/en/081211_EU%20Security%20Strategy.pdf

Freire, M.R., and Kanet, R.E.,(eds.),2012a. *Russia and its near neighbours*.

---,2012b. *Competing for influence. The EU and Russia in post-Soviet Eurasia*.

Government of Georgia,2012. *National Security Concept*.

http://www.mfa.gov.ge/files/12_9052_136720_NationalSecurityConcept.doc

Hackett, J.T.,2014. *The military balance 2014*.

Hallbach, U., and Smolnik, F.,2014. *Russlands Stellung im Südkaukasus*.

Harnisch, S.,(ed.),2011. *Role theory in international relations*.

HIK,2003-2013. *Conflict Barometer*.

http://hiik.de/de/downloads/data/downloads_2013/ConflictBarometer2013.pdf

http://hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/ConflictBarometer_2012.pdf

http://hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/ConflictBarometer_2011.pdf

http://hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/ConflictBarometer_2010.pdf

http://hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/ConflictBarometer_2009.pdf

http://hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/ConflictBarometer_2008.pdf

http://hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/ConflictBarometer_2007.pdf

http://hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/Konfliktbarometer_2006.pdf

http://hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/Konfliktbarometer_2005.pdf

http://hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/Konfliktbarometer_2004.pdf

http://hiik.de/de/konfliktbarometer/pdf/Konfliktbarometer_2003.pdf

Hubel, H.,2004. The EU's Three-level Game in Dealing with Neighbours. *European Foreign Affairs Review*(9), 347–362.

Hopf, T.,2008. *Russia's European choice*.

Huxley, T., and Nicoll, A.,(eds.),2008. *Perspectives on international security*.

Kogan, E.,2013. *The South Caucasus Countries and their Security Dimension*.

Korosteleva, E.,2011. The Eastern Partnership Initiative: A New Opportunity for Neighbours? *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 27 (1), 1–21.

---, Natorski, M., and Simão, L.,2013. The eastern dimension of the European neighbourhood policy. *East European Politics*, 29 (3), 257–272.

Lavrov, S.,(2009). *Shake loose the cold war*.

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/jan/30/obama-russia-security-treaty>

Made, V., and Sekarev, A.,2011. *The European neighbourhood after August 2008*.

Maier, J., and Rittberger, B.,2008. Shifting Europe's Boundaries: Mass Media, Public Opinion and the Enlargement of the EU. *European Union Politics*, 9 (2), 243–267.

Mankoff, J.,2012. *The big Caucasus. Between fragmentation and integration*.

MFA of Georgia. *Chronology of Basic Events in EU - Georgia Relations*.

http://www.mfa.gov.ge/index.php?lang_id=ENG&sec_id=462

Minister of Defense of Georgia,2013. *The Defense of Georgia*.

<http://mod.gov.ge/documents/ministrisinterviueng.pdf>

Ministry of Defence of Georgia,2012. *Strategic Defence Review 2013-2016*.
<http://www.mod.gov.ge/documents/yzqhgsgsreeng.pdf>

---,2013. *Minister's Vision 2013-2014*.
<http://www.mod.gov.ge/documents/Ministers%20Vision%20Eng.pdf>

Monaghan, A.,2013. *The New Russian Foreign Policy Concept*.

NATO,2014. *NATO's relations with Georgia*. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_38988.htm

Nodia, G., and Scholtbach, P.,2006. *The political landscape of Georgia. Political parties: achievements, challenges and prospects*.

Nygren, B.,2008. *The rebuilding of Greater Russia. Putin's foreign policy towards the CIS countries*.

OSCE,2009. *Press releases related to the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism*.
<http://www.osce.org/home/104212>

Polikanov, D.,2005. *Russia's Perception and Hierarchy of Security Threats*.

President of Georgia,2013a. *Address at the Eastern Partnership Summit*.
<https://www.president.gov.ge/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=8564&i=1>

---,2013b. *New year's address*.
<https://www.president.gov.ge/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements/?8604>

--- ,2014. *Statement*.
<https://www.president.gov.ge/en/PressOffice/News/SpeechesAndStatements?p=8710&i=1>

President of the Russian Federation,2002. *Foreign Policy Concept of the Russian Federation*.
<http://www.fas.org/nuke/guide/russia/doctrine/econcept.htm>

Prodi, R.,2002. *A Wider Europe - A Proximity Policy as the key to stability*.
http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-02-619_en.htm

Raszewski, S.,2013. *The Weakest Link? Hedging Energy Security Challenges and Opportunities*.

Ratka, E.,(ed.),2012. *Understanding European Neighbourhood Policies. Concepts, Actors, Perceptions*.

RFE,1999. *Caucasus: EU Seeks To Bolster Transition In Armenia, Azerbaijan And Georgia*.
<http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1091604.html>

Secretary of the National Security Council of Georgia,2013. *Statement*.
<http://www.nsc.gov.ge/eng/news.php?id=6273>

SIPRI, *Military Expenditure Database*.
<http://portal.sipri.org/publications/pages/expenditures/country-search>

---,2013a. *World military expenditure 1988-2013*.
<http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex-graphs-for-data-launch-2014/World-military-expenditure-1988-2013.png>

---,2013b. *Recent trends in military expenditure*.
<http://www.sipri.org/research/armaments/milex/milex-graphs-for-data-launch-2014/The-share-of-world-military-expenditure-of-the-15-states-with-the-highest-expenditure-in-2013.png>

Snetkov, A.,2011. *Russia's North Caucasus: An Arc of Insecurity*.

Sorensen, G.,2008. The Case for Combining Material Forces and Ideas in the Study of IR. *European Journal of International Relations*, 14 (1), 5–32.

The Caucasus Research Resource Centers,2013a. *Caucasus Barometer 2013 Georgia*.
http://caucasusbarometer.org/downloads/CB2013_Regional_only_responses_07032014.dta

---,2013b. *EU Survey*.

http://caucasusbarometer.org/downloads/EU_2013_Only_responses_06082013.sav

TI, *Corruption Perceptions Index 2002/2005/2007/2009/2011/2013*.

http://archive.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2002;

http://archive.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2005;

http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_2007#results;

http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/cpi_2009#results;

<http://www.transparency.org/cpi2011/results#CountryResults>;

<http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2013/results/>

Wendt, A.,1992. Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics.
International Organization, 46 (2), 391–425.

---,1994. Collective identity formation and the international state. *The American Political Science Review*, 88 (2), 384.

---,1998. On constitution and causation in International Relations. *Review of International Studies*, 24 (5), 101–118.

White, S.,2011. *Understanding Russian politics*.

Whitman, R.G., and Wolff, S.,(eds.),2010. *The European neighbourhood policy in perspective. Context, implementation and impact*.

Williams, P.,2013. *Security studies. An introduction*.