



ISSICEU – Intra- and Inter-Societal Sources of Instability in the Caucasus and EU Opportunities to Respond

Information on ISSICEU research projects and partner institutions

St. Gallen, 10.06.2015

ISSICEU – General Information

- Stems from one of two successful bids for the EC call “Security and democracy in the neighbourhood: The case of the Caucasus”
- Started on 1 Januar 2014
- Duration of 36 months
- Project Coordinator is Prof. Dirk Lehmkuhl from the University of St. Gallen
- Consortium comprises 8 institutions from Switzerland, Germany, the Russian Federation, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey
- Website available at www.issiceu.eu



ISSICEU – Consortium

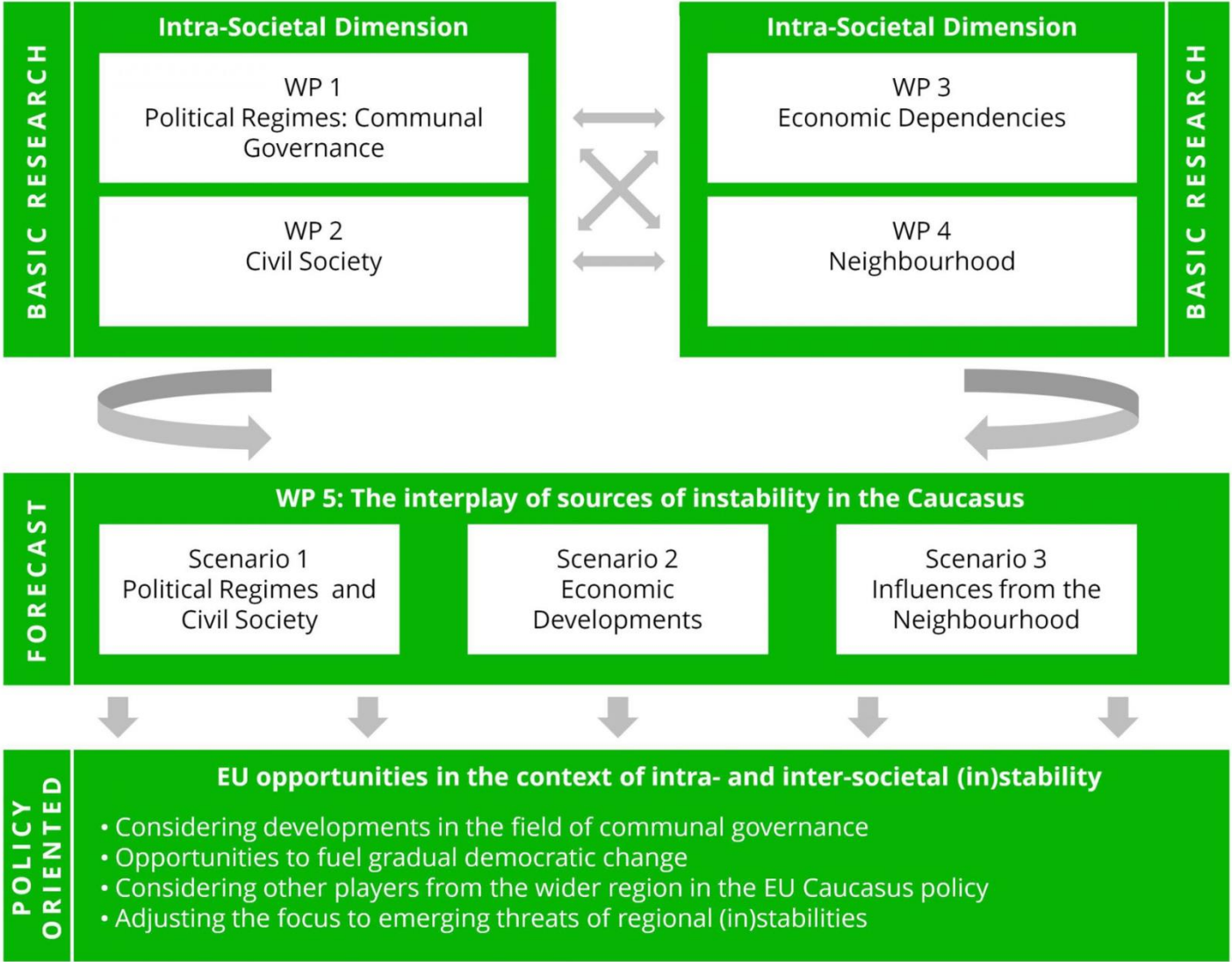
- **University of St. Gallen**, Switzerland (Project Coordinator) (<http://www.gce.unisg.ch/de>)
- **University of Fribourg**, Switzerland (<http://www.unifr.ch/sr/de>)
- **SWP - German Institute for International and Security Affairs**, Germany (<http://www.swp-berlin.org/>)
- **Khazar University Baku**, Azerbaijan (<http://www.khazar.org/>)
- **GeoWel Research**, Georgia (<http://www.geowel.org/>)
- **Kabardino-Balkarian State University**, Russia (<http://www.kbsu.ru/>)
- **Russian State University for the Humanities**, Russia (<http://rggu.com/>)
- **Ankara Policy Center**, Turkey (<http://www.apm.org.tr/Home.aspx>)



ISSICEU – Work Packages

- ISSICEU research is clustered into 5 work packages
- WP 1 & 2: Intra-Societal Dimension
 - WP 1: Political Regimes – Communal Governance
 - WP 2: Civil Society
- WP 3 & 4: Inter-Societal Dimension
 - WP 3: Economic Dependencies
 - WP 4: Neighbourhood
- WP 5: The interplay of sources of instability in the Caucasus – Scenario Development and Policy Briefs

ISSICEU – Work Packages



Work Package 1 - Political Regimes: Communal Governance

- Period: January 2014 to December 2016
- **Lead CP: Kabardino-Balkarian State University**
- WP leader: Prof. Alexey Gunya
- Research foci:
 - Interplay of adopted democratic and established domestic institutions at macro level
 - Frictions in communal governance
 - Improving EU democracy promotion efforts: considering domestic practices
- Further CPs involved: Uni SG, SWP, Khazar University, GeoWel

Work Package 2 – Civil Society

- Period: January 2014 to December 2016
- **Lead CP: Khazar University Baku**
- WP leader: Dr. Farda Asadov
- Research foci:
 - Attitudes towards and practices of civic participation
 - Sources of civic participation
 - Regional and extra-regional influences on civic participation
 - Promoting civic participation in EU policies
 - Adequate approaches to strengthening civil society organisations
- Further CPs involved: Uni SG, Uni Fribourg, SWP, APM, GeoWel, KBSU, RSUH

Work Package 3 – Economic Dependencies

- Period: January 2014 to December 2016
- **Lead CP: GeoWel Research**
- WP leader: Dr. George Welton
- Research foci:
 - Mapping economic dependencies in the Caucasus
 - Economic dependencies and secessionist conflicts
 - Economic dependencies and intra-societal conflicts
 - The EU as an economic actor in the Caucasus: unintended externalities
 - The EU as an energy trade partner of Caucasus states in the context of the secessionist conflicts
- Further CPs involved: SWP, APM, Khazar University, KBSU

Work Package 4 – Neighbourhood

- Period: January 2014 to December 2016
- **Lead CP: Ankara Policy Center**
- WP leader: Dr. Burcu Punsmann
- Research foci:
 - Societal linkages between Turkey and the Caucasus
 - Turkey's political and economic relations with the Caucasus states and de-facto states
 - Regional influences on the development of civil society, political regimes, and intra-regional cooperation
 - Compatibility of the Caucasus policy of the EU and Turkey
 - Compatibility of EU activities of civil society development with that of other regional players
- Further CPs involved: Uni SG, Uni Fribourg, SWP, Khazar University, GeoWel, KBSU

Work Package 5 – The interplay of sources of instability in the Caucasus

- Period: July 2016 to December 2016
- **Lead CP: University of St. Gallen**
- WP leader: Prof. Dirk Lehmkuhl
- Synthesis of research findings from WPs 1-4, development of scenarios and policy briefs
- Research foci:
 - Sources of instability in the individual Caucasus societies
 - Potential spill-over of destabilising dynamics across the Caucasus entities
 - Dynamics of Instability in the Caucasus: Three Scenarios
 - Strengthened impact of the EU as a player in the Caucasus
- Further CPs involved: Uni Fribourg, SWP, APM, Khazar University, GeoWel, KBSU, RSUH

CP: University of St. Gallen

Research topic	Hybridity at the „local level“ and its impact on regime stability
Research questions	How does hybridity (interplay between adopted institutions that have been developed and proved in democracies and established domestic institutions) manifests in local governance? Does hybridity challenge or strengthen regime stability? (why and how)
Theoretical approach	historical neo-institutionalism
Empirical cases	Azerbaijan (including NK), Armenia, Georgia
Empirical data	Expert and narrative interviews with residents of the capital and 2 minor communities
WP contribution	WP1 (patterns of hybridity that characterise the political regimes) WP2 (role of hybridity in intrasocietal conflicts)
Leading researcher	Katharina Hoffmann (katharina.hoffmann@unisg.ch)
Research topic	Potential of collaboration and conflict between the Caucasus policies of the EU and Turkey
Research questions	What characterizes the Caucasus policies of the EU and Turkey? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the relations between EU and Turkey impact on Turkey's in certain sectors (for example trade)? • Are there standards and norms that both actors promote? • What are the areas of incompatibility and conflict?
Empirical data	Legal documents, statistics, expert interviews
Leading researcher	Dirk Lehmkuhl (dirk.lehmkuhl@unisg.ch)

CP: University of Fribourg

Research topic	Iranian Influence on Religious Groups in Azerbaijan and Dagestan
Research questions	What is the impact of a transnational religious connection on (national/regional) civil society and politics?
Theoretical approach	Religion in the public sphere Religions as transnational actors
Empirical cases	Azerbaijan, Dagestan
Empirical data	Expert interviews; Case studies (interviews with local religious leaders, internet based networks)
WP contribution	WP2 (impact on domestic politics) WP4 (role of Iranian influenced groups in civil society)
Leading researcher	Ansgar Jödicke (ansgar.joedicke@unifr.ch)

CP: SWP Berlin (I/II)

Research topic	'Turkey' as actor and factor in the political space of the Caucasus
Research questions	<p>What are the disaggregated influences from Turkey on the Caucasus, in particular on Abkhazia and Adjara and in the context of the Abkhaz-Georgian conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of Turkish actors are active in Abkhazia and Ajara; how have their activities developed in the last 20 years? • What is the relationship between Turkish societal / economic actors and other external actors (Russian, EU, etc.) active in Abkhazia and Ajara? • What impact does Abkhazia's unrecognized status have on the nature of Turkish economic engagement there as opposed to Turkish business activities in Ajara? • What are the (power) relationships and links between these actors; are there any conflicts?
Theoretical approach	Transnationalism, combination of approaches from political sociology, IR, and political geography
Empirical cases	Turkish religious cooperation on societal level with Ajara; Turkish Diaspora activities in Abkhazia; Turkish businesses and investments in Abkhazia and Ajara, security cooperation of Turkey with Georgia and Azerbaijan
Empirical data	Interpretive-qualitative methods, data gathered during field research: interviewing, archival research, etc.
WP contribution	<p>WP 2: Transnational ties on societal level between Turkey and the Caucasus</p> <p>WP 3: Economic ties between Turkey and the Caucasus on the micro level</p> <p>WP 4: State and societal influences from the neighborhood on stability</p>
Leading researchers	Franziska Smolnik (Franziska.Smolnik@swp-berlin.org), Andrea Weiss, Yana Zabanova (on maternity leave until 11/2015)

CP: SWP Berlin (II/II)

Research topic	Societal ties between Turkey and the Caucasus (special comparative focus on Ajaria and Abkhazia)
Research questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of Turkish societal actors are active in Abkhazia and Ajara; how have their activities developed in the last 20 years? • What is the relationship between Turkish societal actors and other external actors (Russian, EU, etc.) active in Abkhazia and Ajara?
Theoretical approach	Transnationalism, combination of approaches from political sociology, IR, and political geography
Empirical cases	Micro-level studies of Turkish religious organizations in Ajara and Turkish Diaspora activities in Abkhazia
Empirical data	Interpretive-qualitative methods, data gathered during field research: interviewing, archival research, etc.
WP contribution	WP 2: Transnational ties on societal level between Turkey and the Caucasus WP 3: Economic ties between Turkey and the Caucasus on the micro level WP 4: State and societal influences from the neighborhood on stability
Leading researchers	Franziska Smolnik (Franziska.Smolnik@swp-berlin.org), Andrea Weiss, Yana Zabanova (on maternity leave until 11/2015)
Research topic	Economic ties between Turkey and the Caucasus (special comparative focus on Ajaria and Abkhazia)
Research questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the major Turkish economic actors active in Abkhazia and Ajara? • What impact does Abkhazia's unrecognized status have on the nature of Turkish economic engagement there as opposed to Turkish business activities in Ajara? • What are the relationships and links between these actors; are there any conflicts?
Empirical cases	Micro-level studies of Turkish businesses and investments in Abkhazia and Ajara

CP: GeoWel Research

Research topic	Resource Dependencies in the South Caucasus and their impact on political decision making
Research questions	<p>How can we understand the resource interdependencies within the South Caucasus? To what extent and how do resource dependencies in the South Caucasus influence political decision making? Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To what extent and how is Georgian policy dictated by the country's dependency on ODA? And to what extent did that impact on the policy immediately before the war in 2008? - How do diaspora communities in Russia and the US exert influence in politics in Armenia? - How does the oil wealth of Azerbaijan effect decision making vis-à-vis Nagorno Karabakh?
Theoretical approach	Rational choice, social economic and neo-institutional
Empirical cases	Armenia, Azerbaijan (including Nagorno Karabakh) and Georgia (including Abkhazia)
Empirical data	Economic analysis, reprocessing of primary economic data, expert interviews with political decision makers, donors, NGOs, processing of attitudinal data and media analysis
WP contribution	<p>WP1 WP lead – providing overview – particularly focused on national resource interdependencies and their impact on decision making and society. Analysis of EU policy in this area.</p> <p>WP2 support in the form of macro-analysis of resource flows from outside the region. Analysis of EU policy in this area.</p>
Leading researcher	George Welton (george.welton@gmail.com)

CP: Khazar University Baku

Research topic	Forms of civic activism and its impact on stability and democratic change in the South Caucasus
Research questions	How major political actors and general constituencies in the South Caucasus comprehend and conceptualize civic participation? What used to be forms of civic participation experienced in Azerbaijan and Georgia ? How civil society organizations are perceived in public opinion and by political actors?
Theoretical approach	Concept of civil society as vehicle of stability, sustainable development and democratic change
Empirical cases	Azerbaijan (with references to Georgian practice and data)
Empirical data	Public opinion survey in Azerbaijan (capital and rural areas based on demographic sampling) Expert and Stakeholder interviews with NGO leaders, government official, civil society activists and academia, media reports
WP contribution	WP 1 (aspirations and motivations for civic activism on communal level) WP 2 (civil society as factor of stability challenges and societal transformation WP 5 (civil society in EU policy in the South Caucasus)
Leading researcher	Farda Asadov (asadovfm@hotmail.com ; fasadov@khazar.org)
Research topic	Sources of civic participation and potential of civic activism as a source of reformation
Research questions	NGO funding sources in light of independence and transparency connotations? Secular and religious civic agendas: overlapping and distinguishing features? Motivations for civic activism? Coordination and cooperation with international civil society?
Empirical data	Legal documents, public opinion survey ,statistics, expert interviews
Leading researcher	Farda Asadov (asadovfm@hotmail.com ; fasadov@khazar.org)

CP: Kabardino-Balkarian State University I/II

Research topic	Interplay of adopted democratic and established domestic institutions at macro level
Research questions	What are the adopted (democratic) rules and organisations related to communal governance? How deep is their embeddedness in the political regimes at macro-level
Theoretical approach	Institution centred analyses
Empirical cases	North Caucasus (Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, Chechnya, Dagestan)
Empirical data	Expert's narrative interviews, document analysis, in-depth interviews, content analysis of media and process tracing.
WP contribution	WP1: the contribution of local institutions to the stability of political regimes WP2: typing institutional interactions (in order to understand institutional hybridization process)
Leading researcher	Prof. Alexey Gunya (gunyaa@yahoo.com)
Research topic	Frictions in communal governance
Research questions	What are the frictions between state agencies and society in communal governance? What actors and mechanisms fuel or mitigate conflicts?
Empirical data	Semi-structured interviews, focus groups, statistics and sociological surveys, reconstructive content analysis.
Leading researcher	Dr. Murat Shogenov (mshogenov@gmail.com)

CP: Kabardino-Balkarian State University I/II

Research topic	Improving EU democracy promotion efforts: considering domestic practices
Research question	What are the effects of democratisation policies on the regime stability? Which established domestic practices that alter democratisation efforts should be considered in the export of communal governance practices?
Leading researcher	Prof. Alexey Gunya (gunyaa@yahoo.com)
Empirical data	Data analysis from research topics 1 and 2s

CP: Russian State University for the Humanities

Research topic	Sources and dynamic of civic participation in Armenia and Georgia
Research questions	What are main sources of civic participation? What is the level of it? What are main hindances and alternative attitudes?
Theoretical approach	Theory of social capital
Empirical cases	Armenia, Georgia
Empirical data	Quantitative data; statistics; public and academic debate; legislation
WP contribution	WP2
Leading researcher	Alexander Agadjanian (grandrecit@gmail.com)
Research topic	Religious networks and civic participation in Armenia and Georgia
Research questions	How do religious institutions, religious networks relate to the development of civil society
Empirical data	Quantatative data; case studies of particular communities
Leading researcher	Alexander Agadjanian (grandrecit@gmail.com)

CP: Ankara Policy Center I/II

Research topic	Inter-societal flows between Turkey and the Caucasus & Caucasian diasporas in the Turkish context
Research questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤How the Caucasian identities are being redefined in the current socio-political context / If/how they impact on the national identity in Turkey➤Inter-societal flows between Turkey and the Caucasus and their impact on the communities in the Caucasus➤If/how these interactions impact on political participation and civil society in the Caucasus
Theoretical approach	Political sociology, network politics, transnationalism, historical analysis
Empirical cases	Mapping of Caucasus originated ethnic diasporas in Turkish (Cerkas, Georgian, Laz, Ahiska, Armenian, Azeri), case studies on flows in Istanbul, Antalya, and the Eastern Black Sea coast
Empirical data	Interviews, focus group meetings, statistical data on trade, migration and investments, logistics
WP contribution	WP 3 – WP4 – WP2
Leading researchers	Hasan Kanbolat (hasankanbolat@apm.org.tr), Hulya Demirdirek (hulyademirdirek@apm.org.tr)

CP: Ankara Policy Center II/II

Research topic	Drivers of the formulation and conduct of Turkish policy towards the Caucasus & Analysis of the impact of Turkey on stability and security in the Caucasus
Research questions	To what extent the Turkish foreign policy is being shaped by geopolitical considerations, neighbourhood and border management imperatives and domestic concerns? To what extent non state actors are affected Turkish foreign policy (diaspora CSOs, interest groups and private sector) How the Turkish-Armenian dispute and the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict have become interlinked
Empirical data	Qualitative interviews, discourse analysis in Turkey, on the borderland
Leading researcher	Burcu Gultekin Punsman (burcupunsman@apm.org.tr)

Overview of ISSICEU Events

Date	Location	Host	Type of Event	Topic / Comment
December 2015	Baku, Azerbaijan	Khazar University	Public Panel	-
February 2016	Berlin, Germany	SWP Berlin	Public Panel	-
April 2016	Kabardino-Balkaria, Russia	Kabardino-Balkarian State University	Public Panel	-
May 2016	Moscow, Russia	Russian State University for the Humanities	Public Panel	-
May 2016	Brussels or Caucasus	ISSICEU	Expert Workshop	Political Regimes and Civil Society
August 2016	Brussels or Caucasus	ISSICEU	Expert Workshop	Economic dependencies
October 2016	Brussels or Caucasus	ISSICEU	Expert Workshop	Neighbourhood
October 2016	Switzerland	University of St. Gallen & University of Fribourg	Public Panel	-
December 2016	Brussels	ISSICEU	Expert Workshop	Scenarios and stability and security dynamics