

POLITIK UND GESELLSCHAFT IM KAUKASUS. EINE UNRUHIGE REGION ZWISCHEN TRADITION UND TRANSFORMATION, HERAUSGEgeben VON OLAF LEIßE. SPRINGER VS, WIESBADEN, 2019. X, 480 S.

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Globalization and integration are the general directions of development of the modern world economy. The process of European and international integration is a specific phenomenon of international relations, which began in the middle of the 20th century, and the world has accumulated sufficient theoretical and practical experience in this area of international activity. In recent decades, there has been an increase in regional centripetal processes in international relations. At the same time, the integration processes that have unfolded in almost all regions of the world represent a qualitatively new form of interstate interaction, which is characterized by a general orientation towards the emergence of interstate and supranational principles. In any case, these processes are a reflection of the general process of the formation of an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world economy, acquiring a truly global scale in certain areas and sectors. In this regard, two main trends can be noted in regional and world politics today. On the one hand, factors leading to the formation of some kind of its integrity are growing, which is commonly called the process of globalization and which is caused by the development of political and economic ties between the countries of the Caucasus, the creation of modern communication and information systems, European standards and norms. On the other hand, the political and economic rapprochement and interaction of the Caucasian countries at the regional level is the most intensive by historical standards, large regional integration structures are being formed, developing towards the creation of relatively independent centers of the European and world economy.

The Caucasus is one of the most strategically and geopolitically important destinations for the United States, Germany, France, Russia, Turkey, Iran and other countries. Undoubtedly, the Caucasian region with a multinational composition of the population, which has a complex ethno-political and multicultural mosaic. Interethnic relations in the South Caucasus and the North Caucasus were formed historically and were accompanied by conflict and interethnic tolerance, good neighborliness, ethnopolitical friendship and mutual assistance. The ethnopolitical situation in the

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Caucasus is characterized by military conflicts and their consequences (Chechnya, South Ossetia, Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Armenia, and Azerbaijan). The aggravation of interethnic relations, in a historically unstable region, led to an increase in conflict in the Caucasus, resulting in hostilities, uncontrolled migration, and terrorist activities.

The South Caucasus and the North Caucasus, located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, have been at the crossroads of clashes of civilizations, world religions and states for centuries. The problematic region between tradition and transformation, which has access to the Caspian and Black Seas, occupies a key geopolitical position. At the present stage, in the context of the transformation of international relations, the South Caucasus region, due to its geostrategic location and significant reserves of energy resources of the Caspian basin, has become the focus of priority areas of foreign policy of regional and non-regional actors. One of the countries pursuing an active policy in the South Caucasus is Turkey. In the context of the implementation of the South Caucasian vector of its foreign policy, Turkey pays special attention to Georgia, which, in the context of the unresolved Karabakh conflict, not only acts as a transit country in regional energy transport projects, but also occupies a special position between Turkey and the Turkic-speaking world. This fact is pushing Turkey to deepen relations with Georgia in various fields and search for new ways to increase influence on this country. The study of Turkey's foreign policy towards Georgia, which occupies a special position in the South Caucasus, makes it possible to identify the goals and interests of Turkish policy in this region. The relevance of the chosen topic of this dissertation research is also determined by the fact that the implementation of Turkish policy in the South Caucasus affects the interests of the national security of the Russian Federation, as well as its policy towards the South Caucasian countries.

The main object of the regional study of this book is the modern regional integration policy and the strategy of stable development of the countries of the South Caucasus. It is important to note that the authors of various articles comparatively discuss the following issues: 1) Halted Democracy: Government Hijacking of the New Opposition in Azerbaijan; 2) Europeanization of Azerbaijan: Assessment of Normative Principles and Pragmatic Cooperation; 3) The political landscape of Georgia; 4) The Europeanization of Georgia; 5) Fighting corruption in Georgia and Armenia; 6) Peculiarities of the development of parliamentarism in Armenia; 7) Armenian Complementarity: Foreign Policy of a Small State in Turbulent Times; 8) Islam in post-Soviet Azerbaijan; 9) The state of democracy and human rights in Azerbaijan; 10) Ethnic and Nationality Policy in Azerbaijan; 11) Georgia in the field of tension between liberal democracy and right-wing populism using the example of minority politics; 12) Interreligious families in an ethnographic portrait. Jewish-Christian coexistence in Racha, Georgia; 13) Civil society in Armenia and the South Caucasus; 14) Current conflict dynamics in the North Caucasus; 15) The historical role of Islam, the rise of Islamism and the political system of Ramzan Kadyrov in Chechnya; 16) The relationship between Abkhazia and Russia. From international isolation to recognition; 17) The Future of Russia-Georgia Relations: The Need for a Comprehensive Anti-annexation Policy; 18) Russia in the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh; 19) The South Caucasus, Turkey and the New Geopolitical Reality: Determinants of Turkish

Foreign Policy in the South Caucasus; 20) The South Caucasus in the context of competing demands for order and integration.

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union caused fundamental changes in the system of international relations. The emergence of new independent states in the post-Soviet space led to a geopolitical transformation, which, in turn, led to the emergence of new geostrategic regions. The Caucasus, previously closed to the leading states of the world, became accessible to non-regional states after the collapse of the Soviet Union, thereby turning into a center of conflict of interests of various countries and political forces. The geopolitical significance of the Caucasus is determined by its geostrategic location with the potential to become an important hub of transport and communication systems along the East-West and North-South lines.

Participation in the processes of regional integration is one of the main ways of self-identification of the countries of the post-Soviet space. The national integration policy is an integral part of both the foreign policy strategy and the model of economic development of the states of the region under consideration. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has remained the main initiator of integration processes in the post-Soviet space. Officially defining relations and integration with the countries of the region as priority areas of its foreign policy and initiating the majority of integration projects in the region, Russia faces both the passivity of its partners and their direct opposition to the integration processes. The ambiguity and inconsistency of the policies and goals of the countries of the region participating in the processes of economic and military-political integration often provoke crises in relations between partner states. The growth of economic costs and political risks on the part of Russia associated with its integration course actualizes the understanding of the Russian integration policy, its tasks and tools, as well as the factors hindering and facilitating its implementation.

The objectives of the study of the articles in this book involve a deep analysis of the conceptual approach of the countries of the South Caucasus and the North Caucasus to the implementation of the goals of their policies in the post-Soviet space, fixed in the fundamental foreign policy documents of their countries, and the study of the objective reasons for failures in integration policy. The main reason for the problems of the integration policy of the Caucasian countries is the lack of a full-fledged long-term integration strategy in Russia, as the main initiator of integration in the post-Soviet space. At present, the integration strategy of the Caucasian countries is being replaced by a set of often contradictory and uncoordinated foreign policy concepts and local strategies that largely overlap and overlap each other, although they generally justify the high importance of integration in the post-Soviet space in the context of the implementation of the foreign economic and strategic interests of the EU. As part of the analysis of publications devoted to the subject of democratization and integration in the post-Soviet space, a number of works were studied, in which the authors conducted in-depth studies of the main problems and prospects for economic and military-political integration within all the currently existing associations of the region. At the same time, these works do not consider new forms and stages of economic and military-political integration caused by the global financial crisis and conflict. In addition, in these works, the authors raise the issue of the conceptual justification of the EU integration policy in the post-Soviet space.

They highlight the prospects for cooperation in the energy sector as the core of economic integration, as well as the post-crisis economic situation in the Eastern Partnership area, which is notable for its instability and is doomed to undergo significant changes in the post-crisis period. The scientific works consider the issues of maintaining and strengthening the leading role of the EU as the main and civilized actor of the regional economy and politics among the states of the Caucasus region, the problem of the EU's participation in integration processes and the use of resources of the states of this region in the interests of modernizing its economy. At the same time, these works contain predominantly pessimistic assessments and are mostly focused on the financial and economic component of European integration, which does not seem to be the only correct approach, since the progress and success of integration depend on a wide range of factors, including political, social and humanitarian ones. It should be noted that all the considered works, although they reveal many aspects of the integration processes in the post-Soviet space in conjunction with the interests of the EU, however, the information contained in them quickly loses its relevance due to the constantly changing political and economic situation in the Caucasus region, accelerating international economic and political processes, both globally and regionally.

In addition, among the studied publications, complex scientific studies were identified that consider the applicability of the main classical and new approaches to the study and development of regional integration in the post-Soviet space, revealing the entire set of directions and forms of integration in the Eastern Partnership region. Finally, several works have been found that identify and take into account the specifics of the region and contain a deep analysis of the integration policy of Russia and Turkey in this region.

In the process of formation of integration processes, complex methodological problems arise, the solution of which largely determines the success of international integration, which largely determines the fate of not only the peoples of individual countries, but also entire continents. Accordingly, the responsibility for possible errors or miscalculations is also great. Therefore, the importance of a correctly chosen methodology is very high. The combination of complexity and high responsibility of the strategic decisions made makes this area of research particularly relevant and significant.