

## **Abstract**

### **External Europeanization: stretching a concept too far? The case of Georgia**

**Thijs Rommens**

The research agenda on Europeanization appears to have found another patch of fertile ground by shifting attention to the countries bordering the European Union. This specific form of Europeanization, i.e. external Europeanization, appears to be the next generation of research, following on the domestic impact of the European level on accession countries, and earlier on the 15 “old” members states. Initial research on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Eastern Partnership (EaP) struggled to find an appropriate analytical framework and fell back on adapting foreign policy analysis or enlargement theories to this new context. External Europeanization proved to be a valid and useful alternative to analyze the effectiveness of the ENP/EaP and as a result has become increasingly applied when assessing the domestic impact of the EU in its neighbourhood.

This article fits in this expanding body of literature and aims to contribute to it in two ways. First, it is an in-depth case study based on field research of how the ENP/EaP influences the domestic level in Georgia. More specifically, it focuses on how the EU’s democratization agenda resonates within Georgia and how Georgian non governmental organizations make use of the opportunities provided by the implementation of the ENP/EaP. Second, this article places the concept of external Europeanization in a broader framework that takes into account both domestic and international factors. By placing external Europeanization in this broader framework that incorporates domestic politics and geopolitical dynamics, its usefulness as an explanatory mechanism is critically assessed. This article aims to tackle the question about the limits of external Europeanization, both geographically and as an analytical tool.