

ON THE INFLUENCE OF MOUNTAIN AND HERITAGE TOURISM IN GEORGIA: THE EXEMPLARY CASE OF USHGULI

STEFAN APPLIS

With 3 figures, 1 table and 5 photos

Received 15 April 2019 · Accepted 10 October 2019

Summary: This study centres on the village community of Ushguli, located in the Upper Svaneti region in the north of Georgia. After attaining UNESCO World Heritage status in 1996, and benefiting since around 2010 from the establishment of secure state structures and systems, Ushguli has seen an incremental rise in tourism. Thus far, it has been relatively unprepared for meeting the interests and needs of visitors and coping with the diversity characterising modern lifestyles. The encounter and in many instances clash of interests between villagers and tourists is correspondingly difficult to channel and manage; visitor numbers are continuously growing, due at least in part to local residents' efforts to advance their economic goals. Ushguli therefore represents a space offering ideal experimental conditions for the exploration of tourism as a strategy for overcoming economic and social crisis and of its effects on preexisting spatial, economic, environmental and social structures, against a backdrop of change to material and immaterial objects driven by various stakeholders. This article provides an overview of the specific focus of this study, commenced in 2017 and planned to cover a duration of several years, and of the research approach taken, as well as outlining central findings.

Zusammenfassung: Das Untersuchungsfeld der vorgelegten Studie ist die Dorfgemeinschaft Ushguli, gelegen im Norden Georgiens in Obersvanetien. Ushguli verzeichnet seit der Erklärung zum UNESCO-Welterbe 1996 und der Herstellung äußerer staatlicher Sicherheit seit etwa 2010 einen schrittweise zunehmenden Tourismus, der dort auf wenig Vorbereitung trifft im Umgang mit touristischen Interessen, Bedürfnissen und sich unterscheidenden modernen Lebensweisen. Entsprechend ungeordnet treffen hier verschiedene, einander in weiten Bereichen entgegengesetzte Interessen von Dorfbewohnern und Touristen aufeinander - auch wenn die ökonomischen Interessen der Dorfbewohner den touristischen Zustrom fortschreitend beschleunigen. So bietet sich in Ushguli ein Raum, in welchem unter fast laborähnlichen Bedingungen untersucht werden kann, wie sich Tourismus als Bewältigungsstrategie ökonomischer und sozialer Krisen auf räumliche ökonomische, ökologische und soziale Strukturen auswirkt, wobei alle Beteiligten im Feld materielle und geistige Objekte umgestalten. Der Artikel gibt einen Überblick zu Untersuchungsfeld und Forschungsperspektiven und präsentiert Ergebnisse der 2017 begonnenen Studie.

Keywords: Caucasus, Svaneti, mountain tourism, world heritage, regional identity

1 Introduction

Located at the head of the Enguri gorge in Svaneti (Georgia), Ushguli initially appears to represent a classic instance of rural depopulation of a peripheral high mountain region (Fig. 1). Beginning in the late 1980s, this community of four villages saw severe loss of population in the context of state-organised resettlement plans, prompted by a series of extreme weather events in 1986/87, including snowstorms and avalanches, which led to outmigration of about 50% of the population (cf. STADELBAUER 1990; VOELL et al. 2016, 26–28). By contrast, strengths have emerged in recent years with the development of significant potential for tourism, providing families in the Upper Svaneti area with opportunities to overcome the poverty which continues to plague Georgia and to attain

a degree of economic and therefore social security (cf. CRRC 2017; ECHANOVE 2016; GUGUSHVILI 2011; PEARCE 2011).

Ushguli's value as a tourist destination today lies in its defensive tower houses (see PAVAN 2011 and Photo 1) and the remarkably extensive retention of its landscape's medieval-era appearance (see ICOMOS 1996, UNESCO 1997), additionally in its proximity to the foot of Shkhara (5201m). The area has held UNESCO World Heritage status since 1996. Hikers, mountaineers and skiers from outside Georgia have been coming to the region since Soviet times, particularly in the 1970s (cf. STADELBAUER 1983; CAPPUCCI and ZARRILLI 2015, 74). The villagers thus possess a fundamental level of experience in tourism and the associated practices, including mountain and horse-trekking guiding and the provision of accommodation and meals.

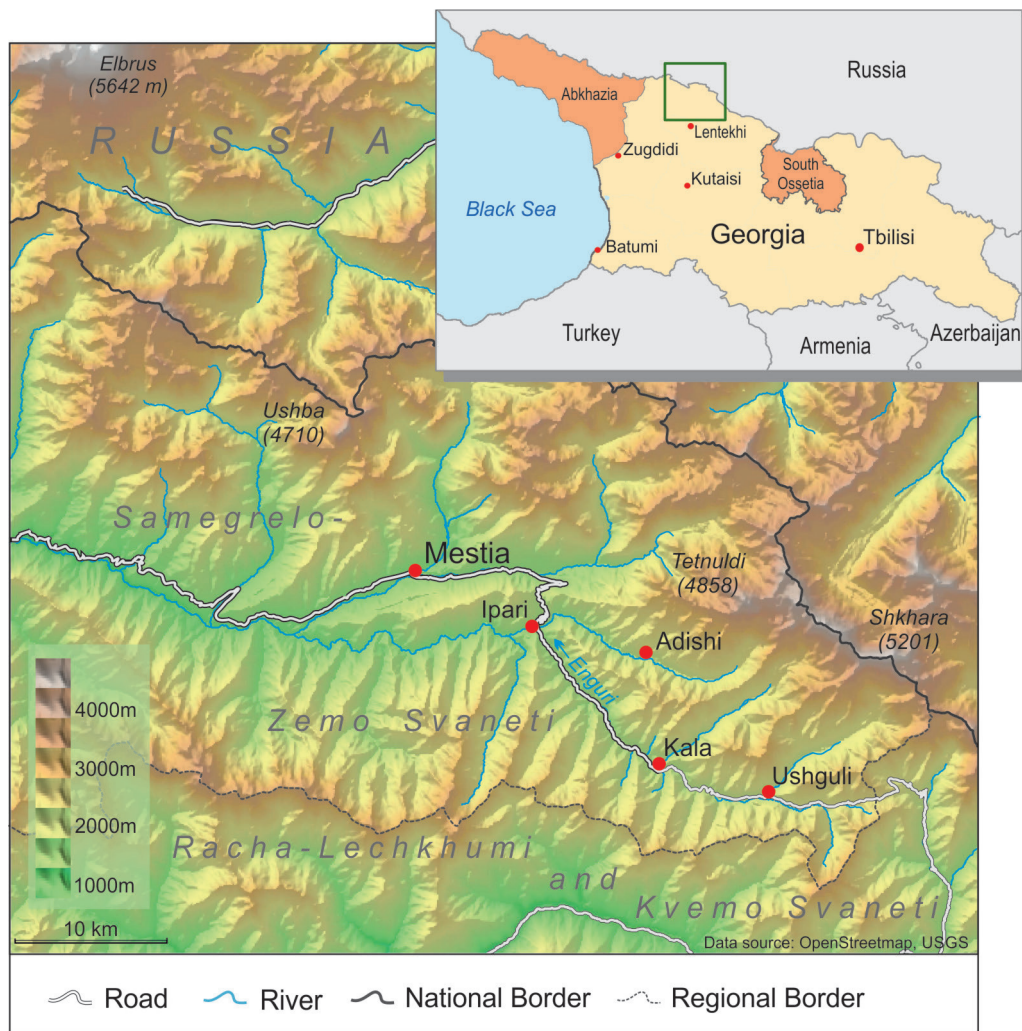


Fig. 1: Study area

The early 2000s brought a substantial increase in visits to Ushguli by independent travellers who use internet platforms to choose their destinations, aided by the establishment of permanent transport services. Ushguli welcomes particularly large numbers of visitors in the three summer months. The narrative of an authentic society (VOELL et al. 2016, 20ff.) living at the edge of time, where little has changed over centuries and where life has a sense of fairytale about it, dominates travel guides and Internet sites such as Wikitravel, TripAdvisor, Facebook and Booking.com. More serious travel writing may also echo this discourse (cf. ANDERSON 2004; NASMYTH 2017). It is a narrative, however, with narrow limits, that has little to do with the reality of life at subsistence level, cut off from medical care and political participation and afflicted by a lack of prospects for the future. It also fails to take account of the higher standards of

living enjoyed in the region in the Soviet era's heyday, when Ushguli was linked to Tbilisi by helicopter flights and was able to provide secondary schooling that enabled a large number of the current aging population to eventually attain university degrees.

Ushguli, or more specifically the village of Chazhashi, is one of the monuments in Georgia to be listed as World Heritage, a title coveted by Georgia as a whole and the tourism industry in particular (Fig. 2); the UNESCO World Heritage List additionally names the whole of Upper Svaneti as an 'exceptional' cultural landscape, but only Chazhashi holds the status itself.

In the course of a few short years, however, uncoordinated building works in response to the tourist influx to Ushguli have altered both the community's architectural character and the surrounding cultural landscape, producing discrepancies between



Photo 1: View of Chazhashi, a current World Heritage site which in the Soviet era was known as the Ushguli-Chazhashi Museum Reserve and held protected status from 1971 onward.

UNESCO's rationale for awarding World Heritage status and the current situation on the ground. The risk exists that UNESCO could, as it has in other cases, reduce the geographical extent of Georgia's World Heritage sites or remove the status from an entire architectural ensemble (cf. STADELBAUER 2018, 47f). Populations in remote mountainous areas, likewise in regions of the Caucasus, generally perceive the rich cultural and ecological heritage frequently found in such areas to hold significant potential for the development of tourism from hikers and culture aficionados (cf. GRACHEVA et al. 2012). In Ushguli, it appears as if this promise may be at risk of radical reversal due to the threat to the cultural landscape's long-term survival.

The work underlying this article seeks to explore possibilities for a sustainable management plan for Ushguli on a participatory basis, consulting and including the local population. This plan would both satisfy the requirements of architectural and cultural preservation and meet criteria of 'gentle' tourism (cf. KHARTISHVILI et al. 2019), as well as enabling the community to retain its authenticity as demanded by UNESCO World Heritage stipulations (see SCHÄFER 2016b, 357). The study's approach, drawn from praxis theory (cf. fundamental considerations in RECKWITZ 2003; further, SCHÄFER and EVERTS 2019 with specific reference to human geography), focuses on ascertaining the village residents' conceptions of a fulfilled life in Ushguli within the context of their experience and establishing their views on how tourism in the locali-

ty might develop sustainably without conflicting with their interests. Accordingly, this article attempts to do justice to the specific historical, political and social circumstances prevailing in Ushguli. Spatial analysis in its typical form identifies, *inter alia*, ecological and economic resources, potential and risks, and generates on this basis proposals for action and associated concepts for planning authorities. One assumption behind the work on this study is that this traditional manner of proceeding will effect little actual change on the ground (cf. GREEN ALTERNATIVE 2011 and VOLL and MOSEDALE 2015 on fundamental issues in Upper Svaneti associated with this phenomenon).

2 Objectives and approach

Numerous recent publications on Ushguli have engaged with the challenges facing the region, emphasising the necessity of economically and socially sustainable approaches (KHARTISHVILI et al. 2019; VOLL and MOSEDALE 2015; GREEN ALTERNATIVE 2011; ENGEL et al. 2006) and the risk to the location's architectural heritage both from human activity and from natural events such as avalanches and land- and mudslides (among others, TARRAGÜEL 2011; TARRAGÜEL et al. 2012). Almost all these studies, however, emerged from fairly brief stays by the relevant research groups, spent recording data which were largely quantitative in nature or collecting fairly straightforward qualitative material, such as short interviews. As a con-



Fig. 2: UNESCO World Heritage Monuments in Georgia. Source: Modified after KHOMERIKI 2018

sequence, they tend to focus on presenting general information on factors common to sustainable agro-tourist activities. However, there is overall consensus that the specific social conditions that characterise Ushguli would be prohibitive to the success of any management plan imposed from outside, and that it takes years for stakeholders to gain awareness of the developments and shifts that ensue when numbers of tourists swell. VOLL and MOSEDALE (2015, 98) emphasise that “more in-depth research is necessary that analyses a) the meanings of hospitality in a neoliberal political economy and changes to local cultures (in particular values of ‘giving’ hospitality), b) the distinct entrepreneurial cultures emerging from new institutional and political-economic constellations and c) the ‘new landscape of governance’ (MOSEDALE 2014, 60), particularly as different actors and levels of scale become involved.”

This study aims primarily to reconstruct the specific social conditions pertaining to Ushguli via an approach that, drawing on praxis theory, takes account of spatialities and temporalities, subjects, objects and actions (cf. RECKWITZ (2003) for fundamental associated considerations). Its chief concern is to explore the issues implicit in the work of VOLL and MOSEDALE (2015) referenced above, which revolve around the impact of tourism on regional cultural practices, lifeworlds and mindsets and a sustainable engagement with this impact. Successive reporting back of findings to the Ushguli setting will aim to support the

village community’s reflection on the issues they raise. Any ‘management plan’ of sorts emerging from this process will of necessity need to be rooted in the community itself. This article therefore has no intent to present such a plan, although it might point to the possible prospects or impacts one might have.

It is crucial that any relevant practices are developed in consultation with all stakeholders, including the locally resident population. In the spirit of supporting and promoting this objective via exploration of the relevant processes, the project underlying this article takes an approach distinct from those in earlier work. Strongly influenced by the theory of praxis (cf. SCHÄFER 2016a; RECKWITZ 2003; SCHATZKI 2001; SCHÄFER and EVERTS 2019), this approach extends over a number of years. The work involves progressive collection of primarily qualitative data which will then be returned to the field (cf. STAKE 2004; SCHWANDT 2001). We are partnering with the Svaneti Museum of History and Ethnography in Mestia and continuing the existing cooperation with the Institute of Geography at Justus Liebig University in Giessen and the Center for Conflict Studies at Philipps University in Marburg. The approach combines conventional methods from geography with a methodology rooted in theory of praxis. It conceives of the practices conducted by stakeholders as loci of the social, insofar as that which is social – including all ways in which people communicate and come to mutual understanding, what they do and why they do

it, and which courses of action they reject and why – comes into being via negotiation and production in and through everyday action. Accordingly, it conceives of knowledge as embodied in subjects in their agency and in the forms taken by their engagement with artefacts (RECKWITZ 2003).

Fidelity to this approach demands emphasis on reconstructing the materiality of objects and practices through exploring the self-conceptions of Ushguli's residents and the contexts of their responses to the rising numbers of tourists visiting their community and to their needs and demands. This proceeds via participatory observation and dense biographical narration (cf. NOHL 2017) within individual and group interviews which act as spaces for participants to construct their reality. Objects and artefacts closely related to the participants' lifeworlds, such as maps and photographs from past eras and from the course of the research process, serve regularly as stimuli for the conversations within the interviews and for the development of narratives and as a basis for closer enquiry into specific matters. For this reason, at the level of physical space and its objects, the project will continuously generate a photographic and cartographic record of the current state of the village space, as a reflection and image of the community's multiple transformations. This record will document the distinct phases of building work in the village, distinguishing the pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet periods.

In other words, the intent here is to do justice to the specific historical and socio-economic circumstances in Upper Svaneti, and particularly in what was once termed Free Svaneti, in their inextricable interrelationship to the region's World Heritage status and the opportunities and risks occasioned by active regional tourist marketing. The outline that follows will explain the study's foci and illustrate the issues which are of relevance to the stakeholders.

3 Specific socio-economic issues in Ushguli as a part of Upper Svaneti: an overview

3.1 Local narratives of cultural identity and their construction, against the backdrop of selected phases of socio-economic change

The region of Upper Svaneti, located in the north of Georgia, has been known in the Soviet era, as it is now, for the substantial ethnic homogeneity of its population and distinct conceptions of community and legal precepts, which are typical of some of the

mountainous regions of the Caucasus (cf. KÖHLER 1999; NIZHARADZE 1999; JANIASHVILI 2016). It is almost certain that part of this homogeneity derives from the population's subsistence from agriculture at an altitude of 1500–2500 m and the resulting need for a collective lifeworld strongly oriented towards the creation and maintenance of a functional community sharing common interests (cf. JANIASHVILI 2016, 92 ff.), aiming for long-term maintenance of a strong identification with a shared origin and heritage. A concomitant issue is the population's clearly defined idea of their own identity as distinct from that of neighbouring groups (cf. JANIASHVILI 2012; VOELL 2012; KÖHLER 1999). From the early Soviet era onwards, the region found itself the target of specific cultural interventions, as were typical of Soviet policy around nationality and national identities (cf. JANIASHVILI 2016, 90ff. on the relationship between the state and traditional law in Soviet times). These included simultaneous reinforcement of an ethnic consciousness through recognition of the region's distinct culture and relative reduction in the significance of national identities in the light of the 'New Soviet man' ideal (cf. SCHLÖGEL 2017; MAISURADZE and THUN-HOHENSTEIN 2015). At the same time, Svaneti remained an exemplary instance of the limitations of measures intended to bring about cultural transformation. The authorities failed in their endeavours to effect the dissolution of local notions and institutions of law, such as councils of elders, the use of intermediaries in the contraction of marriage and issues relating to the distribution of land, and the quasi-legalisation of mediation practices in conflicts around the abduction of girls for marriage and attempts to quell vendettas. These institutions eventually found partial codification within Soviet law (JANIASHVILI 2016; KÖHLER 1999). Current studies point to continued high rates of local acceptance of such practices (see VOELL et al. 2014; VOELL 2012). They also indicate that non-Svani ethnic Georgians widely regard the country's mountain peoples as possessing an authentic core of ethno-national 'Georgianness', inextricably linked to Georgian Orthodox Christianity (cf. VOELL et al. 2014; HALBACH 2016; JANIASHVILI 2012).

Since 1990, Upper Svaneti has suffered, in social and economic terms, particularly markedly from a further series of crises. These have arisen fundamentally from the limitations imposed on the region's agrarian and other economic potential by its position as a mountainous area generating marginal yields. Particularly in the wake of the Georgian state's disintegration after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the course of events such as the Abkhaz-Georgian con-

flict, Svaneti saw violence including blood feuds, the abduction of women for marriage, attacks by gangs of robbers, and land-grabbing and the arbitrary distribution of land. Those that committed these acts frequently sought to legitimate them by citing traditional legal practices. Most local populations, however, condemned them as violations of Svan ideas of honour due to their evident purpose of securing or imposing the power and dominance of local elites (cf. KÖHLER 1999).

The Enguri valley, which found itself compelled to absorb a large number of Svan internal refugees from Abkhazia (cf. WORLD BANK 2016; KÖHLER 1999, 2-4), is the scene of a situation similar to that found generally across Georgia, in that the circumstances of each individual's life, in the main, are highly dependent on chance and tend to be outside that individual's control. The collapse of the Soviet Union unleashed a dramatic crash in industrial and agricultural production. This was exacerbated by the violent conflict in Abkhazia and South Ossetia that affected large swathes of the population, whose capabilities suffered accordingly, with weak education systems adding their part. These causal factors span generations, meaning that in Georgia, poverty tends to self-perpetuate and persist. Accordingly, significant numbers of local people continue to seek work elsewhere, sell their own produce at small-scale markets, and make use of familial and clan networks (cf. GUGUSHVILI 2011, 16-18).

The centrality of ethnic and cultural components to the construction of identities in the region means that family- and clan-based networks are of particular significance in Upper Svaneti life. Alongside the overall loss of trust in state authority that is widespread in today's Georgia, such networks stand in the way of inter-community grassroots cooperation; ironically, it is precisely these aspects of locally-driven cultural construction that UNESCO has declared as distinctive and meriting protection.

3.2 Ushguli's World Heritage status in danger: the cultural construction of Chazhashi and its 'buffer zone' as representations of Svan identity

The core site in Ushguli with UNESCO World Heritage status is limited to the village of Chazhashi, or, more properly, specific monuments and groups of buildings within it, amounting to an area of 1.06 ha which was protected in the Soviet period as the Ushguli-Chazhashi Museum Reserve. A further 19.16 ha surrounding it serve as a protected 'buffer zone'

(Chazhashi's 1-kilometre radius), including Ushguli's other villages with individual buildings of particular architectural value and the agricultural landscape (see Fig. 3 and Photo 1).

The UNESCO Commission deems Ushguli to represent a unique cultural space, fusing the defensive towers and their particular manner of construction (cf. PAVAN 2011), along with other medieval-era buildings including sacred structures, with an impressive and authentic mountainous landscape. This combination satisfies the fourth of the UNESCO World Heritage criteria. Its survival is due to traditional methods of land use is closely linked to further authentic characteristics of traditional Svan life (meeting criterion V). UNESCO considers this set of circumstances to ensure that the existing relationship between the local people and their environment will persist (cf. ICOMOS 1996; UNESCO 1997, 65). UNESCO additionally highlights the exclusive use of local building materials (in this case, slate slabs) and traditional techniques, as in a total of 200 medieval-era buildings across the villages of Ushguli. The World Heritage Committee, however, has stipulated that changes here are to be subject to approval by state authorities, making the prevention of significant alterations to the architectural heritage of the whole of Ushguli a precondition for the retention of UNESCO World Heritage status. Despite this, the Georgian state has yet to present a sustainable plan for the management of the site (cf. STADELBAUER 2018), which would secure the long-term preservation of the 'buffer zone', protecting its buildings, managing the landscape and ensuring sustainable farming practices, and which would take a participatory approach to the involvement of the local administration and, above all, the population on the ground. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) recommended restricting World Heritage status to Chazhashi – which was counter to the Georgian state's original application – but endowing the entire mountainous region in which it is set with a mention. The intent here was evidently to encourage further desirable practices in the area.

The following passage from the ICOMOS recommendation is indicative of the robustness with which the Council advocates the principles underlying its decisions and can well be read as a warning in regard to the site's future development: 'In the opinion of ICOMOS it would be premature for the entire Reserve to be inscribed, since it is a new creation and its policies are still being formulated. The technical condition of Zhibiani village is, according to the "passport", "in a grave condition", which would seem to disqualify it for inscription until action has been taken to rem-

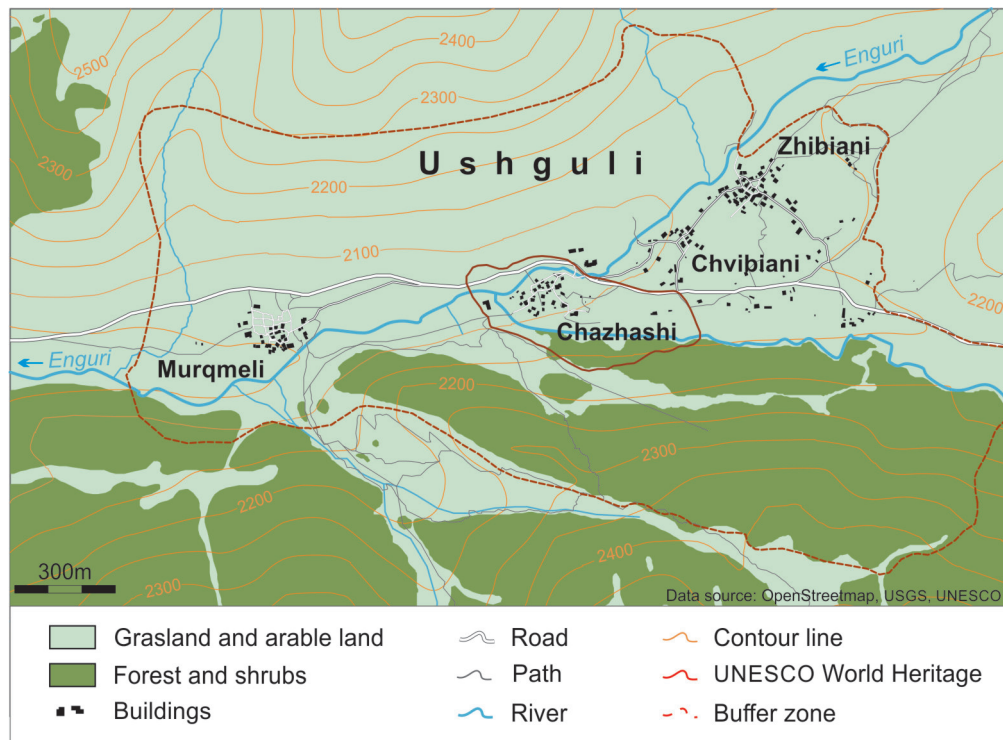


Fig. 3: Ushguli village community

edy that situation. The Ushguli-Chazhashi Museum-Reserve, on the other hand, is clearly defined and has been in operation for several years.⁹ (ICOMOS 1996, 101). The villages of Chvibiiani and Zhibiani saw the greatest impact from substantial architectural change in the Soviet period (cf. Photo 2 and 3), receiving elements reminiscent of typical Soviet dacha architecture, elegant and generously proportioned, with protruding, closed balconies in the Georgian style providing access to the series of rooms within. The dictum issued by ICOMOS (1996) excludes this style of building – the only type to provide enough space to accommodate reasonable numbers of tourists – from any and all protected status. Indeed, it deems it to detract from the site’s medieval architecture and its overall impression as per criterion V (see SCHÄFER 2016b on the construction of the concept of ‘outstanding universal value’).

3.3 Positive and adverse effects of tourism-related practices in Ushguli

Tourists visit Ushguli to see its defensive tower houses and the 5201m Shkhara to the north. Ushguli’s tourist season commences about May, reaches its apex in July and August, and comes to an end in October.

Ushguli has benefited from the reinforcement in 2016 of the road from Zugdidi to Mestia, leading via Ushguli and the mountain pass above it to Lentekhi and making the villages increasingly quickly accessible for day trips from Mestia (cf. STADELBAUER 2018, 57f.). Currently, most visitors come from Mestia to Ushguli as day trippers, travelling in offroad vehicles and providing a large number of jobs for drivers in Mestia. From Lentekhi, the route to Ushguli is only accessible by four-wheel drive vehicles and the journey is time-consuming, although its adventurous character is attracting increasing numbers of cyclists and motorcyclists.

Services to tourists provided in today’s Ushguli include mountain and horseback guides, accommodation and meals. Tourism has wrought significant changes in Ushguli’s village community. Some families make enough from tourism to enable them to remain in Ushguli year-round and provide seasonal work for family members who have already left the community; they have converted empty residential buildings to accommodation, cafés or small-scale restaurants.

Methods of construction, though, are changing profoundly, with the introduction of building materials such as concrete, limestone composites, plastics and sheet metals and of styles of building mod-



Photo 2: Reproduction of an undated photograph from the 1960s, showing Chvibiani and Zhibiani and taken from a room of the Solomon guest house in Chvibiani, which captures the principal phase of reconstruction during the Soviet period. Older interlocutors have stated that during this phase, over half the village's uninhabited towers were demolished for building materials.



Photo 3: The same view, taken in 2018; a check at the site confirms that since the previous photograph was taken, only one further tower has been lost, to collapse.

elled on hotels and other types of tourist-oriented structures typical of the European Alps (cf. Photo 4 and Photo 5). Further, seasonal returners to Ushguli, who cannot do the work of mountain farmers, do not meet UNESCO stipulations as regards contributing to the preservation of the local cultural landscape (cf. criterion V, ICOMOS 1996).

In Ushguli, tourism is the only way of earning a household income capable of sustaining a family with numerous members, some of whom may live, primarily for social and economic reasons, in various locations across Georgia (cf. TOPCHISHVILI 2005). The continued high rates of subsistence farming in Georgia mean that the prices fetched by meat, wool and dairy products are low. Therefore, to keep their farm, a family will need to attract tourists as paying guests. The alternative is living in circumstances so precarious that medical care cannot be afforded in cases of illness and secondary schooling for the children of the family is out of reach.

This situation gives rise to a number of issues and tensions for the villagers. One of the foremost is competition among the families of Ushguli for the tourists; each family can only compete by seeking to meet tourists' expectations (low prices, authentic atmosphere, standards of comfort, food, additional extras) and distancing and distinguishing itself from the remainder of the community. In this way, tourism jeopardises established processes of identity formation and reciprocal recognition among the members of the Ushguli community, whose survival in the past thirty years of economic crisis has depended precisely on acting in concert with the community (cf. APPLIS 2018). On the

other hand, tourism enables families to retain their farmsteads, or infuse them with new life and new purposes, and provides an economic basis for their continued residence in Ushguli.

4 Findings of the field study, approached via theory of praxis

The data generated in the field (texts of interviews, historical documents, photographs etc.) were subject to continuous situational analysis (cf. CLARK 2005, 2007). They emerged from a total of seven field visits, which took place at various points in the tourist and agricultural year over a total period of three years. The photographic record takes account of the villagers' input and enables access to the community-related, family and individual narratives of their lives. Several preliminary surveys identified a selection of suitable informants, which expanded during fieldwork to comprise a typical distribution across groups, including individuals holding positions of significance in village life (elders, doctor, teacher, etc.) and, *inter alia*, young people who return to Ushguli only in the summer months.

Today, according to the author's own figures, approximately 80 people live in Ushguli on a permanent basis, with up to a further 150 joining them in the summer. We can categorise this population with regard to the modality of their residence in Ushguli (see Tab. 1); the analysis treats each of these categories as a distinct group of cases: (1) permanent residents who remained in Ushguli throughout the crises of the late 1980s and the years that followed;



Photo 4: The new building in the foreground is a café and restaurant for tourists constructed in a European Alpine style



Photo 5: A 1960s residential building, whose core dates from the medieval period and which has been transformed from its original shape by processes of renovation and extension

(2) ‘permanent returners’ who resettled in the community in response to the economic crises since the late 1990s, initially to subsist and later, after around 2010, in order to develop a sustained livelihood from services to tourists; (3) ‘intermittent returners’, who live in Ushguli during the summer months only and have converted their properties and farms to guest houses (see also VOELL et. al. 2016).

The interviews reveal key arenas of experience for the villagers, which include past and present crises, issues around property and land, an idea of Ushguli as a ‘moral community’, and opportunities and limitations arising from lived family life. All of these have close links to the performance of tourist-related practices. The following findings emerging from the triangulation of data (cf. CLARK 2005, 2007) explore the impacts of these practices more fully.

4.1 The centrality of crisis to the experience of Ushguli’s community of origin and heritage

The fieldwork, collecting data from interlocutors distributed evenly across the three groups set out above (cf. Tab. 1), has enabled the researcher to identify specific phases or events of crisis as constitutive of both individual experience and of the construction of overarching sets of values (around, for instance, family, ethnic Svani culture, the Ushguli community). These phases or events are as follows:

- Restructuring of traditional agricultural methods in the context of collectivisation after 1951: replacement of cereal crops by potatoes, increased livestock holdings, family-owned property being taken over by the state, etc.

- Restructuring of the *kolkeboz* to a *sovkeboz* system after 1970, with changes in private farming and further increases in livestock holdings.
- Avalanches in the winter of 1986/1987, claiming about 200 lives in Svaneti, followed by the resettlement of more than half of Ushguli’s 800-strong population to Lower Kartli.
- Collapse of the Soviet Union; violent conflict in Abkhazia, and the return of Svani people from these regions, from 1992/1993 onward. Consequences included a massive influx of weapons and loss of state control in the region leading to weakening of the rule of law in Upper Svaneti; outmigration of approximately a further half of the remaining population
- Re-establishment of state control in the final years of the Saakashvili administration (2004–2013) and beginnings of state-led presentation of Upper Svaneti as a tourist destination; permanent or intermittent remigration

Present-day experiences of crisis recur each winter, as the village community finds itself cut off from the electricity supply for a total of several weeks and the road to the regional administrative centre of Mestia becomes impassable due to avalanches. The impacts include lack of access to medical care in life-threatening emergencies and shortages of medication, other medical supplies, consumer goods and foodstuffs.

The crisis of winter 1986/87 emerges in the interviews as a particular locus of identities. Those who remained perceive themselves as preservers of Ushguli’s community and therefore as having a particular claim to the village (cf. APPLIS 2018). Simultaneously, they see themselves as disadvan-

Tab. 1: Overview of categories of residents of/returners to Ushguli, drawn from reconstructive analysis and based on situational analysis as described by CLARK (2005, 2007). The underlying data stemmed from interviews, participatory observation and photography. The category of ‘intensive’ was applied to practices generating more income than required for the family’s immediate support and therefore enabling investment and growth; that of ‘extensive’ signified practices whose generated income covers the family’s living costs.

	Tourist-oriented practices			Agricultural practices			Number of interviews	Age group of interviewees
	Intensive	Extensive	None	Intensive	Extensive	None		
permanent residents, type A	X				X	X	6	50 - 60
permanent residents, type B		X		X	X		9	60 – 70
permanent residents, type C			X		X		2	70 – 80
‘permanent returners’, type A	X				X	X	2	40 – 60
‘permanent returners’, type B		X		X	X		3	30 – 40
intermittent returners, type A	X				X		3	20 – 30
intermittent returners, type B	X					X	5	20 – 30

tagged by the relative lack of state support they have received in comparison to those who resettled south of Tbilisi (Kvemo Kartli) and by their greater exposure to the turmoil of the 1990s. Returners, whose children had benefited from the opportunities for advanced education afforded by proximity to Tbilisi and attained better access to the region’s competitive job market, possessed comparatively greater capital for investment in tourist infrastructure.

These conflictive issues around the extent of ‘belonging’ to the community of Ushguli and around claims to an identity firmly associated with the area have a direct impact on matters of land, its possession and use, specifically for tourist purposes. The rapid transformations in Ushguli’s architectural substance relate therefore to the resettlements of 1987 and the years that followed and, correspondingly, to the risks to the area’s World Heritage status.

4.2 Ownership of and conflict over land

Today as in the past, access to material resources, in the shape of usable land and intact buildings, has been the key to the local population’s capacity to successfully tackle and overcome the persistent and ongoing impact of the crises listed above. Accordingly, villagers prioritise the attempt to secure these resources, primarily for themselves and their immediate

families, secondarily for their extended families (cf. JANIASHVILI 2016). The restitution of farms to previous owners and their families after 1990 was generally unproblematic due to the evident links between the families in each case and the associated buildings and land. Determining ownership of pastures and woodlands was a different matter, and called, in the absence of documentation for the pre-collective farming era, for the knowledge of older members of the community. Almost all the wooded areas were transferred to state hands. However, five of the researcher’s interlocutors (see “group 1 – permanent residents”, type B and C, Tab. 1), each aged between 65 and 85, testify that even during Soviet times, the village community considered collective ownership of the woodlands to exist *de jure* only. This meant it was treated *de facto* as if it continued to belong to the families concerned, and the practice has persisted to this day with respect to the officially state-owned woodland. At the same time, the present *de jure* situation enables private individuals to purchase land from the state, and financially better-off families have begun to do so in order to expand their tourism businesses, which has led to other families effectively losing land they have long considered ‘theirs’. Community ties have further destabilised as a result (cf. JANIASHVILI 2016, 92 ff.). In Mestia, where competition for land is more intense, the situation is markedly more precarious (cf. GREEN ALTERNATIVE 2011).

The legal ambiguities around land ownership arise primarily from the local specificity of law in Upper Svaneti, originating in the high Enguri valley's renunciation of and self-detachment from any and all rule or dominion in the late medieval period. At that time, eleven (later eight) village communities, all of which were difficult to access from outside for several months of the year, formed what was referred to as 'Free Svaneti', emancipating themselves from all external claims upon them. From this point onward, the communities and the families they comprised owned the land on which they settled and which they farmed, passing ownership from generation to generation over a period of centuries without written documentation. This practice has rendered their present-day descendants largely unable to produce documents attesting to their rights to their land (cf. VOELL et al. 2016, 22–26; STADELBAUER 2018, 75; KÖHLER 1999).

All interviewees (particularly "group 1, permanent residents", and group 2, "permanent returners") affirmed the potential elemental importance of councils of elders and mediators in the period of change that characterised the incipient phase of tourism in the community. They considered such structures a potential solution to current crises, yet confirmed that the associated practices had lapsed over a decade previously. This argumentation simultaneously points to tourism as the cause of this crisis experience and appears to bolster a sense of Ushguli as a community in a permanent state of crisis. Those with stronger economic potential due to their better access to land and buildings will tend to enjoy greater and readier prosperity and thus invest more. At the same time, their activities acutely reflect the risk which changes in local lifestyles, such as shrinking agriculture and the appearance of new architectural structures, pose to precisely these tourist activities. We might say in this context that some wealthier families from the group of "intermittent returners" (group 3, type B, cf. Tab. 1) would prefer others to take on the role of permanent exhibits in an emergent living museum.

The few families who have been able to dispense with potato cultivation and the keeping of livestock on summer grazing pastures are those who have been in a position to build hotel facilities whose character is clearly distinct from the otherwise typical practice of accommodating visitors within family homes (see "group 3, intermittent returners", type B, Tab. 1). These families buy up significant tracts of land and property and provide work in the summer months for those of their members who spend the winters at their main residences elsewhere in Georgia.

It is still the case that the overwhelming majority of families permanently residing in Ushguli need to farm their own land in order to provide food for themselves and their paying guests (see "group 1, permanent residents", and group 2, "permanent returners", Tab. 1). They require, at the least, a basic holding of livestock and horses and small vegetable gardens close to their family home, which necessitates year-round residence in Ushguli for at least a core family group capable of carrying out the work. Over the past two years, the once-typical keeping of sheep and goats has virtually died out in Ushguli. Those in receipt of state pensions or working locally for the police or the border force have the greatest opportunity, or necessity, to remain in Ushguli throughout the year; these residents too depend on tourism and on contributions from those of their children who have found work outside Upper Svaneti. During spring, summer and autumn, most families will receive intermittent support from relatives living in Lower Kartli, Kutaisi or Tbilisi who themselves are economically reliant on forms of subsistence economic activity away from their principal residence (see "group 3, intermittent returners", type A, Tab. 1).

4.3 Moral identity: being a Svan from Ushguli

The interviews conducted to date touched on ideas and ideals around a 'moral community' of Ushguli, in relation to the former significance of councils of elders, the respect accorded to older by younger community members, mutual assistance among neighbours and idealised notions of being a man or a woman (cf. VOELL et al. 2016, 41 ff., on social dimension of traditional law and local sense of morality). Analysis of the interviews' points to the exclusivity of these ideas to a mental construction of a 'Svan way of being'; if we consider the dominance of the crisis experience in the individual and family-related narratives produced by the interviewees, it seems as if such a way of being has rarely, if ever, existed 'for real'. Where an 'us' is constructed, it relates solely to the family group as an economic unit – that is, in this context, a unit of subsistence – which, limited to the immediate surroundings, sets up tangible boundaries to other families in the community and their members. The interviews also point to the predominance of conservative views on people's social roles and selective ideas of modernity, anchored within a traditional outlook.

Other qualitative interviews in the Svan context (cf. VOELL et al. 2014, 2016) have described activities which they have termed typical community-oriented action. In Ushguli these appear to recede into insignificance when confronted with the severe impact of the crisis events. One reason for this could be the fact that the authors cited above conducted their research in villages in Lower Kartli, which were founded and built after the resettlement campaign subsequent to the events of 1986/1987, where life was less precarious. For those who stayed behind (see “group 1, permanent residents”), life became significantly more arduous in the 1990s, as described in a number of accounts (cf. KÖHLER 1999).

But the village community is faced with another experience of crisis in the shape of a rising ‘multiplicity of lifeworlds’ (see PRUS 1997, 28), combined with the numerous experiences of the ‘foreign’ or ‘other’ and the concomitant destabilisation of concepts with which the villagers identify as their own (cf. CAPPUCCI and ZARRILLI (2015) on the desire to meet the ‘other’ in the context of new trends in mountain and heritage tourism, 66f., and TEVADZE and KIKVIDZE (2016) on the ethno-ecological context and the role of tourism in the case of Upper Svaneti; CRRC (2017) reported that 74% of the population think that it is important for a good citizen to protect traditions).

Due to the design of their houses, those offering accommodation to tourists in Ushguli (and who have not built hotel facilities as discussed above) are in constant close proximity to their guests, a situation challenging to all involved; there are very few ‘homestay’ properties which have additional living rooms specifically for guests. In this way, the residents come under severe pressure to conform to the expectations of their visitors, who, immediately upon departure, tend to leave Internet reviews indicating whether they experienced their accommodation as ‘authentic’ – which primarily means low prices and uncomplicated interaction. This pressure additionally works to counter the stabilising effect of constructs of the Ushguli moral community, of Svani identity and traditional legal precepts (as discussed above) for the residents of Ushguli, faced with uncertainties around the relationship between tradition and modernity.

4.4 Tourism’s positive social potential: ‘doing family’ in Ushguli

During field stays in the summers of 2015, 2017 and 2019, the researcher was able to interview members from various different generations of two fami-

lies who had left Ushguli as children or adults after the avalanches of 1986/87 and had recently returned to homes which had stood empty for over thirty years (see “group 3, intermittent returners”).

Every summer, members of resident families return in increasing numbers, in search not only of an income and prospects for the future, but also of regeneration and a boost to their wellbeing. They consistently report finding urban settings inhospitable and isolating, regarding them as places where people do not know or look out for their neighbours; places of bad air and poor-quality foodstuffs; as places where they, and above all their children, live in conditions considerably less healthy than those they had enjoyed growing up. Their summer stays remind them of how they had once lived all together. Those with secure incomes from town- or city-based jobs see Ushguli as a romantic counter-lifeworld to their own, while those who struggle year-round to stay afloat provide their labour to their permanently resident relatives in Ushguli, thus ensuring the family, and therefore they can continue to make ends meet. Others, in breathing new life into their long-defunct family houses, are seeking to set up new livelihoods for themselves. All these factors and motivations mean that Ushguli’s material culture is in a permanent, processual state of flux, changing in accordance with each actor’s own, highly distinct, ideas and desires, which are intimately related to their praxis. As a consequence, mapping, via situational analysis (CLARK 2005, 2007), the processes with and within which the people make their world includes the particularly crucial task of recording the state of the physical objects that shape this world, which year on year are suffering perceptible disrepair and experiencing transmutation. In all this, however, intermittently resident relatives act as a significant stabilising factor for Ushguli’s permanent residents, balancing out the loss of privacy sustained by the presence of the visitors whom their hosts categorise as ‘strangers’.

4.5 ‘Doing tourism’: a central strategy for overcoming economic and social crisis

Reconstructive analysis of the data reveals the following key issues, rooted in Ushguli as a community of livelihoods and day-to-day living, yet valid, in varying forms, beyond the groups of residents identified here. Rather than having been derived from without, these issues have emerged from a process of reconstructing the spheres of action relevant to the residents and their associated narratives.

- a) Which income safety nets are available for building a permanent or intermittent life in Ushguli, and how can they be combined to secure a family income (tourism, agriculture, holders of salaried positions within the family and across generations; state benefits such as pensions)?
- b) How can migration and diversification of places of residence within and beyond families help them in the process of securing an income?
- c) What significance should tradition and traditional legal concepts retain, and how could they help in the resolution of conflicts over, for instance, the use of land?
- d) What are the economic, social and spatial impacts of tourism and its influence on the moral and economic community of Ushguli?
- e) Which coping strategies and practices of adaptation to social and economic ruptures are effective or appropriate, and how do they impact the 'moral community' of Ushguli?

Across all groups of residents explored here, a clear picture emerged of the hopes associated with Ushguli's reinvention as a tourist space and of the impact of this process on central components of identity generation. The tensions inherent to practices of daily life in this context reveal Ushguli as a 'community of crisis'. The danger is, should no grassroots regulatory initiatives emerge, that this community may successively destroy its own potential as a tourist site.

5 Conclusions, discussion and a look ahead

The community lacks effective institutions to fulfil a mediating role, which are recognised by all involved and able and willing to take account of all competing interests. One consequence of this is the increasing impact of changes such as new buildings on the community's physical appearance (cf. Photo 4 and 5). This is partially due to a lack, both of expertise in curation of the cultural landscape, and of a sustained culture of complying with structured heritage preservation policies and practices. What are known as 'administrative agreements', and often cited in this context, currently extend only to the use of wood and stone in external building or renovation measures. The central factor, however, is the paucity of the financial means available, as is evident, for instance, in the replacement of slate roofing damaged by the weight of winter-time snow with metal sheeting. Ushguli's continued UNESCO World Heritage

status is conditional upon the preservation of the area, landscape or architectural ensemble as a whole. In this light, plans to concentrate on the preservation of the village of Chazhashi as a sort of open-air museum can only represent a limited solution to the issues (cf. the interrelation between criteria IV and V as described in ICOMOS 1996). This is all the more true in view of the fact that the realisation of such plans removes space for living and working from the community, thus intervening in and markedly affecting people's established life settings on an ongoing basis.

Studies completed in this area to date have concentrated primarily on quantitative data, material objects, and general concepts and models around issues such as environmental sustainability, agrotourism (VOLL and MOSEDALE 2015; GREEN ALTERNATIVE 2011; ENGEL et al. 2006) and hazards posed by natural events (TARRAGÜEL 2011; TARRAGÜEL et al. 2012). This limitation of focus has restricted this work's capacity to take account of the specific social, material and immaterial conditions on the ground. A proper and nuanced comprehension of these conditions requires sensitivity to the decades of crisis the community has undergone and to the resulting profound distrust of outsiders, institutions and even distant relatives. These circumstances represent a serious obstacle to the local community (STADELBAUER 2018, 75; VOLL and MOSEDALE 2015, 98).

It is evidently necessary to create conditions which would enable the local population to remain living in Ushguli throughout the year, at a level at least approaching that generally achieved during the Soviet period. This would mean a stable electricity supply, cheap and plentiful heating fuels, medical care, secondary education, shops selling groceries and consumer goods, and opportunities to sell the produce of farming activity. Ushguli further requires funding for building works, in line with preservational principles and accompanied by expert support, in order to prevent further deterioration of its architectural heritage, particularly in view of the fact that the local population is principally reliant on subsistence farming and residents' seasonal income from tourism is unevenly distributed due to differences in opportunity. Any sustainable strategy will need to include proposals for supporting local high-altitude farming and marketing its produce (cf. ENGEL et al. 2006). This would take account of the potential of sustainable agriculture both to provide a basis for year-round residence in Ushguli and to preserve a representative cultural space in accordance with UNESCO criterion V (see ICOMOS 1996, UNESCO 1997).

Echoing previous findings, and supplementing the researcher's work in Ushguli, we can identify the following destabilising factors and processes, which both progressively impact Ushguli's architectural heritage and present difficulties to socio-economic and environmental conditions in the community:

- a) The Georgian state's capacity to support the population via social security and relief measures is limited (cf. GUGISHVILI 2011; PEARCE 2011; CRRC 2017). This means that approximately 50% of local households are required focus partially or completely on subsistence-level farming on a permanent basis in order to support themselves (KHARTISHVILI et al. 2019; CAPPUCCI and ZARRILLI 2015).
- b) The lack of other job prospects means that, in rural areas, the opportunity to break out of or ameliorate these conditions resides solely in employment or self-employment in tourism (cf. KHARTISHVILI et al. 2019; ENGEL et al. 2006)
- c) Sustained tourism, driven by the private sector without external regulatory mechanisms, results in monetisation-led activities. Cut-throat competition ensues; greater numbers of customers converge on an unchanged volume of space and larger-scale operators arrive in greater numbers, requiring cheaper prices (cf. for Ushguli and Mestia VOLL and MOSEDALE 2015; GREEN ALTERNATIVE 2011)

Without management systems recognised and respected by stakeholders, the processes described at c) above impede the opportunities referenced in b), resulting in an exacerbation of the situation at a) due to, for instance, a lack of tax revenue from tourism. The attractiveness of Ushguli (here as an example of these processes in action) as a tourist region is likely to decline as new buildings proliferate in Chvibiani and Zhibiani and what is probably the most frequently photographed village in Georgia begins to lose its distinctive face.

It is unlikely that community-centred action will emerge without monetary recompense. This is due in part to differences in the economic power of permanent and intermittent residents, and also to a dwindling sense of commitment to the community (beyond immediate family ties) in the wake of the last thirty years of crisis and other factors. The rift in experience between the various categories of residents is significant. Summer-time returners, while reinforcing a sense of family, exacerbate processes of intra-community division and distinc-

tion; each individual invests only in action of immediate apparent use to themselves and their family, and cooperation beyond familial boundaries is non-existent.

Any management plan for the region would therefore need to prioritise the generation of capital, in principle freely available, to which residents would have a claim proportionate to their contribution to preserving UNESCO World Heritage status. In the best case, this capital could consist of revenue from a state-approved tourist or spa tax levied in accordance with duration of stay and including hikers and cyclists who are merely passing through. This would ensure Ushguli benefited financially from the day-trippers from Mestia who make up the majority of visitors; currently, it is only the local restaurateurs, who do not spend the winter in Ushguli, who make money from this group. The community itself, via representatives from its families, should hold decision-making power over distribution of this revenue, along the lines of the well-established and culturally formative and constructive practices outlined above for Upper Svaneti (cf. JANIASHVILI 2016; VOELL et al. 2014; VOELL 2012). This caveat notwithstanding, extant work and the researcher's findings point to the necessity of providing financial support to specific population groups and areas of village life as follows:

- a) A per capita payment to Ushguli's permanent residents for their contribution to maintaining the landscape and architectural heritage
- b) Infrastructure projects, with the most urgent being pipeline modernisation and a sewage plant to reduce environmental strain on the Enguri river
- c) Sustainable systems for waste reduction and disposal
- d) Medication provided to the local general practitioner for distribution free of charge, with children and elderly residents as priority recipients; also first-aid materials

The researcher presented the proposals outlined here to representatives of the village community in June 2019. Those present considered that a tourist tax of just one Euro per visitor per day, on the basis of previous estimated visitor numbers, could bring in an annual minimum of around 10,000 Euro, an enormous sum in the context of rural Georgia. Official figures from Mestia, as reported to the tax authorities, would suggest that the amount potentially achievable is in fact significantly higher (cf. CAPPUCCI and ZARRILLI 2015). This dialogue uncovered widespread

concern over the potential loss of World Heritage status due to the various building works and an associated fear of declining tourist numbers. In line with the approach set out in this article, the researcher will continue to feed the data successively gained in the coming years back to the community and will record the ensuing effects and results.

References

- ANDERSON, T. (2004): Bread and Ashes. A Walk through the Mountains of Georgia. London.
- APPLIS, S. (2018): Tourism sustains, and threatens, Georgia's highland heritage. Tales of an authentic society living at the edge of time fail to account for higher living standards in the Soviet heyday. eurasianet.org. <https://eurasianet.org/perspectives-tourism-sustains-and-threatens-georgias-highland-heritage> (Date: 18 July 2019)
- CAPPUCCI, M. and ZARRILLI, L. (2015). New trends in mountain and heritage tourism: the case of Upper Svaneti in the context of Georgian tourist sector. In: Geojournal of Tourism and Geosites 15 (1), 65–78. http://gtg.web-host.uoradea.ro/PDF/GTG-1-2015/6_182_Zarilli.pdf
- CLARKE, A. (2005): Situational analysis: grounded theory after the postmodern turn. Thousand Oaks.
- (2007): Grounded theory: conflicts, debates and situational analysis. In: OUTHWAITE, W. and TURNER, S. (eds.), Handbook of social science methodology. Thousand Oaks, 423–442.
- CRRC (Caucasus Research Resource Centers) (2017): Caucasus barometer Georgia 2017. Carnegie Cooperation of New York. New York. <http://www.crrccenters.org/caucasusbarometer> (Date: 18 July 2019)
- ECHANOVE, J. (2016): The feasibility of averting collapse: the resurgence of Georgia's agricultural sector. In: Caucasus Analytical Digest 88, 2–4. <http://www.laenderanalysen.de/cad/pdf/CaucasusAnalyticalDigest88.pdf> (Date: 18 July 2019)
- ENGEL, E.; VON DER BEHRENS, H.; FRIEDEN, D.; MÖHRING, K.; SCHAAFF, C.; TEPPER, P.; MÜLLER, U. and PRAKASH, S. (2006): Strategic options towards sustainable development in mountainous regions. A case study on Zemo Svaneti, Georgia. SLE Publication Series, Faculty of Agriculture and Horticulture. Mestia, Berlin. <https://edoc.hu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/18452/3820/224.pdf?sequence=1> (Date: 18 July 2019)
- GRACHEVA, R.; KOHLER, T.; STADELBAUER, J. and MEESSEN, H. (2012): Population dynamics, changes in land management, and the future of mountain areas in northern Caucasus: the example of North Ossetia. In: Erdkunde 66 (3), 197–219. <https://doi.org/10.3112/erdkunde.2012.03.02>
- GREEN ALTERNATIVE (eds.) (2011): Problems related to the protection of property rights – the case of Mestia. Report within the framework of the project “Protection of Property Rights in New Touristic Zones of Georgia” 6. Tbilisi. http://www.crystalfund.ge/wp-content/uploads/Report_Mestia_ENG_July_2011_.pdf (Date: 18 July 2019)
- GUGUSHVILI, A. (2011): Understanding poverty in Georgia. In: Caucasus Analytical Digest 34, 16–18. <http://www.laenderanalysen.de/cad/pdf/CaucasusAnalytical-Digest34.pdf> (Date: 18 July 2019)
- HALBACH, U. (2016): Religion und Nation, Kirche und Staat im Südkaukasus. SWP- Studie 18, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik. Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit. Berlin. https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/studien/2016S18_hlb.pdf (Date: 18 July 2019)
- ICOMOS (eds.) (1996): World Heritage list: Upper Svaneti. No 709: advisory body evaluation. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/709/documents/> (Date: 18 July 2019)
- JANIASHVILI, L. (2012): Traditional law in Soviet times. In: Caucasus Analytical Digest 42, 5–7. <http://www.laenderanalysen.de/cad/pdf/CAD-42.pdf> (Date: 18 July 2019)
- (2016): Traditional legal practise in Soviet times. In: VOELL, S. (ed.): Traditional law in the Caucasus: local legal practices in the Georgian lowlands. Marburg, 83–124. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326395935_Traditional_Law_in_the_Caucasus_Local_Legal_Practices_in_the_Georgian_Lowlands (Date: 18 July 2019)
- KHARTISHVILI, L.; MUHAR, A.; DAX, T. AND KHELASHVILI, I. (2019): Rural tourism in Georgia in transition: challenges for regional sustainability. In: Sustainability 11 (2), 410. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11020410>
- KÖHLER, J. (1999): Parallele und integrierte Rechtssysteme in einer postsowjetischen Peripherie: Swanetien im Hohen Kaukasus. Berlin. https://www.oci.fu-berlin.de/en/research/cscqa/downloads/jk_pub_swanetien.pdf (Date: 18 July 2019)
- KHOMERIKI, G. (2018): UNESCO World Heritage Monuments in Georgia. In: BOLASHVILI, N.; DITTMANN, A.; KING, L. and NEIDZE, V. (eds.): National Atlas of Georgia. Stuttgart, 116.
- MAISURADZE, G. and THUN-HOHENSTEIN, F. (2015): Sonniges Georgien. Figuren des Nationalen im Sowjetimperium. Berlin.
- MOSEDALE, J. (2014): Political economy of tourism: regulation theory, institutions and governance networks. In: HALL, C. M.; LEW, A. A. and WILLIAMS, A. M. (eds.): The Wiley-Blackwell companion to tourism. Oxford, 55–65. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118474648.ch4>
- NASMYTH, P. (2017): Georgia. In the Mountains of Poetry. London.

- NIZHARADZE, L. (1999): Svanebis migratsia da misi gan-sakhlebis arealebi [Migration of Svans and areas of their resettlement]. Tbilisi.
- NOHL, A.-M. (2017): Interview und Dokumentarische Methode – Anleitungen für die Forschungspraxis. Wiesbaden. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-16080-7>
- PAVAN, V. (2011): Svaneti towers, fortified stone villages in the Caucasus. Glocal Stone. Verona Fiere – 46th Marmomacc Fair. https://ambtbilisi.esteri.it/Ambasciata_Tbilisi/it/ambasciata/news/dall_ambasciata/special-issue-svaneti-towers.html (Date: 18 July 2019)
- PEARCE, K. E. (2011): Poverty in the South Caucasus. In: *Caucasus Analytical Digest* 42, 1–10. <http://www.laender-analysen.de/cad/pdf/CaucasusAnalytical-Digest34.pdf> (Date: 18 July 2019)
- PRUS, R. (1997): Subcultural mosaics and intersubjective realities: an ethnographic research agenda for pragmatizing the social sciences. Albany.
- RECKWITZ (2003): Grundelemente einer Theorie sozialer Praktiken. Eine sozialtheoretische Perspektive. In: *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 32 (4), 282–301. <https://www.degruyter.com/downloadpdf/j/zfsoz.2003.32.issue-4/zfsoz-2003-0401/zfsoz-2003-0401.pdf>
- SCHÄFER, H. (2016a): Grundlagen, Rezeption und Forschungsperspektiven der Praxistheorie. In: SCHÄFER, H. (ed.): *Praxistheorie. Ein soziologisches Forschungsprogramm*, 9–28. Bielefeld. <https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839424049>
- (2016b): „Outstanding universal value“. Die Arbeit an der Universalisierung des Wertvollen im UNESCO-Welterbe. In: *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 26 (3-4), 353–357. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11609-017-0329-3>
- SCHÄFER, S. and EVERIS, J. (2019): *Handbuch Praktiken und Raum Humangeographie nach dem Practice Turn*. Bielefeld. <https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839446034>
- SCHATZKI, T. R. (2001): Practice theory. In: SCHATZKI, T. R.; KNORR CETINA, K.; v. and SAVIGNY, E. (eds.): *The practice turn in contemporary theory*. London, 1–14.
- SCHLÖGEL, K. (2017): *Das sowjetische Jahrhundert. Archäologie einer untergegangenen Welt*. München. <https://doi.org/10.17104/9783406715129>
- SCHWANDT, T. A. (2001): Understanding dialogue as practice. In: *Evaluation* 7 (2), 228–237. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13563890122209658>
- STADELBAUER, J. (1983): Hochgebirgstourismus in der Sowjetunion. Entwicklung, Formen und Problem am Beispiel des Großen Kaukasus. In: *Erdkunde* 37 (3), 199–212. <https://doi.org/10.3112/erdkunde.1983.03.04>
- (1990): Gebirgskatastrophen und journalistische Transparenz in der Sowjetunion. Eine Interpretation der Schneefall-, Lawinen- und Überschwemmungskatastrophe des Jahres 1987 in Georgien. In: DOMRÖS, M., GORMSEN, E. and STADELBAUER, J. (eds.). *Festschrift für Wendelin Klaer zum 65. Geburtstag*. Mainz, 257–278. <https://freidok.uni-freiburg.de/data/4238#?>
- (2018): Schützen oder nutzen? Konflikte über das Bauerbe in Georgien. In: *Osteuropa* 68 (7), 47–77.
- STAKE, R. E. (2004): Standard-based and responsive evaluation. Thousand Oakes. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412985932>
- TARRAGÜEL, A. (2011): Developing an approach for analyzing the possible impact of natural hazards on cultural heritage: a case study in the Upper Svaneti region of Georgia. Master Thesis. University of Twente. https://webapps.itc.utwente.nl/librarywww/papers_2011/msc/gem/tarraguel.pdf (Date: 18 July 2019)
- TARRAGÜEL, A; KROI, B. and VAN WESTEN, C. J. (2012): Analyzing the possible impact of landslides and avalanches on cultural heritage in Upper Svaneti, Georgia. In: *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 13, 453–461. <http://doi.org/10.1016/j.culher.2012.01.012>
- TEVZADZE, G. and KIKVIDZE, Z. (2016). Ethno-ecological contexts of the Skhalta Gorge and the Upper Svaneti (Georgia, the Caucasus). *Journal of Political Ecology* 23, 246–262. <https://doi.org/10.2458/v23i1.20212>
- TOPCHISHVILI, R. (2005): Svaneti and its inhabitants. National Parliamentary Library of Georgia. Tbilisi. https://histinstitute.files.wordpress.com/2009/02/georgian_mountain_regions.pdf (Date: 18 July 2019)
- UNESCO (ed.) (1997): *Convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*. World Heritage Committee. Twentieth Session Merida, Mexico, 2.-7. December 1996. <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/1996/whc-96-conf201-21e.pdf> (Date: 18 July 2019)
- VOELL, S. (2012): Local legal conceptions in Svan Villages in the lowlands. In: *Caucasus Analytical Digest*, 42, 2–4. <http://www.laender-analysen.de/cad/pdf/CAD-42.pdf> (Date: 18 July 2019)
- VOELL, S.; JALABADZE, N.; JANIASHVILI, L. and KAMM, E. (2014): Identity and traditional law. Local legal conceptions in Svan Villages, Georgia. In: *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 23 (2), 98–118. <https://doi.org/10.3167/ajec.2014.230208>
- VOELL, S.; JALABADZE, N.; JANIASHVILI, L. and KAMM, E. (2016): Traditional law as social practice and cultural narrative: introduction. In: VOELL, S. (ed.): *Traditional law in the Caucasus: local legal practices in the Georgian lowlands*. Marburg, 11–82. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326395935_Traditional_Law_in_the_Caucasus_Local_Legal_Practices_in_the_Georgian_Lowlands (Date: 18 July 2019)
- VOLL, F. and MOSEDALE, J. (2015). Political-economic transition in Georgia and its implications for tourism in Svaneti. In: *TIMS Acta* 9 (2), 91–103. <https://doi.org/10.5937/TIMSACT9-8139>

WORLD BANK (2016). Georgia. Transitioning from status to needs based assistance for IDPs. A poverty and social impact analysis. GSU 03, Report No: ACS16557. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/493981468030331770/Georgia-Transitioning-from-status-to-needs-based-assistance-for-IDPs-a-poverty-and-social-impact-analysis> (Date: 18 July 2019)

Author

PD Dr. Stefan Applis
Justus Liebig University Giessen
Department of Geography
Karl-Glöckner-Straße 21G
35394 Gießen
Germany
and
Friedrich-Alexander University
Erlangen-Nuremberg
Institute of Philosophy
Bismarckstraße 1
91054 Erlangen
Germany
stefan.applis@fau.de