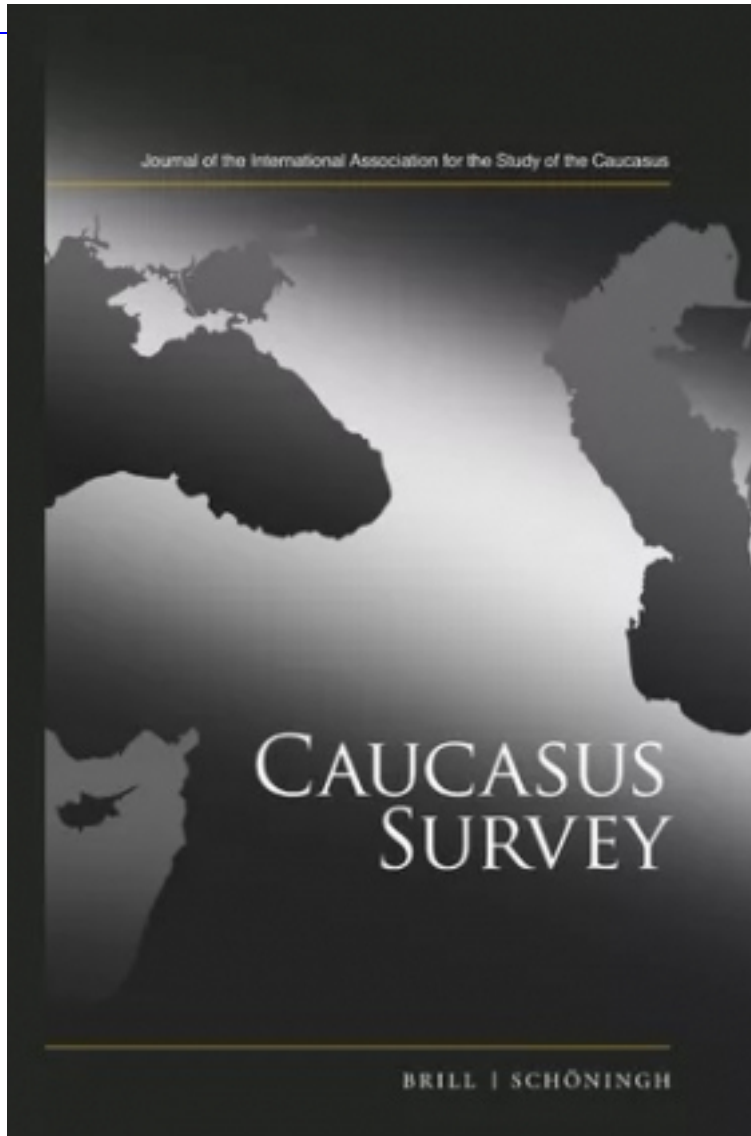


Nobody Will Marry You If You Don't Have a Pension

'Nobody Will Marry You If You Don't Have a Pension'. Female Bribing Practices in Dagestan, North Caucasus

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[1]

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Abstract:

Gendered dimensions of informality have been only briefly studied by anthropologists. Therefore, while engaging in the debate on informality it is important to ask how women engage in informal practices, and whether these practices are gendered. In this paper we analyse female bribing practices in the Republic of Dagestan and take a closer look at the arrangements of state welfare benefits, particularly the disability allowance and the old age pensions. How do Dagestani women engage in bribing? Why is it mostly women who 'arrange' state welfare benefits? What are the implications of this engagement for them? Based on case studies from fieldwork in the Republic of Dagestan carried out between 2014–2019 we show that bribing practices are gendered. We also reveal that having the resources to outsmart the state by buying benefits empowers women in a society where patriarchal arrangements are predominant. More broadly, we discuss how resistance at one level may lead to unexpected empowerment at another. By emphasizing the female perspective, this paper makes a contribution to post-Soviet area studies and anthropological studies of corruption and informality more generally.

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