

CAUCASUS RESEARCH RESOURCE CENTERS

THE 6TH CRRC METHODS CONFERENCE

**COMING TOGETHER AND
GROWING APART:
A DECADE OF TRANSFORMATION
IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS**

JUNE 26-27

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June 26-27



ABOUT CRRC

The Caucasus Research Resource Centers (CRRC) is a network of research and research support centers in the capital cities of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Established in 2003, CRRC's goal is to strengthen social science research and public policy analysis in the South Caucasus. Over the past seventeen years, CRRC offices have become a nexus of activity for the social science community in the South Caucasus by providing open access to data, scholarly literature, and professional training for social science researchers. For more information about CRRC and the upcoming conference, please visit the respective country websites at crrc.am, crrc.az and crrc.ge.

ABOUT CAUCASUS BAROMETER

The Caucasus Barometer is a bi-annual nationwide household survey conducted by CRRC offices in the South Caucasus. Since 2004, CRRC has interviewed around 45,000 residents of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia on socio-economic issues, values, beliefs, and political attitudes. Since 2015, Caucasus Barometer has been administered in Armenia and Georgia only. To find more about the survey and access the dataset, please visit caucasusbarometer.org.

AGENDA

JUNE 26, 2020

10:30-11:00 Online registration of participants via Doodle, technical support for logging in

11:00-11:15 Opening remarks



RESULTS OF THE 2019-2020 CAUCASUS BAROMETER SURVEY
MODERATOR: TINATIN ZURABISHVILI, UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA

11:15-11:30 Dustin Gilbreath – The Church's scandals are hurting trust in it

11:30-11:45 Tamar Khoshtaria and Rati Shubladze – Exploring the links between support for democracy and liberal values in Georgia and Armenia

11:45-12:00 Ella Karagulyan – Trust towards institutions in Armenia: before and after the Velvet Revolution

12:00-12:15 Samvel Manukyan – Social distances between ethnic groups in Georgia, 2007-2019

12:15-12:45 Q&A

12:45-13:00 Break



PANEL 1: MEMORY, RITES, IDENTITIES, AND VALUES IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS
MODERATOR: NUTSA BATIASHVILI, FREE UNIVERSITY OF TBILISI

13:00-13:15	Askar Mambetaliev – The role of language policies in identity construction in the post-Soviet space
13:15-13:30	Smbat Hakobyan – New places, new rituals: how funeral houses transformed the ritual
13:30-13:45	Anahit Gharibyan – Memory map of Soviet-era Monuments: the powerless symbols and power of the past
13:45-14:00	Levan Tarkhnishvili – Theoretical aspects of World Values Survey: Main principles, challenges, and critics
14:00-14:15	Q&A
14:15-15:00	Long break



PANEL 2: POLITICAL ECONOMY OF TRANSITION
MODERATOR: HEGHINE MANASYAN, CRRC-ARMENIA

15:00-15:15 Thomas Barrett – Reforming governance from the top or bottom? Fighting state capture in Georgia and Ukraine

15:15-15:30 Natia Tchigvaria – How do mining activities in Georgia affect local public health?

15:30-15:45 Ülviyye Aydın, Ahmet Nazmi Üste – Covid-19 in energy markets: potential results for the South Caucasian economies

15:45-16:00 Ana Diakonidze – Gig workers in a transition economy - the case of Georgia

16:00-16:15 Q&A

16:15-16:30 *Break*

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: CHALLENGES TO THE SOCIAL SCIENCES IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

16:30-17:45 Participants: Sona Balasanyan (CRRC-Armenia), Timothy Blauvelt (American Councils for International Education, Ilia State University), Anar Valiyev (ADA University), Tinatin Zurabishvili (University of Bologna)
Moderator: David Sichinava (CRRC-Georgia)

17:45-18:00 *Break*

18:00-19:00 **KEYNOTE SPEECH: PROFESSOR JOHN O'LOUGHLIN, UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER**

June 27, 2020

11:30-11:45 Online registration of participants via Doodle, technical support for logging in



PANEL 3: PARTY SYSTEMS, DEMOCRATIZATION, AND CIVIL SOCIETY
MODERATOR: KORNELY KAKACHIA, GEORGIAN INSTITUTE OF POLITICS, TBILISI STATE UNIVERSITY

11:45-12:00 Urban Jakša – Pashinyan vs. the Karabakh Clan? Re-examining patronal relations between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh

12:00-12:15 Daniel Bochsler and Andreas Juon – National sovereignty with and without nationalism: a two-dimensional model to explain the disintegration of federal authoritarian regimes

12:15-12:30 Galina Selivanova - Free and fair? Election monitoring and electoral integrity in Georgia

12:30-13:00 Q&A

13:00-14:00 *Long break*



PANEL 4: CONFLICTS, NATIONALISM, AND STATE BUILDING IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS
MODERATOR: LEVAN TSUTSKIRIDZE, EASTERN EUROPEAN CENTER FOR MULTIPARTY DEMOCRACY

14:00-14:15 Guranda Bursulaia – The making of Abkhazian nationalism: Cain and Abel dichotomy

14:15-14:30 David Sichinava – How far is too far? Public opinion on conflict resolution in Georgia

14:30-14:45 Rauf Garagozov and Rana Gadirova – The interplay between narratives, memory, identity, and politics in peace and conflict in the Southern Caucasus

14:45-15:00 Samil Niftaliyev – Social norms and human rights in Azerbaijan

15:00-15:15 Q&A

15:15-15:30 Break

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: FIELDWORK IN TIMES OF CRISIS – COVID-19 AND DATA COLLECTION IN EURASIA

15:30-16:45 Participants: Olga Karaeva (Levada-Center, Moscow), Andrey Vardamatski (NOVAK, Minsk), Nursultan Zhamgyrchyev (M-Vektor, Bishkek)
Moderator: Koba Turmanidze (CRRC-Georgia)

16:45-17:00 *Break*

17:00-18:00 **KEYNOTE SPEECH: PROFESSOR JULIE GEORGE, QUEENS COLLEGE, CITY UNIVERSITY
OF NEW YORK**

18:15-18:15 Final remarks

RESULTS OF THE 2019-2020 CAUCASUS BAROMETER SURVEY

CHAIR: TINATIN ZURABISHVILI

University of Bologna

DUSTIN GILBREATH

CRRC-Georgia

The Church's scandals are hurting trust in it

The Georgian Orthodox Church is among the most powerful institutions in Georgia. The majority of the country identifies as Orthodox Christian. The Church's Patriarch, Ilia II, has been consistently the most trusted person in the country when surveys ask about him. Yet, Caucasus Barometer data suggests a slow but steady decline in trust in the church over the last ten years. While the data clearly show a slow and steady decline, recent scandals also appear to be taking their toll, particularly among the religious. This presentation describes the declines in trust that have taken place following the Fall/Winter 2019 pedophilia scandal and 2020 Covid-19 Easter scandal.

TAMAR KHOSHTARIA

CRRC-Georgia

RATI SHUBLADZE

CRRC-Georgia

Exploring the links between support for democracy and liberal values in Georgia

While democracy has been viewed by Georgians as the most preferable form of government for the last decade, support is on the decline, and a majority no longer reports a preference for democratic governance. CRRC's Caucasus Barometer survey also shows that more and more Georgians view the country's democracy as having major problems. This article addresses support for democracy at the individual level, specifically whether support for democracy is associated with liberal values. Using data from the Caucasus Barometer 2019, it examines whether liberal values predict democratic support after demographic factors are taken into account. This research demonstrates that none of the proxies for liberal values within the multiple logistic regression models have a significant association with support for democracy. The only significant predictors in the models were years of education and ethnic minority status.

Studies on this topic in the post-socialist countries have shown that support for democracy may be conditioned by "instrumental" factors and that preference can be identified for political structures that function in for benefiting individual interests. In the context of Georgia, the paper presents evidence that liberal democratic values are not associated with support for democracy. Examination of factors that address the issue of instrumental approach may shed further light on the determinants of support for democracy in Georgia.

ELLA KARAGULYAN

CRRC-Armenia

Trust towards institutions in Armenia: before and after the Velvet Revolution

The growing distrust towards the government in Armenia escalated in April-May 2018, resulting in a series of massive anti-government protests, now referred to as the Armenian "Velvet Revolution." This event reshaped the expectations from and perception of the new post-revolutionary government and public institutions in the country.

A comparison of the level of trust in Armenia towards the government and public institutions before and after the "Velvet Revolution" will be drawn using data from the CRRC Caucasus Barometer waves 2007-2020. Several other phenomena, alongside trust, will be discussed.

SAMVEL MANUKYAN

ORBELI - Analytical Research Center, "Public Relations and Information Center of Staff of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia" SNCO

Social distances between ethnic groups in Georgia, 2007-2019

Perceptions of social distances towards ethnic groups in Georgia are constructed using Caucasus Barometer databases of 2007-2019. Bogardus scale is used as the measure of social distances. Perceptions of Georgians, Georgian Azerbaijanis, and Georgian Armenians, towards Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, Abkhazians, Ossetians, Kurds, Russians, Turks, Iranians, Americans, Jews, Georgian Armenians, Georgian Azerbaijanis are considered.

Dynamics of changes of the mentioned social distances during 2007-2019 are investigated. The

latent structures of the considered social distances in the worldviews of Georgians, Georgian Armenians, and Georgian Azerbaijanis are revealed by use of Factor Analysis.

PANEL 1: MEMORY, RITES, IDENTITIES, AND VALUES IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

CHAIR: NUTSA BATIASHVILI

Free University of Tbilisi

ASKAR MAMBETALIEV

University of Pannonia, Veszprém

The role of language policies in identity construction in the post soviet space

Language and identity is an important part of the struggle for freedom in the post-soviet countries. They are interwoven and dependent on each other. They are also a source of major conflicts in Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Kyrgyzstan. This research presents a number of aspects of correlations between these two variables employing a comparative approach from both diachronic and situational perspectives to understand the most salient errors and successes for strategic language policies and planning. The main question is what are the top three correlations between language policies with Russian and English and emerging identities in the region? To find an answer to this question, the study employs document analysis, interviews, and an analysis of the linguistic landscapes. The data is analyzed using the online data collection and processing tool: <https://multil.org/mychance>.

SMBAT HAKOBYAN

*Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography,
National Academy of Sciences of the
Republic of Armenia, Yerevan*

New places, new rituals: how funeral houses transformed the ritual

In his prominent work entitled "To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual" historian of religion Jonathan Z. Smith acknowledged the importance of place and space for rituals. He insisted that the very place determines ritual elements, function, and structure. What he calls place is not just bare geographical or physical location. It can be considered something cultural or even mental. Smith's theory has been criticized for its

reductionism and oversimplification. Still, recent changes to funerals in Armenia show how important place is for rituals. Funeral houses have appeared and gradually spread in Yerevan from 2014-2015. Until then home was the main place for funerals, and most of the ritual occurred in the same place people live. Coffins, wreaths, weeping grievers, and deceased once normal and usual scenes in most neighborhoods, disappeared almost entirely from contemporary urban culture. Now funeral houses have conquered the realm of death. This not only entailed a shift of location, but also the very structure, elements, and dynamics of funerals have been transformed ever since. In this paper, I will try to show which kinds of changes this shift has brought and to what extent place affects the ritual.

ANAHIT GHARIBYAN

*Research Centre for East European Studies,
University of Bremen*

Memory map of Soviet Era Monuments: the powerless symbols and power of the past

This research is the first attempt to map Soviet monuments in Armenia. All of the monuments were summarized and sited with consideration of Russian political interference in the country since the beginning of 19th century. During this period of time, new political circumstances have emerged in the form of monuments. The themes of monuments erected in the Soviet era can also be divided into spatio-temporal stages. Before the Second World War, during Stalin's cult of personality, the monuments built were basically dedicated to revolutionary figures, party leaders, the anniversary of Armenia's Sovietization, October Revolution etc. Therefore, a great deal of the Soviet monuments in Armenia are 'Victory' monuments. Approximately 625 memorial monuments have been constructed for the victims of the Second World War. Overall, these monuments have tremendous cultural, social and even political impacts on the societal and environmental levels.

The construction of these monuments has interesting interpretations in the daily life practices of people. An interesting aspect is the location of these monuments. First of all are villages, where the community was multinational. These monuments somewhat lead to reconciliation. For instance, the village of Khojorni (Georgia) is a place where the monument still keeps the solidarity of Armenian and Azeri people. Secondly, though the Soviet symbols become ideologically powerless,

they still have superior status for the whole milieu. Currently, they lose their power neither in the physical dimension nor in peoples' minds, which associate the symbols with the welfare and the power of the Soviet past. At a community level, Soviet era symbols contribute to the perception of identity of both an individual and a collective nature.

After gaining independence, the government of Armenia continues to reproduce the power of these symbols, constructing up to 10 new monuments to the victims of the Second World War and one more for Armenian and Russian friendship in the center of Yerevan. These not only had an impact on physical space, but also are connected to ideological, political, and socio-cultural meanings. Three monuments from different historical periods, all sculpted by the same architect, Jim Torosyan, are situated in close proximity next to the Yerevan Victory Park: The Monuments for the Victims of Soviet Repressions, a monument for the 50th Anniversary of the October Revolution and The Sovietization of Armenia, and a monumental stone representing political repressions. Indeed, all of these monuments are peculiar not only for their appearance but also for the symbols they contain. One of the most significant architectural expressions of the Soviet period was Stalin's statue, which is very close to the mentioned monuments (in Victory Park). It was the biggest statue in the USSR.

In his book "Kultura dva" Vladimir Paperny analyses the breaks between the 1920s (Culture 1) and the Stalin epoch (Culture 2), taking as his point of departure the architecture of the two epochs. The gigantic statue of Stalin in Yerevan which was planned after the Second World War (1950-1962) has some similarities (size, pedestal and appearance) with a monument for the 50th Anniversary of October Revolution. As opposed to the symbols of the early Soviet era (Culture 1), those of the Stalin epoch became traditional, since they appeal to feelings and passions. The same is true for the "victory monuments". On the other hand, after the Second World War victory monuments tended to fulfill the daily needs of the people (for instance there are lots of memorial fountains to the victims of war). Therefore, the monuments become inevitable parts of every-day life, thus creating memories of the past.

LEVAN TARKHNISHVILI

Ilia State University, Tbilisi

Theoretical Aspects of World Values Survey: Main Principles, Challenges and Critics

The notion of value holds a prominent place in social science. Although there is no unified definition of the notion of value, most often social scientists cite Clyde Kluckhohn's definition: "A conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable which influences the selection from available modes, means and ends of action" (C. Kluckhohn, 1951).

Values are important at both macro and micro levels. Societies and their component institutions are formed around values, and these values help define at which level of development a society, nation, individual institution, or person has reached. Every day, theoretical and practical discussions and comparisons of values take place. For a certain social group the most important thing may be family, while for others work and career may play the most important roles. One political group claims that it pursues the goal of promoting equality, while others prefer the idea of personal freedom.

Values interact continuously and their study is a complex task. It is impossible to extract a value from its social and developmental contexts, and to review it without considering its relation to other values. Also, values must be studied taking into account their dynamics, and the study must be of a systematic nature. This is necessary as values and their hierarchies constantly evolve. Separate values, like hierarchies, are not static. The system undergoes constant development and change. Halting these processes of systemic development will prevent a society's development and lead to its degradation.

As a result, based on the presence of certain values and the structure of their hierarchy, a society's stage of social development can be defined and compared to previous stages. When they try to classify values, and based on this, diagnose the stage of social development, most often analysts refer to the concepts and empirical work of the American political scientist Ronald Inglehart. In this article we try to demonstrate both the strengths and weaknesses of his concept and work, and offer an alternative path for values studies. We will use World Values Study and Caucasus Barometer data for analysis.

PANEL 2: POLITICAL ECONOMY OF TRANSITION

Chair: Heghine Manasyan

CRRC-Armenia

THOMAS BARRETT

*Free University of Berlin; Ivane Javakhishvili
Tbilisi State University*

Reforming Governance from the Top or Bottom? Fighting State Capture in Georgia and Ukraine

This research challenges the prevalent narrative that Georgia is a model for fighting corruption in the post-Soviet region by comparing reform in Georgia and Ukraine. Much of the available literature on reform in Georgia is produced by the World Bank and applauds Georgia's spectacular rise in its own rankings such as the Ease of Doing Business Index and "control of corruption" in its Governance Index. It has even produced manuals on Georgia's success, some penned by the architects of reforms from the Saakashvili era. This all looks very different from Ukraine, where the literature paints a picture of deeply ingrained corruption and state capture with only partial success in several areas since the Maidan Revolution of 2014. However, this supposed contrast in fact stems from a severe lack of critical academic literature on Georgian reforms since the Rose Revolution.

I argue that the Georgian approach to anti-corruption suffers from two major drawbacks. First of all, Saakashvili's centralization and concentration of power in the executive may have enabled an anti-corruption crusade where the United National Movement wielded the sword of law enforcement against corrupt officials and organized crime. However, it has created a situation where the incumbent party in Georgia faces few checks and balances with weak media and judicial independence and those close to the ruling party are often the beneficiaries of government spending. This is not only a threat to democracy, but to the sustainability of the reforms themselves, since they rely on the ruling party remaining committed to fighting corruption. Secondly, the strongly libertarian approach to reform has drastically reduced petty corruption, but the failure to rebuild robust institutions has led to the persistence (and effective legalization) of state capture by private interests.

Meanwhile, few commentators have lavished Ukraine with praise. Corruption, oligarchs, and state capture have survived two revolutions and no Ukrainian Saakashvili has emerged to fight corruption from above. The consensus has generally been that significant piecemeal successes since the Maidan Revolution emerged from a synergy of a proactive civil society and international organizations which have forced governments to make temporary alliances with democratic forces in order to fight off other oligarchic challengers. Herein lies Ukraine's alternative reform model: the recognition that a captured political system will not reform itself without significant pressure from the outside and a maximum level of political pluralism and media freedom. In addition, Ukraine has recently embarked upon the most ambitious experiment in fiscal and political decentralization in the post-Soviet space. This offers a direct contrast to Georgia's executive-centered reforms, and offers the potential for diminishing communities' reliance on central power brokers and cultivating reformist democratic forces from the bottom.

This research also considers the international dimension of "reform promotion". It suggests that despite Georgia's proclaimed EU aspirations, reform was heavily influenced by American libertarian think tanks and foundations. Meanwhile, Ukraine's greater focus on decentralization, civil society and institution-building is connected to the European Union and its member states' predominant role in assistance to Ukraine.

NATIA TCHIGVARIA

*Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA),
Tbilisi*

How Do Mining Activities in Georgia Affect Local Public Health?

This paper evaluates the degree to which proximity to toxic or semi-toxic mining facilities affects public health in the Republic of Georgia. Theoretically, proximity to mines means that there is a higher probability of human exposure to contaminated air, water, or soil. This idea was tested by examining data from 63 Georgian municipalities in the year 2016, except Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. Using Poisson regression, it is shown that the rates of some diseases are elevated for municipalities that have toxic or semi-toxic mines in their presence. These results suggest that enforcing laws that Georgia has enacted is

essential to curb the toxins that are negatively affecting public health.

ÜLVIYYE AYDIN

Manisa Celal Bayar University

AHMET NAZMI ÜSTE

Manisa Celal Bayar University

COVID 19 In Energy Markets: Probable Results For The South Caucasian Economies

Oil prices have dropped sharply as the Corona virus lowered global energy demand. Moreover, the price disagreement between Russia and Saudi Arabia and Russia's decision to increase oil supply caused a 30 percent decrease in oil prices in one day and shook the global markets. The aim of this presentation is to examine the effects of low oil prices in global energy markets on the economies of the South Caucasian states. We argue that undoubtedly, this situation will affect all three South Caucasian countries negatively though there are different reasons for it. Considering that Azerbaijan is an oil producing country and Georgia is the main transit route of Azerbaijani oil to the world markets, the fall in prices will directly affect the economies of these countries. However, due to its economy's high dependence on Russia, the effect of an oil price drop on the Armenian economy will be indirect, but also negative.

ANA DIAKONIDZE

Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA), Tbilisi

Gig workers in a transition economy - case of Georgia

The research paper has two main objectives. First, it aims at understanding the "working arrangements" of individuals including their working hours, earnings, and relationship with the company providing the job. Second, it aims at assessing the level of social security of "gig workers" and their coping strategies in the case of materialized social risks. Drivers using the ride-sharing application (Bolt) in the capital city (Tbilisi) were selected as a target group. 40 semi-structured interviews were conducted with Bolt drivers during July-August 2019. Preliminary findings indicate that for the majority of drivers performing these "gigs" are not the side-job, but rather their main occupation, equivalent to full-time employment. Despite the fact that workers

operate in the formal sector (a majority are licensed taxi drivers) their employment is informal as they are not paying income tax and are largely out of contributory social protection schemes. The research contributes to the debate on the social implications of gig work in transition economies and provides evidence for the necessity of universal social protection coverage to meet the demand of the ever-growing share of "on-demand workforce" in these societies.

PANEL 3: PARTY SYSTEMS, DEMOCRATIZATION, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

CHAIR: KORNELY KAKACHIA

Georgian Institute of Politics (GIP), Tbilisi State University

URBAN JAKŠA

University of York

Pashinyan vs. the Karabakh Clan? Re-examining patronal relations between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh

The paper examines the relations between Armenia and the internationally unrecognized Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. Armenia, along with its diasporic networks, acts as a patron to Nagorno-Karabakh, providing the entity with security, political support, budgetary funds, and infrastructural development. However, Nagorno-Karabakh is an outlier among the post-Soviet de facto states as its elites – sometimes referred to as the 'Karabakh Clan' – have historically exercised a strong influence over the politics of Armenia. How salient is the notion of the 'Karabakh Clan' beyond a journalistic cliché? The paper discusses this question in the context of the aftermath of the 2018 Armenian Revolution, which disrupted the two-way patronal relationship with the Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan attempting to crack down on the members associated with the 'Karabakh Clan', such as the former presidents President Serzh Sarkisyan and Robert Kocharyan - the only person in recent history to serve as president of two states (albeit one unrecognized). Kocharyan was repeatedly charged, arrested (for the third time in June 2019), and released. In light of these recent events, the author re-examines patronal relations between Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Can the weakening of the 'Karabakh Clan' be an opportunity for democratization and development of Nagorno-Karabakh or are the old patronage networks likely to be replaced with new ones? What does it take for political transition to

be sustainable in a region that has seen repeated outbreaks of democratization, as well as the tendency for authoritarianism to re-emerge? The author addresses these questions by drawing on Henry E. Hale's analysis of regime dynamics, as well as his own comparative research on post-Soviet de facto states.

DANIEL BOCHSLER

*Central European University, Budapest;
University of Belgrade*

ANDREAS JUON

University College London and University of Zurich

National sovereignty with and without nationalism: a two-dimensional model to explain the disintegration of federal authoritarian regimes

As several federal-authoritarian regimes experience periods of mass mobilisation, political violence or gradual liberalisation, the stability of such regimes is on the global spotlights yet again. There is a widespread view, based largely on the political transition from communism, and the three communist federations (Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia), that federal states under previous authoritarian rule are highly instable stake during regime transitions, and may either disintegrate, or be subject to ethno-political wars (Bunce, Hale, etc.). An important driving factor thereof are elites, which mobilise along ethnic lines, and ethnonationalist movements, which may be conducive to spirals of radicalisation and eventually conflict and disintegration.

This paper introduces a new theoretical model about regime transitions in federal states, and applies it to the transition from communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The model capitalises from the classical agency-model of regime transitions by Linz & Stepan, O'Donnell & Schmitter, Karl, etc.. However, while this "transitology" literature has thought of the regime conflict as a single-dimensional conflict between revolutionaries, reformers and regime loyalists, we complement their argument by a second, ethnonationalist dimension. We hypothesise that in federal states, the two dimensions may interplay, and they may lead to separatism and disintegration, even in the absence of strong separatist actors. This model contributes to the understanding of yet unexplained variance in the declarations of independence by the federal units of the Soviet

Union, the former Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia: in particular, we argue that ethno-nationalist mobilisation might be less important than previously thought.

Empirically, we capitalise from the significant variation within and between the formerly communist federations: most of republics did not, or only delayed, some only in the last stage of disintegration, seek independence from a sinking ship. The empirical study is based on a comparison of the federal units of the three communist federations, and their dissolution in the period of 1989-1992.

GALINA SELIVANOVA

Scuola Normale Superiore Firenze; National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow

Free and Fair? Election Monitoring and Electoral Integrity in Georgia

The study is aimed at the investigation of civil society actors in Georgia focusing on election monitoring organizations. In general, the role of post-Soviet civil society is still widely debated in the academic literature: some authors stress its weakness, donor-dependency, and pressure from the non-democratic political context and non-participatory culture. Others emphasize their positive role, specific action repertoires, and different types of non-contentious strategies developed by the local NGOs. The study is based on the theoretical framework borrowed from the social movements and civil society literature and contributes to the second stream of academic literature. It attempts to develop a better understanding of the strategies and outcomes of the NGOs involved in election monitoring in Georgia.

The research attempts to answer a broader research question of what impact various civil society actors have on electoral integrity in the post-Soviet political context. It critically assesses various factors that have contributed to the improvement of electoral integrity in Georgia including local election monitoring. First, the project shortly introduces organizations, which are involved in the election monitoring network. Next, it briefly summarizes the political context in 2008 to 2016 and the development of election quality. Finally, it discusses factors that have influenced election observers' strategies and the results of their activities: the structure of political opportunities, resources, internal ideology, and international context.

The empirical part of the project mostly relies on semi-structured interviews with representatives of NGOs collected during fieldwork in Georgia and secondary sources (websites of the organizations, donors and partners, academic literature, and official elections results). This research brings together two academic traditions that rarely talk to each other: studies of elections and research in social movements. Hence, the research attempts to contribute to the area of electoral integrity evaluation and broader assessment of democratic consolidation and civil society development in post-Soviet states, hence benefiting both academics and practitioners.

PANEL 4: CONFLICTS, NATIONALISM, AND STATE BUILDING IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

CHAIR: LEVAN TSUTSKIRIDZE

Eastern European Centre for Multiparty Democracy

GURANDA BURSULAIA

Free University of Tbilisi

The Making of Abkhazian Nationalism: Cain and Abel Dichotomy

Nationalism, a by-product of the French Revolution (Kedourie, 1960), is still an influential doctrine in modern political settings. It has intensified value particularly for the communities which are currently in the process of nation-building. This article focuses on the Abkhazian nationalism discourses transmitted through school history textbooks - the voice of official rhetoric and extensively adopted by politicians. Using the concepts of pan-national skhods (gatherings) and korenizatsiia (indigenization) policies I discuss the development of Abkhazian nationalism over the last two centuries. I explore the dichotomy of the Abkhazian nationalism narratives: Abel, the sacred and absolute nobility (ethno-interest) in the permanent war against Cain, the absolute evil (Georgia as an imperialistic enemy and occupant). I make use of qualitative methods to conduct textual analysis of all Abkhazian school history textbooks published between 1993 and 2020. I concentrate on the chapters since the establishment of the rule of the Russian Empire in Abkhazia (1810) including contemporary history. Based on the outcome of this research and the subsequent analysis, using the conceptual framework of nationalism, I propose two dimensions of Abkhazian

nationalism: the ethnonational project and the Soviet nationalism idea, which create a unique model of ethnic politics. This research contributes to the ongoing discussion about the invention (Cassirer, 1946) and imagination (Anderson, 1991) of nationalism reflected in modern socio-political life and national curricula.

DAVID SICHINAVA

CRRC-Georgia

How Far is too Far? Public Opinion on Conflict Resolution in Georgia

This presentation looks at how public opinion regarding the peace processes between Georgia and its two breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia have changed over the past few decades. Research has shown that Georgian citizens overwhelmingly oppose the idea of these breakaway regions obtaining sovereignty or becoming a part of neighboring Russia, in any form. Still, decades of frozen conflict have also caused many to concede that there is a need for new approaches to how Georgia can co-exist with its breakaway regions into the future. If certain political conditions are met, Georgians seem supportive of a quasi-federal solutions, or are at least open to compromise.

RAUF GARAGOZOV

Independent researcher

RANA GADIROVA

Baku State University

The Interplay of Narratives, Memory, Identity and Politics in Peace and Conflict in the Southern Caucasus

Recent research in narrative psychology provides insights into the dynamics of collective memories and group identities and how they are exploited by populist and nationalist forces for instigating intergroup conflict. In particular, the narrative approach to conflict is important in this regard. In one key way, this approach considers conflicts as competing stories and conflict resolution as narrative transformation and the creation of a common (shared) narrative. In this regard, two questions are of particular concern: 1) What kinds of narratives are conducive to reconciliation between adversaries? 2) Which strategies for dealing with narratives found in intergroup conflicts are effective? As a way of addressing these questions I have developed a theoretical model of narrative

intervention which was empirically examined in the context of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno Karabakh. These studies over the two decades have used different perspectives that enable me to identify "common suffering" type narratives as a way of eliciting positive implicit attitudes and empathy among the conflicting parties. The research has also identified two psychological constructs: "painful collective memory" and "competitive victimhood", which are often employed by political forces who are not interested in peace and reconciliation in the region. These dynamics have taken on new dimensions in an age of rising nationalism in Russia and the surrounding regions.

SAMIL NIFTALIYEV

Vision Academy, Baku

Social norms and human rights in Azerbaijan

Though almost all of the countries in the modern world transformed into a democracy, we still see the tendency of violation of fundamental human rights in several countries. These violations occur not only because of the corrupted political regimes but also in certain cases social norms of societies are stronger rather than a legal framework. When researchers investigate the topics related to the violation of fundamental human rights, they mainly tend to "blame" political regimes. Consequently, the role of societies has been neglected. However, there is a supportive role of societies behind all of the human rights violations, regardless of their passive or active participation. Therefore, the research project intends to approach the situation from a different angle. The aim of the research project is to assess the social norms of Azerbaijani society and their influences over the fundamental human rights in Azerbaijan.

