



Max-Planck-Institut für ethnologische Forschung Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology

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Speakers and Abstracts

LEVON ABRAHAMIAN (Head of Department of Contemporary Anthropological Studies, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Armenian Academy of Sciences) has written widely on Armenian traditional and contemporary culture, comparative mythology, and political anthropology. He has held teaching positions at Yerevan State University, the University of Pittsburgh, Columbia University, and the University of California, Berkeley. Among his most recent works are *Conversations Near a Tree [Besedy u dereva]* (Moscow, 2005); and *Armenian Folk Arts, Culture, and Identity* [co-edited with Nancy Sweezy] (Indiana, 2001).

Abstract: Dancing Around the Mountain: Armenian identity through rites of solidarity

In this paper, I look to examine the “Round Dance of Unity” that took place on 28 May 2005, involving as many as 250,000 people. (For more information, see: http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/cau/cau_200506_289_3_eng.txt). I plan to analyze the event for its implications for national, ethnic, anthropological, political, and related understandings of contemporary Armenian culture.

EVA-MARIA AUCH (PD East European History, University of Bonn) has studied history, Oriental studies, Russian, Arabic, and educational sciences at the universities of Baku, Leipzig, Greifswald, and St. Petersburg; and has taught at the universities of Greifswald, Bonn, Basel, Muenster, Hamburg, Baku, and Tashkent. She has held many scholarships and carried out research in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, focusing on colonialism; nationalism; the development of Islam in the Caucasus and Central Asia; modernization movements in the Middle East, the Russian empire, and the former Soviet Union; elites; and environmental protection. Her works on the Caucasus include, *Öl und Wein am Kaukasus. Deutsche Forscher, Kolonisten und Unternehmer im vorrevolutionären Aserbajdschan* [Oil and wine in the Caucasus: German researchers, colonists, and entrepreneurs in pre-revolutionary Azerbaijan] (Reichert 2001); and *Muslim – Untertan - Bürger. Identitätswandel in gesellschaftlichen Transformationsprozessen der muslimischen Ostprovinzen Südkaukasiens (Ende 18. – Anfang 20. Jh.). Ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Nationalismusforschung* [Muslim – Subject – Citizen. Identity shifts through social transformations among Muslims of the eastern provinces of the South Caucasus (from the end of the 18th until the beginning of the 20th centuries): A contribution to comparative studies of nationalism] (Reichert 2004). She is also co-editor of the book series, *Kaukasische Studien* [Caucasus Studies] (Reichert-Verlag). (Web: <http://www.graphic-bridge.de/eurokaukasia/www/ansprechpartner/index.htm>).

Abstract: On Death in Postsocialist Societies: coping with dying in the Caucasus

Despite the great amount of scholarship paid to death and dying in the social sciences since the 1960s, there has been less study on the subject from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet bloc. This paper is devoted to public discourses on and ritual practices concerning dying and death in the Caucasus, with particular attention to the social contexts in which they are marked, such as the overlapping of traditional, religious, and state institutions and norms. By comparing Georgia and Azerbaijan, in particular, I look to examine two population groups, one primarily Christian, the other Muslim. Among the questions I look to cover are religious modes of thought, the politicization of death, and the popular understandings of death in these societies where increased violence and skyrocketing mortality rates have become the norm since the onset of struggles for independence.

GEORGI DERLUGUIAN (Associate Professor of Sociology, Northwestern University) holds a doctoral degree in Modern African History from Moscow State University, and a Ph.D. in Sociology from SUNY-Binghamton. Having once served as an advisor to Gosplan in Mozambique, he went on to hold fellowships at Cornell, the University of Michigan, and the US Institute of Peace; as well as grants from the SSRC, NCEEER, the Soros Foundation, and IREX. In 2001 he was named a Carnegie Scholar of Vision. (Web: <http://www.cas.northwestern.edu/sociology/faculty/derlug.html>). Among his recent writings on the Caucasus are *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World-System Biography* (Chicago, 2005); and "How Soviet Bureaucracy Produced Nationalism, and What Came of It in Azerbaijan," in Colin Leys and Leo Panitch, eds., *Fighting Identities* (Merlin, 2002), 93-113. Dr. Derluguian also writes commentaries for leading Russian newspapers such as *Izvestiia*, *Vremia novostei*, and *Ekspert* weekly magazine.

Abstract: The Codes of Dissertation Titles: towards a taxonomy of Homo Academicus Sovieticus (Caucasiensis)

Using personal data for almost two hundred intellectuals from the former USSR, mainly from Russia and the Caucasus, who became political figures after 1989, I attempt to sketch how the symbolic capitals and career strategies embedded in Soviet-era academic and artistic fields became translated into the emergent field of politics. In particular, I examine how patterned cultural codes in the titles of Soviet-era dissertations turn out to be a robust predictor of subsequent political paths.

BRUCE GRANT (Associate Professor of Anthropology, New York University) received his Ph.D. from Rice University and began work in the former Soviet Union as a scholar of indigenous cultural politics in the Russian Far East, as well as Moscow monuments, and Soviet cinema. He has held grants from the NSF, NEH, SSRC, and recently, NCEEER for new fieldwork in Azerbaijan. (Web: <http://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/anthro/faculty/grant.html>). His work on the Caucasus includes, "The Good Russian Prisoner: Naturalizing Violence in the Caucasus Mountains," *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no. 1 (2005): 39-67; and "An Average Azeri Village (1930)," *Slavic Review* 63, no. 4 (2004): 705-731.

Abstract: Cultural Histories of Kidnapping in the Caucasus

For approximately 200 years, a remarkable variety of Russian publics have come to understand the Caucasus as a zone of brigandage where the capture of male and female bodies constitutes a central preoccupation of fear, fascination, and romance. In my presentation, I look to explore the political roots of this longstanding popular archetype, and match it to existing ethnographic and historical documents concerning bride capture, amanat, abreks, and so forth. By exploring what might be called a “ritual exchange of bodies” across perceived cultural, religious, mercantile, and kin lines in both the North and South Caucasus, the goal is not only to dispel problematic stereotype, but to consider how popular and scholarly traditions of Caucasology have contributed to these deeply patterned idioms.

ERIN KOCH (Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Middlebury College) received her Ph.D. from the New School for Social Research. She is the recipient of grants from the SSRC, the NSF, and most recently a postdoctoral fellowship from the Harriman Institute of Columbia University. Her work in medical anthropology addresses public health and prison populations in both the United States and the former Soviet Union, and she is currently at work on a book manuscript entitled, *Governing Tuberculosis: Competing Cultures of Disease and Medicine in Postsocialist Georgia*. Her recent publications on the Caucasus include, “Beyond Suspicion: Evidence, (Un-) Certainty, and Tuberculosis in Georgian Prisons,” in press at *American Ethnologist*.

Abstract: Market-Based Medicine in Georgia: “optimization” and health reforms

In this essay I investigate the displacement of the Soviet model of tuberculosis control and transitions to primary health care in contemporary Georgia. In particular, I analyze the impact of new diagnostic procedures and emergent categories of patients on daily medical practices; changes in physicians’ expertise; and the unintended consequences of “rationalization” in the health care and TB sectors. I argue that the growing trends in market-based medicine force patients to bypass clinical services and self-medicate in readily available pharmacies, which promotes the spread of drug-resistant tuberculosis. This analysis provides a much-needed ethnographic account of tuberculosis as a public health crisis and responses to this crisis by local and international officials in Georgia and the Caucasus. Particular attention is given to changing forms of (disease) governance, and political and moral economies of health, medicine, and science along the fissures of formerly Soviet bodies.

PAUL MANNING (Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Trent University) received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, based on extensive ethno-linguistic research in both Wales and the former Soviet republic of Georgia. He has received grants from the Spencer Foundation and NCEEER, and currently serves on the editorial boards of the journals, *Language and Communication*, *Amirani*, and *Enis Saxli*. His recent work on the Caucasus includes, “Disciplines and Nations: Niko Marr vs. his Georgian Students” [with Marcello Cherchi], *Carl Beck Papers* (2002); and “Describing Dialect and Defining Civilization in an Early Georgian Nationalist Manifesto: Iliia Chavchavadze’s ‘Letters of a Traveler,’” *Russian Review* 63, no. 1 (2004): 26-47. (Web: <http://www.trentu.ca/anthropology/pmanning.html>).

Abstract: Mountaineer Romances: Georgian intelligentsia and Georgian landscape

Georgian mountaineers—Khevsurs and Pshavs—have been noted for the presence of what Tu-ite has called “anti-marriage” practices, a sort of endogamous romantic dalliance in the years before marriage (which is exogamous). Anti-marriage practices formed a kind of special intermediate relation between sibling relations and spousal forms. A source of fascination for Georgians on the plains, such practices and the cycles of love, praise, and insult poetry associated with them made these remote corners of Georgia into a “romantic” locale. The Georgian intelligentsia's own ethnographic engagements with these mountaineers and their traditions of romance will be explored using three vignettes: a film from the 1960s, *Khevsur Ballad*; a set of travel letters from the nineteenth century; and an ethnography of these practices written by a Khevsur woman who was herself banished from Khevsureti for violating the norms of these practices.

SHAHIN MUSTAFAYEV (Deputy Director, Institute of Oriental Studies, Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences) holds a Candidate's Degree from the Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow, and has received grants from the Soros Foundation, the Open Society Institute, and, for 2005-2006, at Indiana University through the offices of Fulbright. His work on the Caucasus includes, “The Diaries of Yusif Vezir Chemenzeminli: An Azerbaijani Intellectual in the Process of Acculturation,” in Beate Eschment and Hans Harder, eds., *Looking at the Colonizer: Cross-Cultural Perceptions in Central Asia and the Caucasus, Bengal, and Related Areas* (Ergon 2004), 31-45; and “The Interaction of Religious Traditions of Central Asia, Anatolia, and Azerbaijan,” in *Proceedings of the UNESCO Forum 'Culture and Religion in Central Asia'* (Bishkek 2001), 114-121.

Abstract: The History of Sovereignty in Azerbaijan

For most newly independent states of the former Soviet Union, the ideological dimensions of sovereignty far outstrip scholarly considerations. It is more a matter of political prestige and historical legitimacy, frequently drawing on perceived roots going back to ancient times. This paper will analyze competing understandings of Azeri sovereignty, variously traced back to the state of Mannai in the 9th century BC; ancient Huns; the Great Turkic Khaganate; the Seljuks; the Atabeks of the 12th century; and the most recent attentions being paid to the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan (1918-1920), so important for current political practices.

MATHIJS PELKMANS (Research Fellow, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology) has received his Ph.D. from the University of Amsterdam. Over the past ten years he has carried out extensive fieldwork in Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. He is the author of *Defending the Border: Religion, Politics, and Modernity in the Georgian Borderlands* (Cornell University Press, forthcoming) and has published on Muslim-Christian relations, territorial borders, and postsocialist change. (Web: <http://www.eth.mpg.de/>).

Abstract: Powerful documents: Passports, passages, and dilemmas of identification on the Georgian – Turkish border

Are borders dividing lines between entities, or are the involved entities the product of boundary drawing activities? Passports, as official documents of identification, are useful tools for studying the linkages between border-drawing, categorization, and the formation of collective identities. This paper discusses the role of passports in the delimitation, solidification, and partial demise of the Iron Curtain between (Soviet) Georgia and Turkey. It argues that passports were instrumental in the intensification of state surveillance and that despite their contested nature these documents became central to the self-perception of border dwellers. Because Soviet passports labeled a person's ethnicity and (implicitly) revealed regional and religious affiliation, they had a power that went far beyond the rights of citizenship – they literally defined the worth of its owner. What this paper ultimately shows is that passports are not only tools by which the state disciplines its citizens, but are also documents that inculcate specific identities. As such they form the spill around which dynamics of inclusion and exclusion unfold, and the basis for (asymmetric) negotiations between border-dwellers and state representatives.

ANTON POPOV (Research Fellow, The University of Warwick) received his PhD from the University of Birmingham based on the study of the cultural production of identity among the Greeks in Southern Russia and the North Caucasus. In Russia, he has worked as a researcher at the Centre for Pontic and Caucasian Studies conducting his research on different migrant and ethnic minority communities in Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Black Sea region of Turkey. He received a scholarship from the Ford Foundation and moved to do his PhD in Cultural Studies and Russian and East European Studies in the University of Birmingham. He is now working at the Department of Sociology in the University of Warwick as a manager of the 'Releasing Indigenous Multiculturalism through Education' project which has as its foci regions the South Caucasus, the Balkans, Ukraine and Southern Russia. His recent works on the Caucasus includes: 'Becoming Pontic: "Post-Socialist" Identities, "Transnational" Geography, and the "Native" Land of the Caucasian Greeks', *Ab Imperio*, 2: 339-360; and 'Ethnic Minorities and Migration Processes in the Krasnodar Territory', *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, 1(13): 160-175.

Abstract: The Internal Others: the Cultural Boundaries of the Pontic Greek Identity in Southern Russia.

The paper focuses on the production of meanings of the Pontic Greek identity as culturally and historically rooted in the Caucasus and the Black Sea region. In particular, it explores how in the process of construction of locally embedded Pontic identity diverse discourses and practices (such as the Pontic Greek cultural revival, regional cultural politics in Southern Russia, anti-Caucasian xenophobic attitudes of the majority of population in the region, cultural memory, the Turkish language of some Greeks, their recent migration from the South Caucasus, etc.) are interlaced, contested and reinterpreted.

SETENEY SHAMI (Director of the Middle East, North Africa, and Eurasia Programs, Social Science Research Council) is an anthropologist from Jordan with a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley (M.A., Ph.D.). After establishing the first graduate department of anthropology in Jordan at Yarmouk University, she moved in 1996 to the regional office of the Population Council in Cairo as Director of the Middle East Awards in Population and the Social Sciences. In 1999, she moved to her current position at the SSRC in New York. She has additionally taught at the University of California, Berkeley, Georgetown University, the University of Chicago, Stockholm University, and the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study. Her recent publications on the Caucasus include, "Prehistories of Globalization: Circassian Identity in Motion," *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (2000): 177-204; and "Engendering Social Memory: Domestic Rituals, Resistance and Identity in the North Caucasus," in Feride Acar and Ayse Gunes-Ayata, eds., *Gender and Identity Construction: Women of Central Asia, the Caucasus and Turkey* (Brill, 2000), 305-331.

Abstract: North and South: rethinking margins through Circassian ethnography

This paper will reflect on what long-term ethnographic research reveals about a central paradox in Caucasian Studies: identities that are somehow entrenched yet shifting, fixed in one place, and yet tied to many. This suggests a fundamental rethinking of the conceptual languages of marginality that have long been used to characterize the Caucasus. I plan to explore these tensions between north and south, place and personhood, and marginality and centrality as they have played out for Circassians identifying along multiple and shifting geographic and political axes – Moscow, Mecca, Nalchik, Istanbul, Maikop, Amman, Patterson (New Jersey), Pinarbasi, Tbilisi and so on.

NONA SHAHNAZARIAN (Associate Researcher, Center for Pontic and Caucasian Studies; and Lecturer, Kuban' State University) received her Candidate's Degree from the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology, Russian Academy of Sciences, and has conducted fieldwork in Russia, Armenia, Georgia, and Nagorno-Karabagh, through grants from Memorial, the Soros Foundation, and MacArthur. Her recent articles on the Caucasus include, "Our Mountains Shall Feed Us: Structures of Everyday Survival in Post-Soviet Karabagh," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* (2005); and "The Virtual Widows of Migrant Husbands in War-Torn Mountainous Karabagh," in H. Haukanes and Frances Pine, eds., *Women After Communism* (Bergen, 2005).

Abstract: Fields of Social Networks: informal local economies in Ponto-Caucasian communities

In this paper, I look to explore questions of traditional economic structures across the South Caucasus and the Hemshin community of the Krasnodar region. Among the themes I will analyze are: i) the influence of kinship roles and obligations, specifically gender, *namus*, honor, and reciprocity; ii) patronage and clientelism in the post-Soviet period, and the formation of new elites; and iii) discourses of survival under circumstances of poverty and corruption.

ZAZA SHATIRISHVILI (Associate Professor, Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature) holds a Doctoral Degree in Philosophy from Tbilisi State University. He has taught widely in Tbilisi, and at the University of California, Berkeley. (Web: <http://www.eurozine.com/authors/shatirishvili.html>). Among his books and articles, his recent writings on the Caucasus include, "Fictional Narrative and Allegorical Discourse: The Reception of Rustaveli in 16th-18th Century Georgian Culture and King Vakhtang VI's Commentaries," in *Der Kommentar in Antike and Mittelalter* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 179-183; and "Romantic Topography and Dilemmas of Empire" [with Harsha Ram], *Russian Review* 1 (2004): 1-25.

Abstract: "Old" and "New" Georgian National Narratives

In this essay, I look to explore: the genesis of Georgian national narratives; Rustaveli's epic poem, "The Knight in the Panther's Skin"; narratologies of nationalist movements; and the effects of Eastern Christianity as well as the Rose Revolution on recent understandings of Georgian nationalist politics.

LALE YALÇIN-HECKMANN (Head of Research Group, "Caucasian Boundaries and Citizenship from Below," Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology) received her Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from the London School of Economics, and has taught at Middle East Technical University, the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, the University of Bamberg, and the Free University in Berlin. She has held grants from the Turkish Ministry of Education, the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, and the Volkswagen Foundation, in support of fieldwork and research among Kurds in Turkey, on land tenure in Azerbaijan, and her extensive public advocacy work for migrants. (Web: <http://www.eth.mpg.de/>). Among her recent publications on the Caucasus are: "Retreat to the Cooperative or the Household? Agricultural Privatisation in Ukraine and Azerbaijan" [with Deema Kaneff], in *The Postsocialist Agrarian Question*, compiled by Chris Hann and the Property Relations Group (LIT, 2003), 219-255; and "Zwischen Assimilation und Akkomodation: Zur Geschichte und Gegenwart der Kurden in Aserbaidshchan," in S. Conermann and G. Haig, eds., *Die Kurden* (EB-Verlag, 2004), 151-206.

Abstract: Citizenship Regimes and Borders in the Caucasus after Socialism: closures and openings

State borders in the Caucasus of the post-Soviet era have been subject to two contradictory constraints: On the one hand, they have been nationalised after declaring independence from the former Soviet Union, and also as a result of wars and conflicts within the new states and between them. On the other hand, transition economies and the emergence of new markets urge the borders to be literally or symbolically permissive and even differently drawn. This paper looks at the scope of this tension, and how various social actors perceive and react to this double bind. Whether the agency of social actors leads to notions and practices of citizenship from below will be a key question in this overview and analysis, taking Azerbaijan as a case study.