

Center for Security and Energy Research at Qafqaz University  
Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes/Observatoire du Caucase  
Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Azerbaijan National Academy of  
Sciences

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**IDENTITIES ON THE MOVE: THE CAUCASUS BETWEEN THE LOCAL, THE  
REGIONAL, AND THE GLOBAL  
*WITH A FOCUS ON AZERBAIJAN***

***PROGRAM AND ABSTRACTS***

Qafqaz University, Baku, May 15-16, 2015

Venue: Khirdalan, Hasan Aliyev street, Faculty of Economic and Administrative  
Sciences (IBF), room 310

**Please register: [cmahmudov@qu.edu.az](mailto:cmahmudov@qu.edu.az)**

## **Organizers**

Center for Security and Energy Research at Qafqaz University - Baku  
Institut français d'études anatoliennes (IFEA)/Observatoire du Caucase - Baku  
Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS)

## **Organizational committee**

Aliagha Mammadli  
Ceyhun Mahmudlu  
Adeline Braux

## **With the support of**

Qafqaz University  
Institut français d'études anatoliennes  
Academic Swiss Caucasus Net  
Ambassade de France en Azerbaïdjan/Campus France

## **Under the presidency of**

Ms Anne de Tinguy, Full Professor at the Institut national des langues et civilisations orientales (INALCO-Paris)  
Mr Aliagha Mammadli, Head of the Department of Ethnosociological Research at the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of ANAS



## **PROGRAM**

**MAY 15**

9.30: Get together and welcome addresses

**10.30-12.30**

Chair: Anne de Tinguy

### **Migration and Diaspora Issues**

Chen Bram, Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, The Hebrew University - Jerusalem

*Diaspora and Transnationalism Revisited: The case of Azerbaijani and Georgian Jews*

Adeline Braux, IFEA, Caucasus branch - Baku

*Lifestyle and 'Styled Life': How Youngsters of South-Caucasian Descent in Russia Get Transnational*

Maroussia Ferry, EHESS - Paris.

*Changing Social Identities: The Case of Georgian Circulatory and Return Migrants*

Teona Mataradze, Martin-Luther University - Halle-Wittenburg; Assistant Professor, Faculty of humanities, Tbilisi State University

*'Friendship of People' During Political Crises*

*12.30-13.30: Lunch break*

**13.30-15.00**

Chair: Sofie Bedford

### **Social and Identity Changes in Azerbaijan**

Nicolas Crosnier, INALCO - Paris

*Urban Renewal of Baku. Representations and Clashes in Society About the New Face of Baku*

Raphaëlle Mathey, EHESS

*Social and Identity Changes in Azerbaijan in the Last Decades Through the Prism of the Evolution of Funeral Rituals*

*15.00-15.30: coffee break*

**15.30-17.30**

Chair: Clément Therme

**Minority Issues and Intergroup Relations**

Ketevan Khutsishvili, Institute of History and Ethnology, Tbilisi State University  
*Moslem-Christian Interrelations: The Case of Shared Sacred Sites in Kvemo Kartli Region (Georgia)*

Karli Storm, University of Eastern Finland  
*Analyzing Manifestations of and Responses to Ethno-national Identity in a Border Region: Individual and Group Encounters with Ethno-national Identity in Kvemo Kartli*

Kutbettin Kiliç, Indiana University-Bloomington  
*Ethnicity, Ethnic Identity and Ethnic Political Behavior: A Conceptual Typology*

*19.00: Dinner (for participants to the conference only)*

**MAY 16**

**10.00-13.00**

Chair: Kutbettin Kiliç

**Identity and Nation-building in Azerbaijan**

Sofie Bedford, Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University  
*Turkey and Azerbaijan: One Religion—Two States?*

Aliagha Mammadli, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography at the ANAS - Baku  
*About some factors of stability of ethnic identity of Azerbaijanis during the Soviet period (in Russian)*

*11.15-11.30: coffee break*

Ceyhun Mahmudlu, Center for Security and Energy Research, Qafqaz University  
*Ethnic Origin and Azerbaijanism*

Aydin Balayaev, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography at the ANAS  
*The Revival of Islam in Azerbaijan and Its Influence on National Identity (in Russian)*

*13.00-14.00: Lunch break*

**14.00-16.00**

Chair: Adeline Braux

**Azerbaijan in Its Regional Environment**

Nariman Karakhani, Qafqaz university

*Civilization values of Azerbaijan and its relationship with other civilizations*

Clément Therme, CETOBAC/EHESS - Paris

*The Azeri question in historical and cultural perspectives: the view from Iran*

Serkan Yolacan, Duke University - Durham

*A seesaw across the Black Sea: Turkish-Azeri encounters in old frontiers*

Laurent Vinatier, Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University

*Russia's new unpredictability: a chance for peace in Nagorno-Karabakh*

### **The Revival of Islam in Azerbaijan and Its Influence on National Identity**

*Aydin Balayev*

For decades, Muslim peoples were backward in the development of their national identity compared to the West. This may be explained by the peculiarities of Islam, which has been their main path of identification for centuries and well into the 20th century. This has led to the levelling out of national and racial peculiarities, thus becoming a barrier to the formation of national identity. It was only with the efforts of a number of members of the intelligentsia educated in Europe that the situation was overcome. As a result, a national ideology was born which presumed the refusal of former modifications of the category “nation” in Islam, and instead took for granted the move from a religious to a national identity. In the last years, a reverse process of revival of religious identity has been taking place. This represents a real threat for national statehood. First and foremost, the restoration of the position of Shia Islam in the country represents a particular threat. Akhmed Bek Aghaoglu considered Shia Islam as Iran’s national religion, an expression of the Iranian spirit that had resisted to the destructions brought by Arab invasions, and a means for Persians to keep their specific identity in a large Muslim world. In this regard, Shia Islam has always been a means of Iranian influence among Azerbaijani masses. And the fact that it was given the status of an official religion in Iran precisely during the rule of a Turkic dynasty –the Safavids– does not change this state of affairs.

Dr Aydin Balayev graduated from the Department of History of the Azerbaijan State University and in 1982 he started working at the Institute of Archeology and Ethnography of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences. In 1983-1985, Balayev was a researcher at the Department of Ethnography of Moscow University. From 1985 he continued his doctoral studies at the Ethnography Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences in Moscow, graduating with a PhD in History in 1988.

### **Turkey and Azerbaijan: One Religion—Two States?**

*Sofie Bedford*

As a result of Soviet anti-religious campaigns, the Azerbaijani Muslims were at the time of independence to a large extent not very knowledgeable about their Islamic faith. Because of this, foreign religious influences played an important part in the country’s post-Soviet religious revival. Due to its predominantly Muslim demography and geographic location, missionaries from neighboring Iran and Turkey as well as some of the Gulf countries arrived in the country en masse. This foreign religious influence and new approaches to religion increasingly became seen as something harmful. While the authorities portrayed brands of Islam from North Caucasus, Iran and Saudi Arabian as dangerous, work of Turkish Islamic groups was seen as less threatening and as such faced fewer restrictions. Considering that Turkish groups in general are advocates of the Sunni branch of Islam, while the majority of the Azerbaijani Muslims traditionally

adhere to the Twelver Shia School, this appears counterintuitive. This paper sets out to provide a more thorough understanding of what made 'Turkish Islam' the preferred choice for the political leaders of independent Azerbaijan as well as highlights and considers the reasons for this amicable reception of Turkish religious representatives gradually coming to an end. It suggests at least part of the explanation is to be found in the state-promoted notion of a 'unique Azerbaijani Islam' that in recent years seems to have become more substantial and overt.

Dr Sofie Bedford has a Ph.D. in Political Science from Stockholm University and an MA in Peace and Conflict Research from Uppsala University. The title of her doctoral thesis is *Islamic Activism in Azerbaijan: Repression and Mobilization in a Post-Soviet Context* (Stockholm: Dep. of Political Science 2009). She is currently a researcher at Uppsala Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Uppsala University and her research interests include religious-, political- and social mobilization and elections in the post-Soviet sphere. She has previously been associated with for example the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the Swedish Defence Research Institute, and the United Nations Development Program in Baku. She is currently a committee member of the Association for Friends of the Swedish Istanbul Institute and part of the Editorial Board for the academic journal *Baltic Worlds*.

### **Diaspora and Transnationalism Revisited: The Case of Azerbaijani and Georgian Jews**

*Chen Bram*

In this paper I analyze the various connections of immigrants from Azerbaijan and Georgia in Israel to their Land of Birth. This includes various transnational connections, in several levels: personal, communal, cultural and state-oriented connections. Moreover, symbolic aspects are of special interest in these cases and they reveal specific features of intergroup relations in the Caucasus. I argue that these cases shed light on important features of identity formation, immigration and transnationalism in the Caucasus. The similarities between the Georgian and Azerbaijani cases suggest some wider characteristics of intergroup relations and transnationalism in the Caucasus, notwithstanding important differences and specific features of each case. At the same time, the cases of Azerbaijani and Georgian Jews challenge the common discourse on 'Diaspora' both in Israel, and to certain degree- these cases also challenge some assumption of the theoretical discourse on Diasporas in general.

Dr Chen Bram is an anthropologist, with additional training in organizational studies, sociology and comparative religion. Currently research Fellow at the Truman Institute, the Hebrew University, and lecturer at the international MA program in Immigration Studies in Tel Aviv University. Combining his academic interests with practical applications, previously he worked as an engaged and applied anthropologist. In 2012-2014 Bram had been a Schusterman Visiting Professor at the University of Florida and at James Madison College of Public Affairs, Michigan State University (2012-2014). In 2010-2012 Bram was a Research Fellow at the Van Leer Institute, serving as academic manager of the research group, "Anthropological knowledge: relevance, use and potential."

## **Lifestyle and 'Styled Life': How Youngsters of South-Caucasian Background in Russia Get Transnational**

*Adeline Braux*

Migration has been undoubtedly one of the major phenomena that has affected the post-Soviet space since the collapse of the Soviet Union. These migrations also contributed to create new networks between the former centre and peripheries, thus maintaining human links while other links tend to get looser and looser as time goes by. According to the last population census carried out in the Russian Federation in 2010, 603,070 people in Russia declared themselves “Azerbaijanis”, 1,2 million "Armenians", and 160,000 "Georgians". What was originally perceived by the actors of migration as a temporary and male mobility often turned into a migration of settlement since many migrants did finally create a family in Russia, or did bring their family from their home countries. Thus, a “second-generation” was brought up –and sometimes born - in Russia, far away from a country their parents still long for years after having emigrated. In this regard, immigrant families from the Southern Caucasus do not follow different patterns from immigrant communities that have already been researched in Europe or in the US. One of the basic issues these families are faced with is how to deal with the emergence of this “hyphenated generation”? We will therefore focus on the young generation and see how they experience the transnational arenas they live in. We will emphasise especially the way they tend to reify their identities and try to cope with the symbolic, cultural, and social spaces they experience, praising "Kavkaznost", and at the same time expressing a form of local attachment to the place where they live in Russia.

Dr Adeline Braux holds a PhD in Political Science from SciencesPo Paris (2011). Her dissertation was entitled "Migration, transnationalism and new diasporas in the post-Soviet area: South-Caucasian immigrants in the Russian Federation". Since January 2014 she has been working in Baku where she is in charge of the Caucasus branch of the Institut Français d'Études Anatoliennes (IFEA/Istanbul). Her current fields of interest include migration issues in the South Caucasus (return migrations in Azerbaijan, new migration related legislations), and migrations from the post-Soviet space to Turkey.

## **Urban Renewal of Baku. Representations and Clashes in Society About the New Face of Baku.**

*Nicolas Crosnier*

Proposal analysis of the Azerbaijani society through the transformation of the capital. As in Beirut and Dubai, the urban landscape of Baku is undergoing a major transformation. The choices made in architectural terms, the economic and financial aspects of these housing projects are a subject of study. The project is to sketch a geopolitical portrait - understood here as conflicts over control of space - of the Azerbaijani society. My presentation will focus on urban renewal policies in the capital of Azerbaijan, Baku. In every capital of the world, the political system written in the walls and the national narrative highlights its political project. The situation in Baku is no exception to this fact. The Azerbaijani society is the complex result of multiple



influences. Thus, the face of this city has been experiencing a radical transformation with the influx of wealth following the opening of a pipeline designed by Americans and Europeans. Urban renewal is accelerating, real estate projects multiply, and seem more and more ambitious. The "pharaonic" style of some buildings has drawn the attention of the European public during the broadcast of the Eurovision song contest last May 2012. The interest of this paper is not that description, it can highlight elements of the regime and social relations in the capital, which would be very difficult to study using traditional methods of human sciences. Who wants to analyze the Azerbaijan society must interpret what is seen and what wants to be seen in the capital, which includes almost all the vital forces of the country. I therefore propose to describe certain characteristics of the Azerbaijani society through its capital, Baku. Trade like any sector of the economy are under the influence of political power. I will also discuss the development of new commercial spaces. The malls, such as luxury shops, do not have to be profitable. What is sought is the appearance of wealth. Political and economic hierarchy is found in urban planning, in the arrangement between prestigious projects on the waterfront and small buildings constructed hastily in the more peripheral areas. Finally, public diplomacy concepts, urban marketing, are operative to analyze urban policies in Baku, particularly in the context of the construction of an international identity for the city as the seat of many different sport events.

Ph.D candidate in Geography at the *Centre de Recherches Europes-Eurasie* (CREE) at the *Institut National des Langues & Civilisations Orientales* (INALCO) in Paris, France, since 2012, Nicolas Crosnier has already completed three fieldwork periods in Baku between 2011 and 2013. His interests include landscapes and their use as a tool of public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy for actors of urban revitalization of cities. He has been interested in the many uses of urbanism and architecture in local politics.

**Professor Anne de Tinguy (presidence)** holds degrees from the University of Paris 1 Sorbonne, INALCO, and Sciences Po, and a Ph.D. in political science (1981). Former fellow (1989-1990) of the Institut des hautes études de défense nationale (IHEDN). Former Research Fellow with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS); Tenured Professor at the INALCO since 2005. Academic Director of the joint Master's in International Studies between SciencesPo and MGIMO, Moscow since 2002; Associated Researcher at the Centre d'études et de recherches internationales (CERI/SciencesPo-Paris); Vice-President of the French Association of Ukrainian Studies since 2000; member of the editorial boards of *Anatoli* and *Hommes et migrations*. She specialises in Russian foreign policy, Ukrainian politics, and East-West migrations.

### **Changing Social Identities: The Case of Georgian Circulatory and Return Migrants**

*Maroussia Ferry*

Both the topic of migration and the Caucasus area entail analyses in terms of ethnicity or cultural diversity. Despite the very relevance of these phenomena, we will here focus on another type of identity which is of a social and economic kind. We believe Georgia

is a prime example of this paradigm, having once been one of the most prosperous republic in the Soviet Union, and quickly becoming one of the poorest after independence. The middle class' loss of wealth and social standing, and the lack of upward social mobility, has had a significant impact on social stratifications, both in an objective and in a subjective point of view. Within this specific socio-historical space, people started to migrate as their own world fell down, along with their living standard, social status, values, and feeling of security. Migrating has therefore to be seen as one among all survival strategies that had to be quickly invented in the 90s. This emergency strategy lasted and somehow stabilized, but kept some of its emergency features, among them migration, which is still linked with other survival strategies, and owes a "fragmented temporality". Migration moves (especially the ones towards Turkey because of geographic proximity and a relax visa policy) are very often caused by debts following, for example, the failure of small businesses, or happen to be the means for opening a new business. The instability of Georgian economy, consisting on short cycles and on the importance of loans issue in everyday life, is to be seen also in migration rhythms and expectations. Outward migration from Georgia, undertaken following the fall of USSR, can be therefore understood in the frame of a historical downward mobility that reshapes the views migrants, including the falling "intelligentsia", have on their own social identity and on their position within a rapidly changing society. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork research in Turkey and Georgia with circulatory and return migrants, and more precisely on the formal analyses of biographic interviews, this paper will address the issue of the Georgian Post-Soviet social "malaise" but will also deal with the symbolic strategies, such as narratives, used to somehow overcome it. Thus, outward migration from Georgia will be analyzed at the crossroad of a global historical event, that is to say the fall of USSR and the difficulties faced by the populations during the 90's, shared in various ways by the all post-Soviet space, and of local issues, that is to say the inner reshaping of social identities within the specific Georgian society.

Maroussia Ferry is a Ph.D. candidate in Anthropology at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociale (EHESS), Paris, and a fellow at the French Institute for Demographic Studies (INED). She carried out fieldwork in Georgia and Turkey, investigating how the feminization of migration impacts post-Soviet Georgia. Her publications include an article for the *Caucasus Analytical Digest* and a contribution in a volume of *Security, Democracy and Development in the South-Caucasus* co-edited by Ghia Nodia and Christoph Stefes and published by Peter Lang Publishers (to be published).

## **Azerbaijan's Civilization Values and Its Relationship with Other Civilizations**

*Nariman Karakhani*

The reality of today is much more tragic since we are witnessing cruel resistance to value system. Interactions of civilizations are a very complicated, ambiguous, irregular process as a result of which, under certain circumstances, self-civilization can be amplified and conflicts among the people will become more serious. But it is in the majority of cases occurring in the opposite direction: growing interactions and cooperations, and even a convergence of civilizations. The essence of value analysis of

society allows us to understand the genesis, characteristics, and trends of development of various social and ethnic groups. The problem of inter-civilization interactions in the context of globalization has been studied in numerous academic studies. The impact of cultural and civilizational environment on international relations is taken into account in forming the concepts related to the contemporary world. This article discusses the civilizational values of Azerbaijan through the prism of inter-civilizational relations. A combination of Turkism with Shiism defines the cultural and civilizational specificity of Azerbaijan. Another problematic question is the clash of global interests and its influence on decisions of Azerbaijan foreign policy in the issues at stake in the region. In his monograph "The Grand Chessboard", Brzezinski called Azerbaijan a geopolitical fulcrum of the Caucasus, that is to say a state similar to the "Eurasian Balkans", in other words the Caucasus and Central Asia. Azerbaijan - a bridge connecting East and west, as well as a place of clash of civilizations, mainly known in world politics through the oil factor.

Professor of International Relations Department at Qafqaz University since 2009, Dr Karakhani has completed his BA and MA in International Politics and received a doctorate degree in International Relations from the Inter-regional Academy of personal management, Ukraine. He spent 4 years as a Research Assistant in the Inter-regional Academy of personal management. He is the author of several scholarly publications on civilizations: dialogue among Western and Muslim civilizations, international politics.

### **Moslem-Christian Interrelations: The Case of Shared Sacred Sites in Kvemo Kartli Region (Georgia)**

*Ketevan Khutsishvili*

Historically Georgia has had close political, cultural and economic connections with its Islamic neighbors. Naturally century-long relations caused the formation of certain different stereotypes on the popular and the state levels. The level of tolerance was high. The reason was laid not only in the state politics, but also in the necessary creation of the corresponding conditions for the representatives of various religious groups to live peacefully in Georgia. During the Communist period, state policies were based on internationalism, wholly ignoring religion, which resulted in the explosion of religious energy after the collapse of the USSR. In such an unstable situation, religion on the one hand turned into a disintegration factor but at the same time the traditionally elaborated system of peaceful coexistence came into play and some ethnographic practices received an additional meaning. One of these practices is the habit of sharing sacred sites. The paper will be based on the ethnographic data collected in Kvemo Kartli region in Georgia, where ethnic Azerbaijanis (Shia Moslems) and ethnic Georgians (Orthodox Christians) used to be accustomed to share, and are still used to sharing, sacred sites, in some cases carrying out common rituals, in other cases separately visiting the same places. The common everyday life, needs and difficulties are supporting the tolerance towards these shared religious practices. In the last decades the normative religion is taking over and the practical religion is stepping behind, thus the century long everyday practices are under the threat of disappearance.

Professor Ketevan Khutsishvili studied at the Department of Ethnology of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University (1984-1989) and at Essen University (1995-1996). In 2005 she was granted the scientific degree of Doctor of Historical Sciences (dissertation on „The Influence of Religious Factor on the Ethno-cultural Identification and Civil Integration (The Case of Modern Georgia)”). She acts currently as the Head of the Department of Ethnology of the Institute of History and Ethnology (since 2006 to present) and is Professor of Ethnology at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Faculty of Humanities, Institute of Ethnology (Georgia) (since 2006 to present). Fields of interest: ethno-cultural processes in the Caucasus, religious issues, ethnic identity and relations, IDP studies.

## **Ethnicity, Ethnic Identity and Ethnic Political Behavior: A Conceptual Typology**

*Kutbettin Kiliç*

For any scholarly enterprise, one of the major tasks is to establish a conceptual vocabulary that clearly conveys analytical narratives to the readers. This is mainly the case for theoretically driven studies. When we talk of theories in social sciences, we, in fact, implicitly deal with concepts as the building blocks on which theoretical propositions, thus theories, are constructed. Concepts as analytical categories help us develop a learned and organized approach to the real world. Without well-defined and carefully crafted concepts, it is hardly possible to develop theories with strong validity and explanatory power that helps us better comprehend the complexities of phenomenal world. Nor is it possible to successfully and effectively communicate our ideas with the community of scholars who work on the same phenomena. Thus, for a study with a theoretically informed research design, starting with the clarification and conceptualization of the founding concepts is basically a requirement to be met. This scholarly enterprise largely proceeds in two ways. First, one can simply predicate on the conceptual vocabulary that is already present in the extant literature. This is a common practice in all scholarly fields because in time all fields, more or less, reach an agreement on the definitions of some conceptual vocabulary that carry fairly the same connotations for the practitioners of the field. Therefore, as time proceeds, chains of “coordinated definitions and cumulative conceptual refinements” are likely to pave for more stable concepts and “a shared understanding of categories,” which, in turn, diminish the need for forming new concepts. Second, empirical reality or “phenomenal world” can necessitate some changes in the “semantic field” so that scholars may need to form new conceptual categories to reestablish a correspondence between phenomenal and semantic fields. This often happens when we face empirical puzzles that existing conceptual tools grow insufficient to contain, need to be narrowed or extended in order to address the empirical phenomena under investigation. In such situations, forming new concepts emerges as a necessity. In this study I follow the second path by proposing a new conceptual vocabulary in understanding the connection between ethnicity and political behavior. While carefully elaborating on Kurdish issue in Turkey as well as on its reverberations in the political landscape of the country, I came to realize that extent conceptual frameworks grow insufficient to explore the workings of Kurdish ethnic identity on the ground, something that led me to problematize the concepts proposed in the literature and to come up with a new conceptual vocabulary. I do not imply that extent conceptual tools fail altogether to establish a correspondence

with the phenomenal world. Nor do I claim that the concepts proposed by previous work must be completely abandoned. But I do wish to say that the existing conceptual vocabulary needs to be modified or re-conceptualized in order to match the empirical reality of Kurdish ethnic politics. To this end, I, first, start defining and accordingly conceptualizing the terms ethnic category, ethnic group and ethnic identity. Second, I construct a new conceptual typology on the basis of these concepts that identifies four ethnic identity forms adopted by ethnic individuals ethnic settings.

Kutbettin Kiliç obtained his B.A. in International Relations from Beykent University-Istanbul and an M.A. in the same field from Middle East Technical University. During his M.A. studies at Middle East Technical University, he completed a master's thesis on Iraqi Kurds. He is currently a PhD candidate in the Middle Eastern Studies Program at Indiana University-Bloomington. His research interests include ethnicity and nationalism, civil wars, social movements, Turkish politics and Middle Eastern Politics. In his dissertation he focuses on the connection between ethnic identity and voting behavior in Turkey.

## **Ethnic Origin of Azerbaijanism**

*Ceyhun Mahmudlu*

To understand nation building in modern Azerbaijan it is very important to analyze the process from the perspective of nationality policy during USSR. Before the occupation of Azerbaijan by Bolshevik Russia, an independent Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan was established between 1918-1920. Although it aimed at the establishment of equal opportunities for each of the ethnic groups living in the country in order for them to develop their ethno cultural values, its short period of existence prevented it to realize the programs to related ethnic policy. After the annexation of Azerbaijan to USSR, the ethnic policy (in USSR named as "nationality policy) of this supra national state began to be really implemented in all fifteen Union's republics. That Soviet ethnic policy undoubtedly focused on the assimilation of all ethnic groups under the one supranational unit, "sovetskiy narod", and the method of realization of this policy was the reduction of their number. But in fact none of the ethnic groups in Soviet geography did disappear from the map. However, the strict Soviet administrative system was able to control and reduce possible tensions among ethnic groups. After the collapse of this super state though, newly independent post Soviet countries became victims of this policy. Most of the nation states formed as result of the ethnic policy of the Soviet Union faced problems which were also the result of this policy. Azerbaijan was no exception since it suffered tragically from ethnic separatism. This situation during and after the Soviet Union directly influenced the formation of the ethnic policy of this newly independent state.

Assoc. Prof, PhD in History. Dr. Mahmudlu is the Head of the Department of International Relations and the director of Qafqaz University Security and Energy Researches Center. His teaching and research specializations comprise a variety of topics such as Diplomatic History, International Organizations, Energy policy and Security, Ethnicity and Research Methods in Social Sciences. Dr. Mahmudlu received his PhD from the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Archeology

and Ethnography, and holds MA and BA in European Studies from the Azerbaijan University of Languages. He takes an active part to the curriculum development and joined programs organized in the U.S and Hungary. Besides, he was a fellow of faculty development program granted by the U.S. Department of State. Within the frame of international scientific research programs. Dr. Mahmudlu joined projects in Japan and U.S. He is the author of several scientific articles related to such topics as regional security, conflicts and resolutions and ethnicity.

### **About Some Factors of Stability of Ethnic Identity of Azerbaijanis During the Soviet Period**

*Aliagha Mammadli*

The paper focuses on some factors that have influenced the stability of ethnic identity in the conditions of the Soviet regime. Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, ethnic identity in Azerbaijan has had the character of traditional, pre-industrial societies in a peculiar historical and ethno-cultural context. Particularly, it relied on systems of more concrete issues, primarily on local social links: family (where stability is determined by the preservation of large family), community, regional, and so on. Besides, the low level of geographical mobility in most part of the state actually excluded opportunity for inter-ethnic communication, without which ethnic self-consciousness (the anti-thesis we/they) either doesn't appear at all, or appears very slowly under the influence of irrelevant and unclear information and propaganda. The rejection of ethnicity by the Soviet system did bore a conscious character and aimed to destroy the main components of Azerbaijanis' consciousness, such as origin, historical memory, ethnic symbols and values. One of the constants that contributed to the stability of Azerbaijani identity during that period was the celebration of Newroz (beginning of spring), and of the Shi'a celebration of Ashura. Actually, in the ethnic life of Azerbaijanis these two different phenomena had the same effects on the ethno-cultural functional level. Observing these traditions is a kind of demonstration of ethnic identity through ethnic symbolism: special clothing, dances, rituals, behavior patterns and specific moral values.

Dr Aliagha Mammadli (Anthropology) was born in 1958. He graduated from the Institute of Pedagogy and was a PhD candidate (*aspirant*) at Moscow State University. He is the Head of the Department of Ethnosociological Studies of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography at the NAS.

### **'Friendship of People' During Political Crises**

*Teona Mataradze*

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union the mobility of the population between and out of successor states has increased. The political crises, ethnic tensions, economic disaster made millions of ex-Soviet citizens search their ways out of their communities (either to urban centers, or to foreign countries). According to IOM (International Organization for Migration), in 2005 there were 1 024,598 Georgians out of the country (which composes 22.9% of Georgian population) (International Organization for Migration

(IOM) 2008, 19). Migration of male household members either to capital city or to Russia was much practiced by the village dwellers during the last 15 years. Migration is one of the crucial means of fighting with the economic disaster in the locality, but has its impacts on the political orientation of population towards the receiving state. What defines the destination of migrants, and even after 15 years of independence, why is the Russia the most popular and widespread destination for male village dwellers? How do the locals reflect on the Soviet past and talk about friendship of nations? Can we explain this migration pattern by the colonial theory? I will try to answer these questions, while shortly discussing the history of Georgian – Russian relations, the mass deportation of Georgian citizens from Russia in 2006, and present how Georgian migrants in Russia talk about states and people during the political crises.

Teona Mataradze graduated from Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University in 2005 with MA degree in Sociology. During 2006-2009 she was a PhD student at Max Plank Institute for Social Anthropology and a member of the group “Caucasian Boundaries and Citizenship from Bellow”. Her PhD thesis deals with citizenship and migration issues. Since 2010 she has been an Assistant Professor at the Department of Sociology and Social Work. Since 2015 Teona Mataradze is a head of the Office of Science, Research and Development of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University.

### **Social and Identity Changes in Azerbaijan in the Last Decades Through the Prism of the Evolution of Funeral Rituals**

*Raphaëlle Mathey*

Anthropological studies demonstrate that personal values, social relationships, and indicators of cultural identity are expressed in a symbolic manner in funeral rites. In Azerbaijan such rites can include as many as ten commemorative events (*yas*) in the year following the death. These are critically important events in which allegiances are made and broken. During the period of political chaos and economic recession which followed independence, from 1991 to 1996, the *yas* served as an incubator for a local identity movement. Political stability, beginning in 1996, and the advent of the petroleum era, in the 2000s, transformed the country's face, reordered relationships between individuals, and today raise the issue of creating a State and developing a national political project. The study of funeral rites enables one to measure the magnitude of these changes. The evolution of *yas* reveals new needs of a society in turmoil and reflects the fundamental examination Azerbaijanis are undertaking of themselves, their religion, their European and Oriental identities, and their relationship to modernity.

Raphaëlle Mathey is associated researcher at the the LAIOS/EHESS (Laboratoire d'anthropologie des institutions et des organisations sociales de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales) and currently works on her PhD on Death rituals in Azerbaijan. She graduated in Political Science and International Relations and worked several years in Azerbaijan for various international institutions.

## **Analyzing Manifestations of and Responses to Ethno-national Identity in a Border Region: Individual and Group Encounters with Ethno-national Identity in Kvemo Kartli**

*Karli Storm*

There are many different forms of individual and collective identity, and each of these forms plays an important role in the way individuals *perceive* and *experience* the world around them. Ethnic and national identity are two such forms of identity—forms that serve to group and link particular individuals to one another across time and space on the basis of certain shared characteristics (ancestry, birth place, mother tongue, religion, values, traditions, historical narratives, etc.). This presentation examines questions of ethnic and national identity in a region of Georgia that borders both Armenia and Azerbaijan and is home to the majority of Georgia's ethnic Azeri population—Kvemo Kartli—and explores the implications of narrowly-defined group membership for ethnically, linguistically, and culturally-diverse societies and their individual members. The presentation seeks to demonstrate the theoretical and analytical underpinnings of the author's plan to conduct fieldwork in the region as well as to examine the various possibilities and difficulties in researching individual and collective manifestations of/responses to ethnic and national identity in a globalizing world.

Karli Storm is a PhD candidate and researcher within the Department of Historical and Geographical Studies and the Doctoral Programme in Russian and Border Studies at the University of Eastern Finland (UEF). Storm is a two-time Fulbright recipient, having spent 2009-2010 as an English Language Teaching Assistant at the University of Languages in Baku, Azerbaijan, and 2013-2014 as a Fulbright Student Grantee to Finland, during which time she began her doctoral studies at UEF. Storm received her M.A. degree in 2013 in Russian and East European Studies from Indiana University (USA) and holds a dual B.A. degree in International Relations and Politics from Drake University (USA).

## **The Azeri Question in Historical and Cultural Perspectives: The View from Iran**

*Clément Therme*

The Azeri question became a political issue after the fall of the Soviet Union (1991). With Azerbaijan Iran's initial difficulties in the bilateral diplomatic relationship reflected the competitive nature of Turkish-Iranian cultural relationship but also the divergence between Baku and Tehran regarding the future of the Caspian Sea and its pollution. Moreover, the Islamic revolution ideology is both religious and anti-Western. Unlike the Islamic Republic, the post-soviet Azerbaijani state is secular and its foreign policy's main strategic orientation favours the search of a *modus vivendi* with the European Union and the United States. The cultural proximity is reinforced by the ethnic dimension of Iranian-Azerbaijani relationship since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Before that, the Soviet Union used Iranian Azerbaijan as a diplomatic tool for political penetration and to increase its ideological influence. In the 20th century, the Soviets were particularly active in Iranian Azerbaijan, more specifically in three distinct periods: 1905-1921, 1941-1947 and 1979-1981. During the last period, Moscow tried to



benefit from the post-revolutionary disorder, instrumentalizing Azeri cultural opening in Iran to diffuse Soviet propaganda in Iranian Azerbaijan. After Azerbaijan's independence in 1991, the first priority of Iranian foreign policy was to maintain the territorial integrity threatened by some Azerbaijani political groups who claimed to unify “the so-called thwarted nation – separated because of imperial rivalries and the vagaries of international politics”. This intervention will shed lights on the historical and cultural factors that shape the contemporary relationship between Baku and Tehran. For the historical dimension, I will focus on the Azeri contribution to Iranian nationalism, especially during the first half of the 20th century. The cultural and ethnic aspects will be studied through the transnational links between Azeri and Talesh population living in the territory of the Azerbaijani and Iranian states.

Dr Clément Therme is a Teaching Fellow at Sciences Po, Paris. He is also a Research Associate at the Centre d'études turques, ottomanes, balkaniques et centrasiatiques (CETOBAC) and at the Centre d'Analyse et d'Intervention Sociologiques (CADIS) at the École des hautes études en sciences sociales (EHESS, Paris). He is the author of *Les Relations entre Téhéran et Moscou depuis 1979* (PUF, 2012). He is also the co editor (with Houchang E. Chehabi and Farhad Khosrokhavar) of a book entitled *Iran and the Challenges of the Twenty First Century* (Mazda Publishers, 2013).

### **Russia's New Unpredictability : A Chance for Peace in Nagorno-Karabakh**

*Laurent Vinatier*

Russia's recent unpredictable foreign policy course has, naturally, raised certain fears among its post- Soviet neighbours. Seeing Kremlin decision-makers' intensified aggressive efforts to build the Eurasian Economic Union, seemingly at any cost, there is no guarantee that after “winning over” Armenia and Eastern Ukraine, Moscow will not turn to Baku exerting pressures to make it join the Union project. The Nagorno-Karabakh stalemate, in this view, comes across as a specific vulnerability that could be opportunely “unfrozen” or “threatened”. To some extent, despite Azerbaijani claims and efforts to keep a balanced and non-aligned foreign policy, a certain Azerbaijani dependency on Russia can hardly be avoided but only carefully dissimulated. As the geopolitical context is in flux this opens for a possible return to conflict resolution approach – in the shape of renewed Turkey-Armenia-Azerbaijan dialogue. This time, unlike previous attempts along these lines, facing a threat from Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan stand in a similar position and might even share a common goal to reduce Russian sway on them, and it seems that Baku may even have interest to facilitate a renewed Armenian-Turkish process. In the light of this, the paper intends to explore the current state of affairs between Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia, with an emphasis on the Azerbaijani side, as Baku is the one among the different players that need to radically change its approach.

Dr Laurent Vinatier is a Research Associate at the Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University. He specialises in Russia and the former Soviet Union. During his doctorate under the supervision of Olivier Roy, completed at SciencesPo Paris in December 2008, he studied the Chechnya conflict, the diaspora patterns that have emerged from it, and the political transformations affecting this war zone. He then

started political consulting, on-ground missions for various non-governmental organisations and research centres related to conflict-war zones : North-Caucasus, Turkey-Syria and now Ukraine.

## **A Seesaw Across the Black Sea: Turkish-Azeri Encounters in Old Frontiers**

*Serkan Yolacan*

This paper follows the story of a Soviet imam from Azerbaijan to probe an inter-regional historical pattern that undergirds Turkish-Azeri encounters today. Scholars have looked at similar encounters, though framed them as divorced from the Soviet past. This paper situates Turkish-Azeri encounters within the historical context of Soviet-Middle East relations and argues the following: the convergence during the Cold War of Soviet foreign policy abroad and cultural politics within, provided space for the “Eastern peoples” of the U.S.S.R. to build transnational connections that have outlasted the Soviet regime. The paper then locates this Soviet outreach to the Middle East as an episode in a longer historical trajectory shaped by centuries-long imperial rivalry between the Ottoman and Russian empires; critical in this rivalry was the allegiance of Turkic Muslim populations that were caught in-between. As imperial centers competed for the hearts and minds of their imperial subjects, a seesaw emerged across the Black Sea - and by extension the Caucasus and Central Asia- fragilely balanced on the Turkic Muslim populations of Central Eurasia. The collapse of the Soviet Union, though marking a historical rupture of a global kind for many, only accentuated a historical continuity seen from this inter-regional perspective.

Serkan Yolacan received his B.A. in Cultural Studies from Sabanci University and his M.A. in Sociology and Social Anthropology from Central European University. He worked as a project coordinator at the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation in Istanbul. Currently, he is doing a Ph.D. in Cultural Anthropology at Duke University. His dissertation project focuses on Azerbaijan’s homecoming to the Middle East; he works among Muslim activists and students going in and out of Azerbaijan.