

CAUCASUS RESEARCH RESOURCE CENTERS

THE 8TH ANNUAL CRRC CONFERENCE

RECOVERY AND REALIGNMENT:
THE SOUTH CAUCASUS
IN A NEW DECADE

JUNE 23-24, 2022

The 8th Annual CRRC Conference

**Recovery and Realignment:
The South Caucasus in a New Decade**

June 23-24, 2022



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 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.

JUNE 23, 2022

11:30-12:00 Online registration for conference participants

12:00-12:15 Opening remarks




PANEL 1: THE 44-DAY WAR AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

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|-------------|---|---|
| 12:15-12:30 | Assessing Water (Ir)rationality in Disputed Regions: Nagorno-Karabakh in the Aftermath of the 44-Day War | Leonardo Zanatta, Corvinus University of Budapest;
Marco Alvi, University of Bologna |
| 12:30-12:45 | The Nagorno-Karabakh War in Narratives of Azerbaijanis and Armenians in Georgia - Uncertain Peace and Conflict Mobility | Anna Cieslewska, the Polish Academy of Sciences |
| 12:45-13:00 | Human Rights and Civic Activism after the Second Karabakh War | Zulfiyya Abdurahimova-Carberry, Harvard University |
| 13:15-13:30 | Q&A | |
| 13:30-14:00 | Break | |
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PANEL 2: SOCIETY AND SPACE IN GEORGIA

14:00-14:15	Shrinking Pedestrian Spaces: Experiences of Walking in Tbilisi	Nino Zubashvili, CRRC Georgia
14:15-14:30	Liberal Attitudes and Religion: The Moderating Effects of a Communist Past	Giorgi Babunashvili, CRRC Georgia, and Anano Kipiani, CRRC Georgia
14:30-14:45	The COVID-19 Vaccination Process in Georgia: What Factors Play a Role in the Decision to get Vaccinated?	Eto Gagunashvili, CRRC Georgia, and Nino Mzhavanadze, Independent Researcher
15:00-15:30	Break	



PANEL 3: PARTY POLITICS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN GEORGIA

15:30-15:45 Emergence of Programmatic Party Competition in Hybrid Regimes: Within-Case Comparative Analysis of Georgia Levan Kakhishvili, University of Bamberg

15:45-16:00 Disengagement of Young Georgian Voters from Party Politics: Trends and Potential Explanations based on Survey Data Givi Silagadze, CRRC Georgia

16:00-16:15 From Elections to Elections: How Georgian Opposition Political Parties Strategize Beyond Electoral Campaigning Nino Samkharadze, Georgian Institute of Politics

16:15-16:30 Parliamentary Opposition Parties in Georgia's Foreign Policy under a Hybrid Regime Lasha Kakashvili, Caucasus University

16:30-16:45 Opportunities Matter: The Evolution of Far-Right Protest in Georgia Tamta Gelashvili, University of Oslo

16:45-17:00 Q&A

17:00-18:00 Break

Keynote speech

18:00-18:45 **Identification: The What, How, and Why of Which Whats Answer What Whys**
Professor Nick Huntington-Klein, Seattle University

12:00-12:15 Online registration of participants



PANEL 4: LANGUAGE, POWER AND POLITICS IN GEORGIA

12:15-12:30	Echoes of the 44-day war in Nagorno-Karabakh in Georgia's social media	Dr. David Sichinava, CRRC Georgia
12:30-12:45	How do we Speak? Who Hears us? Data Analysis of the Georgian PM's Twitter Networks and Discourse	Lucas Fagliano, Independent Researcher
12:45-13:00	Official State Language Acquisition as a Boundary Crossing – Experiences of Young Georgian Azerbaijanis	Mariam Mosiashvili, Central European University
13:15-13:30	Q&A	
13:30-14:00	Break	

PANEL 5: DISCOURSES AND THE PATTERNS OF MIGRATION IN GEORGIA

14:00-14:15	Migration Coverage by the Georgian Media in 2019-2021	Tina Tsomaia, Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA)
14:15-14:30	Georgians Migrants in Germany	Ekaterine Pirtskhalva, Tbilisi State University
14:30-14:45	The Impact of Covid-19 and the Consequent Complicated Policies on the Labour Migrants Employed in Georgia	Tatiana Sitchinava, Tbilisi State University
14:45-15:00	Q&A	
15:00-15:30	Break	



PANEL 6: METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS FOR ACADEMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH

15:30-15:45	Domestic Politics and International Human Capital	Jonathan Caverley, United States Naval War College, Jesse Dillon Savage
15:45-16:00	Promoting School Readiness through a Preschool Feeding Program: A Nutritional Nudge to Improve At-Risk Preschooler's Cognitive Development in Armenia	Balasyan Sona, CRRC Armenia, Heather A. Knauer, Elmira Bakhshinyan and Harold Alderman
16:00-16:15	Nudging HIV Self-Testing in Georgia: Preliminary findings from a randomized control trial	Dustin Robert Gilbreath, CRRC Georgia
16:15-16:30	Q&A	
16:30-16:45	Closing remarks	

PANEL 1: THE 44-DAY WAR AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

LEONARDO ZANATTA

Corvinus University of Budapest

MARCO ALVI

University of Bologna

Assessing Water (Ir)rationality in Disputed Regions: Nagorno-Karabakh in the Aftermath of the 44-Day War

The deterioration and scarcity of water resources have been increasingly at the heart of debates on regional security, with disputes over waterway management and ownership leading both upstream and downstream countries to the brink of conflicts. Such danger has emphasized the need for transboundary cooperation to ensure water security and regional governance. This paper focuses on a region in which military security, economic viability and national sentiment have overshadowed transboundary water management issues: Nagorno-Karabakh. As home to the headwaters of rivers, dams, and hydropower plants alike, the lands in and around Nagorno-Karabakh have played a vital role in providing water to an area that has been particularly afflicted by water scarcity. This case is significant within literature on water conflicts because of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh as an upstream, non-internationally recognized state whose control has been disputed by Armenia and Azerbaijan since the collapse of the Soviet Union. On 9 November 2020, the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia signed a Russia-brokered agreement to end the military operations in Karabakh after 44 days of war. While the Azerbaijani side has achieved significant territorial gains and access to an abundance of fresh-water resources, the territories that remained under Armenian control have been plagued by water and electricity shortages. As evidenced by the reciprocal accusations of eco-terrorism and environmental sabotage, mutual distrust and deep

politicization prevent the two sides from achieving successful transboundary management, which fosters instability in the region. For this reason, the paper will assess and compare the main theories on water governance, exploring possible diplomatic outcomes between Armenia and Azerbaijan in convergence with the other regional states - Georgia, Russia, Turkey and Iran - to foster successful cooperation on shared water resources.

ANNA CIESLEWSKA

The Polish Academy of Sciences

The Nagorno-Karabakh War in Narratives of Azerbaijanis and Armenians in Georgia - Uncertain Peace and Conflict Mobility

This presentation will focus on Azerbaijani-Armenian relations in Georgia and the policy of the Georgian state regarding both Azerbaijani and Armenian minorities in the context of the recent Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. To date, most research has concentrated on the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as in Armenia and Azerbaijan, while studies of the conflict's impact on other relevant countries are either overlooked or conducted on a fragmentary basis. However, despite the fact that Georgia was not directly involved in the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War, its geopolitical position and the presence of Azerbaijani and Armenian minorities made the country vulnerable to the consequences of the conflict. Besides, the policy of the Georgian state in relation to minorities influences interactions between both groups, and consequently, the Georgian majority. We will present the ethnic situation in two regions of Georgia: Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo-Kartli. Due to the diverse ethnic composition, history, and political determinants of both regions, each population has developed contrasting approaches and strategies while dealing with inter-ethnic relationships. As such, our presentation will give insight into the topic in question, especially taking into account that the 2020 conflict took place only recently, and its consequences on inter-ethnic relations in Georgia are

unknown and difficult to foresee in the long-term. The consequences will depend on various factors including the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh, the policies of Azerbaijan and Armenia, and finally, the economic and political situation in Georgia. The presentation will be based on field research planned for 2021-2022.

ZULFIYYA ABDURAHIMOVA-CARBERRY

Harvard University

Human Rights and Civic Activism after the Second Karabakh War

In the context of the Second Karabakh War in 2020 and the restricted political environment, this survey is an attempt to learn how people perceive human rights and civic engagement under such circumstances. Specifically, this research will analyze what people perceive as human rights, which right they consider to be most important, and whether they think there is a discrepancy between the existence of laws protecting human rights and the employment of such laws in practice. Furthermore, this survey will ask: How important is civic engagement for the populace, and which domains of civic activity does the populace find most compelling? In January 2021, RIWI, a global trend tracking and prediction technology firm, conducted a web-based perceptions survey in Azerbaijan. In 18 days, the survey collected 1,575 completed responses. The survey asked various questions about human rights and civic engagement in Azerbaijan as well as two demographic questions: the age and gender of respondents. Among the surprising findings were post-war optimism, a favorable attitude toward the use of violence by the police, and overwhelming support for equal rights for women. This survey is the first of its kind and is the initial step toward the creation of a panel survey.

PANEL 2: SOCIETY AND SPACE IN GEORGIA

NINO ZUBASHVILI

CRRC Georgia

Shrinking Pedestrian Spaces: Experiences of Walking in Tbilisi

Guaranteeing obstacle-free pedestrian movement can foster urban happiness, decrease daily urban stress, and encourage citizens to walk more, which in turn translates into ecological, physical and psychological health benefits, and enhanced safety, among other advantages. While cities across the world are prioritizing pedestrians and alternative transport over other means of mobility, many cities still fail to acknowledge the importance of pedestrian spaces. Similarly to many other areas of social life, COVID-19 also pointed to the importance of walking and the development of alternative forms of transport. Despite pedestrians being prioritized in transport policies, and despite recent pedestrian-oriented developments in different districts of the city, pedestrian infrastructure in Tbilisi still suffers from poor design and planning. Pedestrian infrastructure is shrinking even further with the increase of private transportation means, food and beverage businesses, etc. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study aims to understand the challenges pedestrians face in Tbilisi, and how these challenges later affect their well-being, as well as decisions regarding mobility alternatives. The study's research questions are as follows: - What are the experiences of pedestrians in Tbilisi? How do they perceive pedestrian infrastructure? What is the role of different forms of transport, and the role of city infrastructure that invades the pedestrian space? - To what extent are these experiences reflected in pedestrians' emotional well-being and urban happiness/happiness of public spaces and their sense of safety? - To what extent does pedestrian infrastructure impact the selection of mobility means? - To what extent are citizens informed about their pedestrian rights and complaint mechanisms?

GIORGI BABUNASHVILI

CRRC Georgia

ANANO KIPIANI

CRRC Georgia

Liberal Attitudes and Religion: The Moderating Effects of a Communist Past

This research discusses how religiosity and communist historical experience affects attitudes towards homosexual relations. The data show that overall, in post-communist countries, religiosity has a weaker effect on liberal attitudes toward homosexual relations. At the same time, the overall level of tolerance concerning sexual minorities is lower, and there is less variance in attitudes among the societies of former communist countries.

ETO GAGUNASHVILI

CRRC Georgia

NINO MZHAVANADZE

Independent Researcher

The COVID-19 Vaccination Process in Georgia: What Factors Play a Role in the Decision to get Vaccinated?

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic. Scientists agreed that the COVID-19 vaccine is the best weapon to fight against the virus and save lives. Since then, the vaccine has become a pressing global issue and the WHO has advocated for increasing the global vaccination rate.

The Government of Georgia began the process of distributing vaccines on March 15, 2021. Their goal was to vaccinate 60% of the population over the age of 18 by the end of the year. However, the national vaccination plan was not achieved. Hence, this paper seeks to analyze various public opinion surveys on COVID-19 conducted by the Caucasus Research Resource Center as a means of understanding what factors influenced people to get vaccinated. Does being informed about the vaccination

process and having trust in health and religious institutes impact one's decision to get vaccinated? This paper also includes survey experiment analyses so as to better understand the circumstances that motivate people to become vaccinated against COVID-19.

PANEL 3: PARTY POLITICS AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN GEORGIA

LEVAN KAKHISHVILI

University of Bamberg

Emergence of Programmatic Party Competition in Hybrid Regimes: Within-Case Comparative Analysis of Georgia

How does programmatic party competition emerge? Research on advanced democracies suggests the importance of the following factors: the level of economic development (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007; Stokes et al 2013); quality and longevity of democratic institutions (Keefer 2007; Keefer and Vlaicu 2007); quality and capacity of state bureaucracy (Shefter 1994); organizational capacity of political parties (Han 2021; Keefer and Khemani 2005); organized capitalist interest groups (Kuo 2018); and voters' perceptions of parties and the state bureaucratic apparatus (Bustikova and Corduneanu-Huci 2017). These factors, however, cannot explain the emergence of programmatic competition in post-Soviet hybrid regimes where political parties proliferated following the dissolution of the Soviet Union but were unable to find their anchorage in the societal structures. Taking the case of Georgia, I argue that the change of government in the 2012 election was a turning point for the emergence of when programmatic competition started to emerge. I compare the 2012 election to the regime change that occurred in 2003. Using content analysis of 46 party manifestos between 1992 and 2016, as well as 16 in-depth interviews with representatives of Georgian political parties, I build an argument that actor characteristics, such as access to financial resources and confidence in victory, determine the choice of programmatic strategy of competition. At the

same time, this is conditioned by the type of a political system – parliamentary or presidential – and the position of the incumbent as a lame duck.

GIVI SILAGADZE

CRRC Georgia

Disengagement of Young Georgian Voters from Party Politics: Trends and Potential Explanations based on Survey Data

Youth disengagement from politics and, specifically, from one of the essential pillars of the democratic polity – political parties – is neither novel nor an exclusively Georgian phenomenon. There have been increasing concerns regarding the political apathy of Georgian youth. Think-tanks, media outlets, and other NGOs often emphasize that there is a noticeable discrepancy between Georgian young Georgian voters and the elder electorate in terms of engagement being engaged in politics. These concerns are largely about low election turnout among the youth and disillusionment from party politics. It has been demonstrated that greater disengagement and distrust of youth towards political institutions, including political parties, among youth has a noticeably negative effect on liberal democracy. More specifically, Kwak et al (2020) demonstrated that an absolute measure of youth trust towards parliament, legal systems, and political parties, as well as a relative measure of youth institutional trust (i.e. the ratio of youth's institutional trust to that of older persons), have an impact on liberal democracy and this impact takes place in the form of regime delegitimation. Therefore, an examination of the dynamics of youth (dis)engagement with party politics seems to be a reasonable endeavor in an aspiring democracy like Georgia. The purpose of my work is to investigate whether the Georgian youth is particularly detached from party politics as of the third decade of the XXI century. Furthermore, the study aims to examine the time-series dynamics of attitudes of young Georgian voters' attitudes towards political parties. Therefore, the following study attempts to address the following research questions: 1. Are Georgian young Georgian voters more disengaged

from party politics than older Georgian voters? 2. Have Georgian young Georgian voters become more disillusioned from party politics in the last decade? 3. What factors are associated with young Georgian voters' disengagement from party politics? The study relies on data collected by Caucasus Research Resource Center (CRRC Georgia). More specifically, the data come from the Caucasus Barometer – Georgia datasets of the following years: 2011, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019, and 2021. As for analysis strategy, statistical/regression analyses will be conducted to: 4. Determine whether or not there are statistically significant differences between young Georgian voters (aged 18-34) and older Georgian voters (aged 35+) in terms of (dis)engagement with party politics. 5. Investigate which (if any) socio-demographic and attitudinal variables predict/are associated with young people's disengagement from party politics.

NINO SAMKHARADZE

Georgian Institute of Politics

From Elections to Elections: How Georgian Opposition Political Parties Strategize Beyond Electoral Campaigning

During elections, political parties particularly actively demonstrate their programmatic visions and try to suggest issue-based debates. Georgia is not an exception. Campaigning and fighting for the votes are among the strongest drivers for political parties to be active, visible and communicable with the electorate about the issues that they find important for them. Various local and international reports indicate the lack of issue-based debates in pre-electoral periods in Georgia, but Georgian parties are still trying to present programs in the context of election campaigning, whereas during the inter-election periods, their issue-based activity tends to decrease significantly. The main purpose of the political parties in Georgian political parties is to fight tofor gaining or maintaining political power. To this end, elections become one of the main battlefields in Georgia: if a given party loses elections, it loses most of the political leverage to influence policy-making regarding the issues it raises

during the campaigning. TheSuch importance of elections and the electoral period for political parties in Georgia has its determinants, which are often overlooked by observers and students of Georgian politics. Opposition parties are primarily vote-seeking actors aimed at gaining the public office. In this endeavor, permanent emphasis of the issues important to the electorate and suggesting policy alternatives, in theory, should be one of the main tools to form lasting linkages with relevant parts of the electorate. Thus, it is interesting to analyze how Georgian political parties build their ideological identity after elections, and whether they try to maintain the issue-based resilience after losing it. In order to investigate opposition parties' strategies beyond the electoral campaign, the most successful Georgian opposition party since the 2012 parliamentary elections – United National Movement (UNM) – is observed. Compliance with the official policy-related ideas raised during the electoral campaign, and post-electoral behavior will be investigated based on the inter-election period of 2016-2020, as well as the 2016 and 2020 parliamentary elections campaigns. Pre-electoral materials used and disseminated by the UNM will be explored to identify the main policy-related issues, which the party used to stress before elections. Parliamentary activities of the party will be evaluated to find out whether the UNM maintains discussion about similar issues. The approach will help to determine, to what extent Georgian opposition parties maintain a consistent ideological profile in issue-based debates when they have to play the game with no immediate electoral reward.

LASHA KAKASHVILI

Caucasus University

Parliamentary Opposition Parties in Georgia's Foreign Policy under a Hybrid Regime

Although parliamentary opposition political parties have a crucial role in determining domestic policy, their impact on foreign policy is less explored. The lack of research on this issue is particularly characteristic of countries with a hybrid regimes, since the influence of parliamentary opposition political parties in foreign policy is neglected

and marginalized in such countries, and foreign policy is, for the most part, considered to be part of the executive's domain. This does not, however, imply that political parties are no longer relevant in the foreign policy-making process. Based on five case studies, this paper examines the influence of parliamentary opposition parties on Georgia's foreign policy as a country with a hybrid regime. The study covers an eight-year period from the start of Georgian Dream's rule in 2012 to the end of 2020, when pro-Western opposition forces were strong and the government pursued a "normalization" policy with Russia. An analysis of the cases revealed that the parliamentary opposition has leverage in foreign policy and cannot put pressure on the government. The case studies demonstrated that the influence on foreign policy was evident mainly in the opposition's work to mobilize international actors and in shaping public opinion on a particular foreign policy issue.

TAMTA GELASHVILI

University of Oslo

Opportunities Matter: The Evolution of Far-Right Protest in Georgia

What role do political opportunities play in mobilisation of the far right? The literature considers modernisation critical for explaining the rise of the far right; in Eastern Europe in particular, the Communist legacy, subsequent nation-building, and profound, high-paced transformation to market capitalism and liberal democracy are deemed instrumental. However, the case of Georgia has been deviant: protest event analysis of a systematised database of 166 far-right protest events in Georgia between 2003–2020 shows that the movement remained dormant for over two decades after post-Soviet independence and a decade after the 2003 Rose Revolution which jumpstarted modernisation and liberalisation processes. Why has the far-right movement gained traction in recent years? How did a once-marginal movement, limited to a single actor, transform to become a larger, more dynamic, influential, and violent one? To explain the deviant trajectory of the Georgian case, this study investigates the mobilisation of

the far-right movement in Georgia from the 2003 Rose Revolution onwards. Applying social movement theory, it traces the changing political context in Georgia over time and examines how these changes account for increasingly prominent and violent trends in far-right protest. Examining how context has shaped the far-right movement in Georgia not only contributes empirically, but also enriches theoretical insights into such movements in Eastern Europe and beyond. The case of Georgia indicates that modernisation in itself may be insufficient to trigger far-right backlash. After the change in government in 2012, less severe repression of protest, division within political elites, and sympathetic attitudes of mainstream political and societal actors enabled far-right mobilisation and violence. Thus, however deep-rooted, anti-modernisation backlash may not erupt until mobilisation opportunities become available.

Keynote speech :

IDENTIFICATION: THE WHAT, HOW, AND WHY OF WHICH WHATS ANSWER WHAT WHYS

PROFESSOR NICK HUNTINGTON-KLEIN

Seattle University

PANEL 4: LANGUAGE, POWER AND POLITICS IN GEORGIA

DR. DAVID SICHINAVA

CRRC Georgia

Echoes of the 44-day war in Nagorno-Karabakh in Georgia's social media

The 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War went well beyond hostilities between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Officially, Tbilisi remained mostly passive regarding the conflict, except for occasional calls for peace talks, denying its role as an arms transit route, and dryly welcoming the end of

hostilities. Nonetheless, the war had an enormous echo, especially among Georgia's ethnic Armenian and Azerbaijani communities. Georgian politicians of Armenian and Azerbaijani descent quickly supported the countries of their ethnic origin. At the same time, targeted disinformation campaigns on social media exacerbated concerns that Georgia would get dragged into the conflict.

This presentation analyzes how Georgians from various ethnic communities perceive the recent Nagorno-Karabakh War. Specifically, it aims at understanding the major narratives surrounding the conflict. First, the presentation looks at the representation of the 44-day war on Georgian social media. It maps major narratives that are used to frame the conflict in relation with Georgia. Secondly, it also investigates how foreign actors such as Russia and Turkey are characterized in such discussions.

LUCAS FAGLIANO

Independent Researcher

How do we Speak? Who Hears us? Data Analysis of the Georgian PM's Twitter Networks and Discourse

Georgia's foreign policy is at a crucial turning point. On the one hand, an incessantly aggressive Russia invading Ukraine, partly due to the latter's aspiration to join the West, has brought forth questions about the West's relationship with aspiring-NATO-members in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. On the other hand, Russia's invasion brought momentum to a process that appeared mostly dead in its tracks: EU enlargement. However, Georgia's foreign policy portrays contradicting communications regarding its alignment and interests. For instance, on the 9th of April, the Georgian government refused to accept an invitation to visit Bucha, Ukraine. The visit would have represented a sign of solidarity toward Ukraine and a stance against Russia's aggression. The government initially argued that it would not accept the invitation unless Ukraine withdrew its prior comments against Georgia's stance on the war. Such an incident is just one among an increasingly worrisome trend in discourse by Georgian officials, including insults and personal attacks toward EU policymakers. Thus, it is important to analyze

Georgia's Western discourse in this context, and perhaps more importantly, to examine who hears what Georgia says. To analyze Georgia's diplomatic discourse, this paper will focus on the digital communications of Georgia's foreign policy specifically in its use of Twitter. Social media's role in diplomacy and political communications has become an ever-present part of international relations. However, while Facebook reigns supreme across the Georgian political spectrum, Twitter plays a more predominant role in the EU. Thus, this research aims to explore the relatively unaddressed use of Twitter by Georgian officials and, in this case, prime ministers (PMs). This paper will answer the following questions: Are there quantitatively identifiable differences between PM's discourse on Twitter? And, who in the EU policymaker spectrum is a potential audience for the Georgian PMs discourse? The first question is meant to explore the digital discourse of Georgia PMs through quantitative text analysis. This paper will contribute to the growing literature on the use of quantitative methods to analyze text data in international relations and contribute to the relatively unexplored field of digital communications on Twitter in Georgia. The second question provides a timelier analysis of the relevance of Georgia's discourse by introducing network analysis to explore the current PM's ego network. At a time when Georgia is applying for EU candidacy, the potential audience of prime ministers is of particular importance.

MARIAM MOSIASHVILI

Central European University

Official State Language Acquisition as a Boundary Crossing – Experiences of Young Georgian Azerbaijanis

The paper is about ethnic minority youth integration in the context where the majority ethnic group's language is politicized, represents a symbolic and social boundary of belonging, and participates in the shaping of inequality. It addresses the gap in academic literature regarding the individual experiences of first generation Georgian Azerbaijanis' who acquired the Georgian language after the 2010 education reforms aimed at civic integration.

More precisely, the paper investigates the effects of personal experiences in language boundary-crossing on young Georgian Azerbaijanis' self-perception, sense of belonging, categories of identification, and identity negotiation. The research relies on 12 semi-structured in-depth interviews with young Georgian Azerbaijanis who learned the Georgian language and entered higher education institutions through the "4+1" program. All interviewees are from the three districts of the Kvemo Kartli region of Georgia, where there is a high concentration of Georgian Azerbaijanis. I utilized the boundary approach as the main theoretical framework. The research incorporates, links, critically engages and extends the literature on symbolic and social boundaries, ethnic minority integration, identification processes, and language acquisition. It is argued that language boundary crossing is related to complex identification struggles. On the one hand, state language learning makes young individuals better integrated and gives them a tool to claim political identification with Georgian citizenship. On the other hand, through language boundary-crossing, individuals perceive discrimination, ethnic prejudice and relative deprivation, leading to the feeling of otherness. Georgian Azerbaijanis' perception that they are not accepted through the state language acquisition in the same way that they expected, and their new perspective on ethnic issues, make their distinct ethnicity a salient part of everyday life. The research discusses daily identity struggles, feelings of in-betweenness, and identity negotiation strategies, such as producing bottom-up narratives of multiethnicity, civic integration and challenging the exclusive understanding of what it means to be a citizen of Georgia. The analysis indicates that the way individuals relate to and perceive language through boundary-crossing can affect the salience and relevance of their categories of identification and lead to complex negotiation processes. It challenges theoretical assumptions about one-sided theories of assimilation or ethnic retention. What individuals tell us about discrepancies and continuities of their experiences before, through, and after language learning can have a crucial role in researching linguistic boundaries, integration, and ethnic minority identities. Particular attention is given to

stories about motivations, expectations, perceptions, narratives about group membership and socioeconomic aspirations. Methodologically in-depth study and interviews can grasp such complexities. The paper suggests a new perspective on studying ethnic minority integration and language-boundary related identification processes in the Caucasus and post-Soviet states. It also indicates gaps in scholarly literature that need to be addressed in the future and calls for comparative case studies.

PANEL 5: DISCOURSES AND THE PATTERNS OF MIGRATION IN GEORGIA

TINA TSOMAIA

Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA)

Migration Coverage by the Georgian Media in 2019-2021

Using Framing Theory and Social Network Analysis, this report investigates how migration is framed in the Georgian media and who establishes these frames. The analysis is based on twelve media outlets during the period of August 1, 2019 - August 1, 2021. The sample includes TV, online and print media. The most common frames are based on morality, human interest and responsibility, followed by conflict, economic and threat frames. Overall, media coverage of migration tends to be event-oriented and relatively balanced. Reporting on migration is dominated by emigration issues, while immigration issues are largely absent. Georgian media expresses different socio-political positions. Consequently, media coverage of migration is driven heavily by editorial policies: one part of the media intensively covers migration through the “human interest” frame. This kind of media coverage is characterized by more analytical reporting and provides the public with as much information as possible. However, it should be noted that even when media framing is mainly concerned with human stories, it refers to migrants as passive victims, reaffirming the role of elites as powerful, active and in total control. Instead of focusing on “moral” and “responsibility” frames, the second form of coverage focuses on humanitarian aspects of emigration and

attributes responsibility for solutions to the government and authorities. The third case refers specifically to a small subset of coverage, especially the print media that most often focuses on the “threat” and “conflict” frames, portraying immigrants as a threat to Georgian culture and leading to prejudiced attitudes toward them. This kind of coverage is characterized by intolerance and a rejection of immigrants. It is important to note that the Georgian media has been responding to the humanitarian crisis caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic, which is to some extent reflected in the increased number of “moral” and “responsibility” frames voiced by elites.

EKATERINE PIRTSKHALVA

Tbilisi State University

Georgian Migrants in Germany

The study shows how Georgian migrants settled down in Germany. This qualitative research centers on the process of adaptation and integration of Georgians into a new environment. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, economic difficulties led to the highest levels of out-migration since Georgia gained independence. Based on the data of the General Population Census from 2014, the Georgian population (as of January 1st 2015) amounts to 3,729,500 persons. The last two decades have seen a population reduction of around 1,241 (22, 72%) persons. The processes of adaptation and integration are complex since they usually imply keeping the balance between the will to maintain one’s own cultural identity while constructing positive relations with the host society. A multitude of factors contribute to the integration process, such as the individual's ability to learn a new language and culture, acceptance of the dominant and primary culture’s values; the openness and tolerance of the host society towards new members, etc. Identity tactics and strategies, which often resort to the use of representatives from ethnic groups, play a unique role in the interaction processes within new socio-cultural spaces. By mobilising these strategies, ethnic groups manage to engage themselves into the local social-interaction network and move towards integration into the host society. This

explains how representatives of the same ethnic groups located in different socio-cultural environments could mobilize different identity strategies: individual and collective identity strategies (Camilleri., Malewska-Peyre.1997). Based on in-depth interviews with migrants who have lived in Germany for more than 10 years, this work focuses on studying the perception of Georgian emigrants about adaptation process dynamics in new socio-cultural spaces. Referring to identity strategies based on two axes: the simple and the complex coherence, the study tries to analyse Georgian migrants' individual and collective identity strategies.

TATIANA SITCHINAVA

Tbilisi State University

The Impact of Covid-19 and the Consequent Complicated Policies on the Labour Migrants Employed in Georgia

The Covid-19 pandemic became a major challenge for the entire world, and, of course, Georgia was no exception. The crisis caused by the pandemic has created many different problems for various groups of people, especially migrants. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Georgia became a country which experienced intensive emigration. Due to the inflow of immigrants, the last decade marked a significant transformation in the country's migration profile. Covid-19 revealed many weaknesses within Georgian immigration policy. Among them are: legal, socio-economic, and health problems. The purpose of the following paper is to determine the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the resulting tightened immigration policy, on the situation of labour migrants in Georgia. The results are based on a qualitative sociological study that included in-depth interviews with 56 labour migrants employed in the two biggest cities of Georgia: Tbilisi and Batumi, as well as interviews with 13 experts in the field. A comparably complex scientific study on labour immigrants has not yet been conducted in Georgia. The research (PHDF-21-137) has been supported by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia. The results of the study identified the migrant groups most affected by pandemics. The main finding of the research is that government policy that was poorly implemented during the pandemic

significantly hampered the integration process of migrants.

PANEL 6: METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS FOR ACADEMIC AND POLICY RESEARCH

JONATHAN CAVERLEY

United States Naval War College

JESSE DILLON SAVAGE

Domestic Politics and International Human Capital

International experience is often an important part of political candidates' profiles, yet little is known about how this affects their attractiveness as candidates for office. In addition, the source and type of human capital can vary. Human capital can come from experience working in international organizations, in private business, from military training or from education abroad, amongst others. It can also be gained from different countries with varying positions in the international hierarchy. Using a conjoint experiment from Armenia, we compare how different forms of international human capital from different sources influences the attractiveness of political appointees, with a particular emphasis on military human capital. The results of this experiment have important implications for not only domestic political actors but also the foreign policy of states as they seek to enhance their soft power.

BALASANYAN SONA

CRRC Armenia

HEATHER A. KNAUER, ELMIRA BAKHSHINYAN HAROLD ALDERMAN

Promoting School Readiness through a Preschool Feeding Program: A Nutritional Nudge to Improve At-Risk Preschooler's' Cognitive Development in Armenia

Many school feeding programs target child hunger, nutritional deficiencies, attendance, and education outcomes but often do not examine their effects on cognitive development. In this cluster-randomized controlled trial, we tested the effects of adding a morning snack to a school lunch program on the fluid

intelligence of 951 children, from ages 4 to 6 years old. While there were no significant effects on development overall, the morning snack improved short-term memory (STM) and total scores on the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence, Fourth Edition (WPPSI-IV) among children from the lowest quartile of household expenditures (STM: 0.35SD, $p = 0.020$; WPPSI-IV: 0.65SD, $p = 0.087$), and those whose mothers' completed secondary school or less (STM: 0.35SD, $p = 0.002$; total WPPSI-IV: 0.81SD, $p = 0.011$). For at-risk preschoolers, school snack programs may help meet their developmental needs.

DUSTIN ROBERT GILBREATH

CRRC Georgia

Nudging HIV Self-Testing in Georgia: Preliminary findings from a randomized control trial

HIV transmission is increasingly common in Georgia. While there is a concentrated epidemic among young key populations and particularly men who have sex with men, heterosexual forms of transmission are also on the rise in the country. Simultaneously, testing is associated with significant stigma among the population of Georgia, particularly given challenges around privacy in the country. This study reports the preliminary results of a randomized control trial aimed at addressing this challenge. The study specifically tested whether four messages randomized to over 40,000 young people on Facebook resulted in differential rates of HIV self-testing uptake. The messages included a core message on knowing one's HIV status, a message trying to assuage fears of a positive test result, a message focused on the increased confidentiality of self-testing, and a message informing participants about a lottery for an iPhone 13 that they can enter if they get a self-test. The results are promising yet far, insofar as the messages do lead to significant numbers of clicks to the testing landing pages. Yet, they also show that the messages appear to be incapable of leading to the actual target behavior – ordering an HIV self-test.