

CENTRAL ASIA & THE SOUTH CAUCASUS

CONNECTED

MIGRATION, TRADE, AND GEOPOLITICS

JUNE 7-9, 2024

TBILISI STATE UNIVERSITY



PROGRAM ON GEORGIAN STUDIES
PROGRAM ON CENTRAL ASIA
TBILISI STATE UNIVERSITY

Davis Center
FOR RUSSIAN AND EURASIAN STUDIES



CONCEPT NOTE

The idea for a conference emerged as a result of our observations of the changing trade, diplomatic, and geopolitical relations within and between the Central Asian and South Caucasian regions, most dramatically since 2022. These two regions share legacies based on common historical experiences with the Russian and Soviet empires. They also face, in many ways, common challenges to political and economic development connected to migration, environmental degradation, internal conflict and intra-regional relations. Our goal with this conference is three-fold. First, to explore the political and historical parallels between the two regions as imperial and post-soviet peripheries (we term these "legacies"). Second, to explore the rapidly changing relations between states in the two regions based on trade and energy, transit, ports, and on shifting diplomatic and geopolitical dynamics, most notably after Russia invaded Ukraine. Our third goal is to develop academic connections between scholars and researchers working in both Central Asia and the South Caucasus. We believe this conference will increase scholarly connections between the two regions and promote interesting collaborations which until now have been notably lacking.

Prof. Stephen Jones
Director, Program on Georgian Studies

Dr. Nargis Kassenova
Director, Program on Central Asia

6 June 2024

DAY ONE: FRIDAY, JUNE 7

8:30 am -- 9:30 am

Coffee Break

10:00 am -- 10:30 am

Opening remarks from the Davis Center and Tbilisi State University

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

SESSION 1. Keynote Presentation

Prof. Scott Levi, *On the Frontier of Empire in the Global Age: Lessons from Central Asia and the Caucasus*

12:00 pm – 1:15 pm

Lunch (for participants)

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

SESSION 2. LEGACIES: The Imperial Heritage and the Colonial Experience

Speakers:

Dr. David Khoshtaria, *Persian Artistic Tradition and Architectural Orientalism in Nineteenth-Century Georgia.*

Dr. Beka Kobakhidze, *The Nationality Hierarchy on the Imperial Borderlands*

Prof. Giorgi Sanikidze, *The Place of Iran in the Foreign Policy of the South Caucasian Countries*

3:00 pm -- 3:30 pm

Coffee Break

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

SESSION 3. LEGACIES II: The Twentieth Century, Diasporas, Migration, and Deportations

Moderator: Prof. Tim Blauvelt

Speakers:

Dr. Vladimir Hamed-Troyansky, *Central Asian Displacement to Afghanistan, Iran, and China, 1916–38*

Zarina Akhmatova, *The Deportation of Chechens and Ingush. Tragedy without Repentance:*

Forced Resettlement and Retraumatization by the War in Ukraine

Irakli Khvafagianni

DAY TWO: SATURDAY, JUNE 8

8:30 am -- 9:30 am

Coffee Break

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

SESSION 4. Plenary Panel (open to public, RSVP)
The Two Seas: Trade, Energy, Environment

Moderator: Dr. Nargis Kassenova

Speakers:

Leila Batyrbekova, *Expectations and Realities of the Trans-Caspian Corridor*

Dr. Agha Bayramov, *Energy Security and Environmental Governance in the Caspian Sea Region since 2018: Pathways to a Green Future?*

Dr. Mamuka Tsereteli, *Strategic Value of the Black Sea-Caspian Connectivity*

12:00 pm – 1:15 pm

Lunch (for participants)

1:30 pm – 3:00 pm

SESSION 5. Roundtable *Changing Orders I: Geopolitical Shifts and External Actors*

Moderator: Dr. Alexandre Kukhianidze

Speakers:

Dr. Leila Alieva, *Drivers and Factors of Regionalization in the South Caucasus.*

Prof. Gerard Libaridian, *When the Old World Order Has Collapsed and a New One is Nowhere to be Seen*

Prof. Ghia Nodia

3:00 pm -- 3:30 pm

Coffee Break

3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

SESSION 6. Roundtable *Changing Orders: Regionalism and Regional Dynamics*

Moderator: Dr. David Darchiashvili

Speakers:

Dr. David Aprasidze, *From Dreaming to Dealing with the West: Georgia's Domestic Manipulations Amid Geopolitical Shifts*

Dr. Akram Umarov, *Regionalism Developments in Central Asia: lessons for South Caucasus*

Dr. Mikayel Zolan, *Is Post-Russian South Caucasus Possible? A View from Armenia*

DAY THREE: SUNDAY, JUNE 9

8:30 am -- 9:30 am

Coffee Break

9:30 am – 11:30 am

SESSION 7: *Generations & Changing Values*

Moderator: Prof. Joseph Salukvadze

Speakers:

Dr. Alexander Kupatadze, *Comparing Corruption in South Caucasus and Central Asia: Trends and the Impact of the Ukraine War*

Symbat Abisheva, *Echoes of War: Public Perception of the Russian-Ukrainian War in Central Asia*

Dr. Koba Turmanidze, *Attitudes to Political Participation in Georgia Across Age Groups*

Dr. Malkhaz Toria, *Georgia's Fragile Road to Europe: Reform, Revolution, or Tradition in the Face of Illiberal Populism*

11:30 am - 12:00 pm

Coffee Break

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm

SESSION 8. Open Discussion and Conclusion, “A Look into the Future: Possible Scenarios”

Speakers:

Tessa Conrardy, Davit Gasparian, & Jackie Erlon-Baurjan

SPEAKER BIOS

SYMBAT ABISHEVA works as a Senior Project Manager at Central Asia Barometer, which is an Advertising & Marketing company with an estimated 11 employees; and founded in 2012., their management level is Manager. Symbat is currently based in Almaty, Kazakhstan. They used to work at Eurasia Foundation of Central Asia and CABAR.asia.

ZARINA AKHMATOVA - Media Adviser, Researcher, Journalist (Kazakhstan) With over 15 years of professional experience in media, Mrs. Akhmatova has been working as the Program Manager for SCARF) in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan, a project implemented by a branch of the global NGO "Internews" since Oct. 2022. She has held various roles in Kazakh media, including journalist, editor and producer. Previously, she worked as the Editor-in-Chief for HOLA News outlet (2020-2021) and as a managing editor for Vlast.kz (2012-2017). From 2018 to 2020, she worked as a Business Media Adviser in CA (Internews). Zarina has also contributed as the editor of the books "Forging God's Signature" by A. Davidov and "Jusan Operation" by Y. Karin. She has produced documentaries and authored the multimedia project "Afghanistan is not far away" (2016-2017). Additionally, Zarina has been a media trainer since 2010 and has served as a mentor for various public policy projects. She is a member of the Network for Women Professionals in P/CVERLT in Central Asia, supported by the OSCE. Graduated from the University of International Business in Almaty, Kazakhstan, with a Bachelor's degree in media and communications in 2008. In 2019, she obtained her master's degree from Kazakh-German University in Regional Studies, focusing on managing processes in Central Asia. Her research interests include deradicalization, media, security, and memory. Descended from Chechens deported to Kazakhstan in 1944, Zarina has authored stories and interviews with survivors and witnesses of Stalinist repressions.

LEILA ALIEVA is an affiliate of Russian and East European Studies, Oxford University School for Global and Area Studies, currently working on Russia-West relations. She also teaches course on Politics in the oil rich and rentier states at the Department of Continued

Education of the Oxford University. In 2021-2022 she was awarded a Richard von Weizsacker Fellowship of the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin, previously a fellow at Harvard, UC Berkeley, Kennan Institute, NED, besides founding two think-tanks in Baku. Her research covers Caucasus and Russia, EU integration, political economy of natural resources. Her work was published by the Oxford University Press, Sharpe, Journal of Democracy, Jane's Intelligence Review etc.

DAVID APRASIDZE is a professor of political science at Ilia State University and team leader of the EU and Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation supported action aimed at promoting Civil Society Sustainability in Georgia. He received his Ph.D. from Hamburg University, Germany. He was a Fulbright scholar at Duke University, North Carolina, United States. At various times, he has worked for public agencies and international NGOs operating in Georgia. He has expertise in higher education management and reform. His research interest focuses on political transformation and democratization issues.

LEILA BATYRBKOVA, chair and founder of the Europe and Central Asia Transport and Trade Association (ECATA) was born in Almaty in 1979. She graduated from the Kazakhstan National Technical University with a degree in Engineer-Economist (Economic Cybernetics) and the Antwerp School of Management, EMBA Program. During her professional career, she worked in Kazakhstani and international companies in management positions and has 23 years of experience. She has extensive knowledge in strategic and risk management, international relations, marketing and PR. Main areas of her activities: to promote direct trade and transport, cooperation between Europe and Central Asian countries, acting as a mediator and platform that brings together stakeholders from these regions, practical assistance to businesses from these regions.

AGHA BAYRAMOV is Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations and International Organization of the University of Groningen. He was a research fellow in the Center for Eastern European Studies at the University of Zurich in 2022. Agha Bayramov delivered an online presentation at Harvard University's Davis Center in 2023 and a guest lecture at the University of Zurich in 2022. Besides teaching and research, he is editor and co-founder of The Hague Research Institute in the Netherlands. His research

interests are energy security, geopolitics, the Caspian Sea region, Nagorno-Karabakh, Eurasia, infrastructure, climate change. Dr. Bayramov has spent extensive time conducting field research in the Caspian Sea region.

TIMOTHY K. BLAUVELT is a Professor of Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies at Ilia State University in Tbilisi and also Regional Director for the South Caucasus for American Councils. He has published many peer reviewed articles and book chapters, and is the co-editor (with Jeremy Smith) of *Georgia after Stalin: Nationalism and Soviet power* (Routledge, 2016), of *The Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic of 1918* (with Adrian Brisku, 2021) and author of *Clientalism and Nationality in an Early Soviet Fiefdom: The Trials of Nestor Lakoba* (Routledge, 2021).

DAVID DARCHIASHVILI is a professor at Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia. Professor Darchiashvili graduated from Tbilisi State University. In 2002-2003 he was a Fulbright Fellow at Johns Hopkins University, Washington D.C. He teaches national and regional security at Ilia State University in Tbilisi. He is the author of a few books and several articles, including “Georgia: The Search for the State Security,” *Caucasus Working Papers*, CISAC, Stanford University, 1997; “Civil-military relations in a newly independent transitional state: The Georgian case,” in Albrecht Schnabel and Hans-Georg Ehrhardt (eds.), *Security Sector Reform and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, UN University Press, 2005; and “Soviet Path Dependency as an Impediment of the Democratization in Georgia,” *Modernization in Georgia, Interdisciplinary Studies #18*, Peter Lang, Bern 2018. In 2008-2012, as a parliamentary deputy, Darchiashvili headed the Georgian parliamentary committee on European Integration.

VLADAMIR HAMED-TROYANSKY is a historian of the Ottoman and Russian empires and Assistant Professor of Global Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His research examines Muslim refugee migration and its role in shaping the modern world. He is the author of *Empire of Refugees: North Caucasian Muslims and the Late Ottoman State* (Stanford University Press, 2024). Vladimir is currently writing a new book, which is a transnational history of Muslim displacement in the Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia since 1850. His articles appeared in *Past & Present*, *Slavic Review*,

Kritika, Comparative Studies in Society and History, and International Journal of Middle East Studies. He received a Ph.D. in History from Stanford University and served as a postdoctoral fellow at Columbia University.

DAVID KHOSHTARIA is the head of the Medieval Department of George Chubinashvili National Research Centre and an associate professor in the history of architecture at Tbilisi State Academy of Arts. His research interests cover various aspects of Medieval and Modern architecture of Georgia, including church architecture, urbanism and landscape design. He is the author of *Old Hotels of Tbilisi* (2012) and editor of *Church Building in Nineteenth-Century Tbilisi: Architecture and Identity* (2016) and *Urban Planning and Architectural Design in the Cities of Georgia* (2019).

IRAKLI KHVADAGIANI was born in 1988. In 2005-2009 he studied at the Tbilisi State University, the faculty of social and political sciences, specializing in journalism. In 2010-2013 he studied at the Doctoral and Master programs at Ilia State University, specialization - Caucasus in the European and Global Context. From 2014 he is a PhD candidate at the Ilia State University. From 2010 he is a researcher at the Soviet Past Research Laboratory. From 2017 he is a chairman of the board of the Soviet Past Research Laboratory.

BEKA KOBAKHIDZE received his Ph.D. from Ivane Javakhsishvili State University in Tbilisi, Georgia, in 2015. He is a co-chair of the Master's Program in Modern History of Georgia and associate professor at Ilia State University. Kobakhidze has also lectured at the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs, the University of Georgia, and the Caucasus University. In 2018-2019, he was a visiting fellow of Russian and East European Studies at the University of Oxford. His research interests lie in the foreign policy of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921) and the historical intersection between Russia and the Western "great powers" in the Caucasus.

ALEXANDRE KUKHIANIDZE is professor of Political Science Department at Ivane Javakhsishvili Tbilisi State University (TSU). In 1977 graduated from the faculty of philosophy at Rostov State University. In 1985 defended dissertation in philosophy at TSU. In 2019 was visiting professor at Maria Curie-Skłodowska University

in Lublin, Poland; In 2013 was Swedish Institute visiting professor at Malmö University; in 2010-11 visiting researcher at Monterey Institute of International Studies; in 2003-2010 Senior Research Fellow and Director of Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TraCCC) - Caucasus Office; in 2003 DAAD visiting researcher at Free University of Berlin; in 2000-2001 Deputy Chief of Party of the USAID Local Government Reform Initiative in Georgia; and in 1998-99 Fulbright Researcher at Mount Holyoke College and Johns Hopkins University. Since 2003 he has carried out research on organized crime, smuggling, corruption, security, and conflict resolution in the Caucasus Region. He is author of publications on organized crime, corruption, and armed conflicts. He was teaching at Mount Holyoke College, MA; Free University of Berlin; Malmö University; and Maria Curie-Skłodowska University. Currently he is teaching at Tbilisi State University: Political Corruption and Organized Crime; Contemporary Security Studies; Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism; Ethics, Corruption and Public Policy, and Emergency Management.

ALEXANDER KUPATADZE Prior to joining King's College Dr Kupatadze taught at the School of International Relations, St Andrews University. He held the postdoctoral positions at George Washington University (2010-11), Oxford University (2012-13) and Princeton University (2013-14). His research specialization is transnational crime, corruption, public sector reform, informal politics and crime-terror nexus. His regional expertise is post-Soviet Eurasia. His work has appeared in Journal of Democracy, Theoretical Criminology, Nonproliferation Review, Central Asia Survey and other leading journals. His research has been funded by Russell Trust (St Andrews University), British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies (BASEES) and Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation.

GERARD J. LIBARIDIAN is a retired historian and diplomat. He has taught and written on Armenian history and authored numerous books, articles and reports on contemporary Armenian, Middle Eastern and South Caucasus politics. Libaridian was a co-founder of the Zoryan Institute for Contemporary Armenian Research and Documentation (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1982) and served as its Director until 1990. During that period he also was editor of the Armenian Review (1983-1988). From 1991 to 1997, Dr. Libaridian served as advisor to the first President of Armenia, First Deputy Minister of Foreign

Affairs, and Secretary of the National Security Council. He has taught and lectured extensively in institutions of higher learning in the US and internationally. Before his retirement in 2012 he held the Alex Manoogian Chair in Modern Armenian History at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Libaridian is currently working on a number of book projects. His most recent work is “A Precarious Armenia,” (London, 2023.)

SCOTT LEVI is Professor of Central Asian History at the Ohio State University, where he serves as chair of the Department of History. He works mainly on the social and economic history of early modern Central Asia, and his work aims to place the region in a broader, world historical context. He currently serves as editor-in-chief for the Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian Commercial History. He has published a number of articles, chapters, and books, the most recent of which are *The Rise and Fall of Khoqand, 1709–1876: Central Asia in the Global Age* (Pittsburgh, 2017) and *The Bukharan Crisis: A Connected History of 18th-Century Central Asia* (Pittsburgh, 2020).

GHIA NODIA is a professor of politics at Ilia State University in Tbilisi, Georgia. He is also the chairman of the Caucasus Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD), an independent public policy think tank in Tbilisi, Georgia. In February–December 2008, he served as the minister for education and science of Georgia. His research interests are focused on issues of nationalism, democratization, and their intersections. He has numerous publications on these issues both on the theoretical level and in application to the political processes in Georgia and the region.

JOSEPH SALUKVADZE is a human geographer and professor at the Department of Human Geography, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Tbilisi State University (TSU). He graduated from the Faculty of Geography and Geology at TSU in 1979 and defended a dissertation in urban geography in 1985. He has had a distinguished academic career, having been a Swedish Institute research fellow at Stockholm and Lund universities in 1991-92, a Fulbright scholar at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1998-99, and a visiting professor at the Technical University of Munich from 2002 to 2018. In addition to his academic roles, Salukvadze has held several leadership positions within the field of geography. He served as the

vice-rector of TSU from 2014 to 2017 and was the vice-president of the Geographic Society of Georgia from 2008 to 2016. Currently, he is a scientific steering group member for the Scientific Network of the Caucasus Mountain Region. Salukvadze is widely recognized as an expert in urban development issues and land policy. Throughout his career, he has collaborated with esteemed organizations such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UN-Habitat, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), as well as KfW, GIZ, and USAID. His research interests encompass a range of topics including urban studies, housing and land policies, and sustainable mountain development. Salukvadze's contributions to the field extend beyond his academic research. He serves on the editorial boards of three international scientific journals and has authored and edited three books, in addition to publishing over 50 other works. For further contact or inquiries, Joseph Salukvadze can be reached at joseph.salukvadze@tsu.ge.

GIORGI SANIKIDZE is graduated from Tbilisi State University in 1984 (Faculty of Oriental studies). From 1986 he has been working in G. Tsereteli Institute of Oriental Studies on different position. In 1996-2002 he was the dean of the Faculty of history of Eastern countries at the Tbilisi Institute of Asia and Africa. In 2006-2010 he was the professor at the Tbilisi State University. In 1990 he received 'candidate of sciences' degree and in 2001 – doctor of sciences degree. He was working as a visiting scholar in Paris-Sorbonne-III and Paris-Sorbonne-IV universities, UC Berkeley, universities of Hokkaido and Osaka. He is awarded by Fulbright, Diderot, Japan Foundation, University of Hokkaido, Central European University, Carnegie endowment, INTAS etc. grants and stipends. He is the author of up to 50 scientific publications (published in 9 countries), several textbooks and articles in Georgian press. He has been participated in up to 70 Scientific forums. Five doctoral thesis are defended under his supervision. He has delivered lectures in Berkeley, Montana, Paris-Sorbonne-III, Paris-Sorbonne-IV, Vaseda, Hokkaido, Kyoto 'Iberoamericana' and 'Anahuak' universities. He is the member of several international scientific associations. In 2012 he received 'Farabi' international award in the field of Islamic and Iranian studies (supported by UNESCO).

MALKHAZ TORIA (Ph.D. 2009) is an associate professor of history and the director of the Memory Study Center at Ilia State University (Tbilisi, Georgia). He teaches courses on topics including: contemporary historical studies; historical sociology; imperial legacies, boundaries, and genealogy of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict; and collective memory, identity, and politics. In 2021 he began working toward a doctoral degree in sociology at the New School for Social Research and studying how contested historical narratives and primordial historical imaginaries still fuel and contribute to ongoing conflicts (political, ethnic, interstate) in post-totalitarian societies struggling with a “difficult past,” including Georgia.

MAMUKA TSERETELI is a Senior Fellow at the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at the American Foreign Policy Council, President of the America-Georgia Business Council, and an adjunct Professor at American University in Washington, DC. He is a co-founder of the newly created American University in Kyiv. Dr. Tsereteli has more than thirty years of experience in academia, diplomacy, and business development, focusing on security and economic/business/energy developments in the Black Sea-Caspian region. Through his public and private initiatives, he has also promoted Georgian wines in the US for almost two decades.

KOBA TURMANIDZE has been working for CRRC-Georgia since 2007. Koba holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Politics from Central European University. He earned an MPA from American University (Washington, DC) and an M.A. in Political Science from Central European University (Budapest, Hungary). He also holds a diploma in history from Tbilisi State University. From 2005-2011, he was an Assistant Professor at Tbilisi State University, where he taught comparative politics, economies in transition, research methods and applied statistics courses in the Department of Political Science and the Center for Social Sciences. Before joining CRRC-Georgia, Koba worked in several civil society organizations, as well as in civil service. His research interests include authoritarianism, regime change and voting behavior.

AKRAM UMAROV is the First Vice-Rector of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy. He is also affiliated with the Institute for Advanced International Studies in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Recently he has been a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the Center for Governance and Markets, University of Pittsburgh. Previously he was a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies and the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Uzbekistan. He received Master's and PhD Degrees in International Relations at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy. He also graduated with an MA degree in Governance, Development and Public Policy from the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex (UK). His research interests include security, conflict management and development studies in Central Asia, Afghanistan and former Soviet space.



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