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|  | Friday March 24th, room 410 | Saturday March25th , room 410 |
| 9:00-9:30 | Setting up the Conversation Introductions, Overview of the Agenda | Unsettling Questions: Plenary |
| 9:30-11:00 | Panel 1: "Civil Society Beyond Public Politics" | Panel 5: “Centering Kyrgyzstan's Perspectives on Civil Society” |
| *11.00-11:30* | Coffee/Tea & pairs activity room 409 | Coffee/Tea room 409 |
| 11:30-12:30 | Panel 2: “Gender & Sexuality” | Panel 6: “Prefigurative Politics” |
| *12:30-2:00* | *Lunch* | *Lunch* |
| 2:00-3:30 | Panel 3: “Centering Kyrgyzstan's Perspectives on Civil Society” | Panel 7: “Conflictual (Pre)figuration: Acts, Images, Visions” |
| 3:30-4:20 | Tea/coffee room 409 | Tea/coffee room 409 |
| 4.20-5.50 | Panel 4: “Media and Citizenship” | Panel 8: “Memory & Remembering” |
| *5:50-6:00* | Break | Break |
| 6:00-7:30 | Roundtable:  Current Practices of NGOs in Kyrgyzstan: Challenges and Perspectives | Keynote by Madeleine Reeves |
| 7:30-8:30 | *Welcoming Dinner* | *Social: Location to be Determined* |

‘Reimagining Civil Society’ Conference

American University of Central Asia – Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan

March 24th and 25th 2017

**Panels:**

Panel 1: "Civil Society Beyond Public Politics"

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| Aisalkyn | Botoeva | Market Actors as Civil Society Actors: The Case of Islamic Businesses |
| David | Levy | The Impulse to Orthodoxy: Why Religious Pluralism Threatens Illiberal Regimes |
| Regine | Spector | Organizing Collectively at Dordoi Bazaar |
| Gulzat | Botoeva | Exploring Illegal Hashish Production: The Economy/Security Nexus |

Panel 2: “Gender & Sexuality”

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Mirgul | Karimova | Women's (Lack of) Political Participation in Kyrgyzstan |
| Branko | Banovic | The Mustache in the Context of Struggle for Sexual Minority Rights in Montenegro |

Panel 3: “Centering Central Asian Perspectives on Civil Society”

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| Bakhytnur | Otorbayeva | NGOs and 'business matchmaking' in Kazakhstan |
| Nartsiss | Shukuralieva | Potemkin Civil Society in Central Asia |
| Akmal | Abdullaev | Forms of Social Movements in Modern Uzbekistan |

Panel 4: “Media & Citizenship”

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| Elira | Turdubaeva | The Representation of Civil Society in the Media in Kyrgyzstan |
| Emil / Nurgul | Nasritdinov / Esenamanova | The War of Billboards: Hijab, Secularism, and Public Space in Bishkek |
| Jelena | Vasiljević | Reflecting the Link between Citizenship and Civil Society |

Panel 5: “Centering Kyrgyzstan's Perspectives on Civil Society”

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| Reina | Artur kyzy | Western Man's Burden? Foreign Aid in Central Asia: Comparative Analysis of Civil Societies |
| Iliyas | Mamadiyarov | Informality as a form of civil society in Kyrgyzstan |
| Asel | Doolotkeldieva | ‘Contentious groups in Kyrgyzstan: stuck between new democratic practices of deliberative contestation and corrupt existing institutions' |

Panel 6: “Prefigurative Politics”

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| Creston | Davis | The Pedagogy of Re-claiming a New Civil Society |
| Amanda | Winter | Examining Eco-Gentrification through the Prefigurative Politics of Alternative Food Initiatives in Copenhagen |
| Gaspar | García-Huidobro | Chilean Student Movement: Goals, fights, outcomes and learnings in the era of privatization |

Panel 7: “Conflictual (Pre)figuration: Acts, Images, Visions”

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| Igor | Stiks | Re-appropriating the past, pre-figuring the future: Artistic Activism in the Post-Socialist Balkans |
| Agata | Lisiak | Revolution Girl Style Now? Notes on the Language of Prefigurative Politics |
| Mitja | Velikonja | Continuation of Mainstream Politics with Other Means – Extreme-Right Graffiti and Street Art in Slovenia |

Panel 8: “Memory & Remembering”

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| Clyde | Forsberg | Ticket for One on the Midnight Express: Savageries of the Academy Abroad in the New Turkey |
| Emil / Philip | Nasritdinov / Schroder | Re/Claiming Bishkek: Contestation and Activisms in the City of Two Revolutions |
| David | Leupold | Remembering Across Barbed-Wire Fences: Vehicles of bottom-up, counter narratives in Armenia and Turkey |

**Keynote Address by Dr. Madeleine Reeves:**

**“I Can’t Believe we Still have to Protest this S@&t”! Endurance, Assembly, and Refusal after ‘Civil Society’**

Twenty years ago, in the wake of Soviet collapse and the end of the Cold War, “civil society” seemed to offer a certain kind of promise: for an associational life outside the state; and beyond ties of kinship and obligation. Today, as the title of this workshop suggests, “civil society” feels in many parts of the world to be embattled—perhaps even a concept past its sell-by date. It is critiqued for being imprecise, normative, secular, Eurocentric, and perhaps just plain inadequate to respond to the challenges posed by resurgent nationalisms, populist authoritarianisms, religious and secular fundamentalisms, or the precarization of everyday working lives.

This talk starts from these critiques to ask how we might imagine forms of associative life that respond to these times—when “the people” has come to be appropriated in ways that diminish rather than embrace the intrinsic multiplicity of ways of being that we encounter in any polity.  What would it mean to recognise “the people” as a plural subject of politics—one that necessarily overspills any claim to represent “it” as a singularity?  What would it mean to recognise *anger*as a legitimate political emotion? Drawing on recent work in anthropology and feminist political theory, this paper explores how we might think about forms of assembly and political articulation that start from a recognition of difference—including difference that refuses to be “civil”-ized—to recognise ways of being part of “peoplehood” in its plurality.

**Bio**:

Madeleine Reeves is a Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the University of Manchester and editor of *Central Asian Survey.*She has conducted research in Kyrgyzstan and Russia since 1999, on issues of movement, power, place, borders, and political membership. She taught in the Sociology and Cultural Anthropology and Archaeology departments at AUCA between 2000-2002 and in 2005.  Her most recent book, *Border Work: Spatial Lives of the State in Rural Central Asia*(Cornell 2014) won the Joseph Rothschild Prize of the Association for the Study of Nationalities and the Alec Nove Prize of the British Association of Slavic and East European Studies.  She is currently working on a monograph about the everyday legal and labour strategies of Kyrgyz migrant workers in Moscow.

Panel 1: "Civil Society Beyond Public Politics"

Civil Society Beyond Public Politics

Civil society is often conceptualized in terms of organizations and movements that secure popular participation in governance. In this school of thought, civil society exists only when citizens freely engage in political mobilization and dissent.[[1]](#footnote-1) By this measure, civil society has always been deeply imperiled in Central Asia, as in most post-Soviet states, and has recently come under even greater attack as governments harass NGOs and label them “foreign agents.” Other schools of thought, however, conceptual civil society not as a strictly political category, but as a broader sphere of interaction: one dominated by horizontal, as opposed to vertical connections among its members; one in which strong bonds of inter-personal loyalty give way to weak inter-personal connections and generalized trust; one in which people articulate programs for self-determination, autonomous from the state, but not necessarily intended to subvert state power.[[2]](#footnote-2)

By these other measures, many post-Soviet countries possess vibrant civil society, although this sphere of interaction is still threatened. In this panel, we will explore four separate spheres that can be considered nodes of civil society in Kyrgyzstan: Islamic business networks, trade unions in bazaars, “non-traditional” religious movements, and even clandestine networks of hashish production and distribution in a rural community. All of these spheres operate with relative autonomy from the state, but each has aroused deep suspicion by state officials precisely because of their autonomy. We argue that the future of civil society in Central Asia and beyond is less contingent on the strictly political battles fought on main squares than it is on the fate of these and similar spheres of quasi-autonomous public life.

*Market Actors as Civil Society Actors: The Case of Islamic Businesses*

Aisalkyn Botoeva, Providence College

Conventional literature on “civil society” in the Global South typically focuses on political protests and forms of activism that are explicit in public places. Meanwhile business associations for example, get typified as “for-profit” and therefore distinct from civil society. To address this disjuncture, I offer the case of owners and managers in the Islamic business field, who I argue are part and parcel of the so-called civil society. I draw from around eighty interviews with owners and managers of small to medium businesses in various sectors, ranging from finance to construction, trade, and the service sector. How do entrepreneurs in the Islamic business field make sense of their work? How do they discuss their niche and company as they seek to translate broader religious tenets into actual business practices? Conceptualizing Islam as a source of multiple vectors of morality, I suggest the plurality of ways in which Islam and market – the spiritual and the material – become intertwined in different ways to create a “complex moral landscape” (Deeb & Harb 2012). In the paper, I will offer entrepreneurs’ accounts of their personal trajectories that they often charted agains the backdrip of post-Soviet degradation of everyday life. These entrepreneurs, by interweaving their personal stories into the narratives of the larger transformations they have witnessed, suggest that their private business – provides unique means through which to socialize people properly.

*The Impulse to Orthodoxy: Why Religious Pluralism Threatens Illiberal Regimes*

David Levy, Boston University

This paper examines how illiberal regimes use religious policy to exclude dissident attitudes from public life and political processes. Under Russia’s aegis, states across the post-Soviet space have introduced policies that distinguish “traditional” from “non-traditional” religious groups and dramatically restrict the rights of the latter to practice freely.In this context, “traditional” status is primary reserved for Russian Orthodoxy and state-sanctioned brands of Islam, while “non-traditional” status is imposed on a wide range of marginal groups of Christian, Muslim, and other backgrounds. Why do states restrict the activities of seemingly benign and apolitical religious groups? While it is tempting to dismiss such restrictions as reactionary “identity politics,” the substance and outcomes of these policies defy such an easy explanation. Rather than defending local religious traditions from foreign incursions, as we might expect from banal nationalism, these policies often facilitate foreign intervention at the expense of local customs.

Examining religious policies in the Central Asian states of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, I demonstrate that this discourse on “tradition” represents one facet of a broader policy effort to recast pluralism not as a constituent part of the popular will, but rather as a subversive threat to national sovereignty.I demonstrate how established elites limit access to power – especially the authority to represent “the people” in public life and public institutions – by conferring such authority only on those who have already demonstrated their loyalty and utility to the establishment. To such regimes, all autonomous religious and political programs represent a threat, irrespective of their origin. Local political and religious movements can be perceived as “non-traditional” if they do not take their cues directly from the regime, while foreign organizations can be perceived as “traditional” if they demonstrate their value to the regime, especially if they operate through a similarly hierarchical structure.

*Organizing Collectively at Dordoi Bazaar*

Regine Spector, University of Massachusetts Amherst

This paper examines a type of civil society actor often perceived to be stagnating, coopted or in decline globally, as well as in the post-Soviet region: trade unions. I examine efforts by traders at Dordoi bazaar in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan to unite in more sustained and institutionalized ways to defend their common interests against bazaar owners and government officials, and generate creative ways to solve problems related to bazaar property and other conflicts. Through interviews with traders and trade union leaders, I find that they imbued new meanings into Soviet-era understandings of trade unions and adapting practices within this organizational form to meet the needs of the marketizing context. The chapter demonstrates that a certain order at the bazaar resulted in part from the political work of trade union participants. Trade unions are thus neither weak nor coopted in this market context; rather traders used, reshaped, and adapted them in a new capitalist environment. This finding suggests that we take seriously contestations around market creation and regulation, and the nature of work in neoliberal market contexts, as important sphere of civil society activity in the region.

*Exploring Illegal Hashish Production: The Economy/Security Nexus*

Dr. Gulzat Botoeva, University of Roehampton

The conventional literature that investigates civil society typically focuses on political upheavals and resistance to the state. In contrast, illicit and illegal activities that occur on the margins of the formal economy get explored through studies of criminology and deviance. I merge these two strands of social science in this paper by focusing on illegal hashish production in rural Kyrgyzstan. Since the beginning of 1990s,illegal hashish productionhas become one of the primary sources of income for certain rural regions, primarily in the Tyup region of Issyk-Kul oblast. Rural dwellers are typically neglected in the literature on the post-Soviet politics of resistance. They often receive attention only when they take part in formal elections as pawns in the games of informal patronage networks. I suggest that we can better understand these networks of production and distribution as implicit and often neglected forms of resistance on the part of rural residents.  Local hashish producers have negotiated a complex relationship with the state, promoting informal rights for collecting cannabis leaves and making (formally illegal) hashish.  In this paper, therefore, I suggest that rural dwellers, who reside on the fringes of the political economy, should be understood as civil society actors, who in their own way resist the state in their day-to-day coping strategies.

Brief Biographies:

Dr. Regine Spector an Assistant Professor in Political Science at UMass Amherst studying comparative political economy and development. She holds her Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley and has published articles in *Problems of Post-Communism*, *Post-Soviet Affairs*, and *Central Asian Survey*, in addition to three edited volumes. Her first book manuscript, *Order at the Bazaar: Power and Trade in Central Asia*, is forthcoming with Cornell University Press in summer 2017. Spector has received numerous grants over the past decade, including a Title-VIII funded dissertation field research grant and aresearch grant from UMass Amherst’s School of Behavioral Sciences.

Dr. Aisalkyn Botoeva has recently defended her doctorate dissertation in Sociology at Brown University, titled *Moral Futures: The Emergence of Islamic Businesses in the Post-Soviet Economy*. She is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Providence College and Brown University. The results of her individual and collaborative projects have been published *in Theory & Society,* Post-Soviet Affairs, Central Asian Survey and other journals.

Dr.Gulzat Botoeva is a Lecturer in Criminology at the University of Roehampton. She received her Ph.D. in Sociology from University of Essex in 2015, which was funded by the Universityof Essex and Overseas Research Students Award Scheme scholarships. Her doctoralwork focused on small-scale illegal hashish production in one of the regions of Kyrgyzstan. She has published articles in the International Journal of Drug Policy and Central Asian Survey. Herresearch interests are illegal drug markets and specifically drug production inpost-Soviet countries, neoliberalization and crime, informal economies, crimein post-Soviet countries; qualitative research methods and ethnographies ofcrime.

David Levy is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at Boston University, studying authoritarian, populist, and “identity” politics in post-Soviet states. His dissertation examines why emerging democracies treat benign forms of pluralism, particularly religious pluralism, as a threat to national sovereignty and stability. Focusing on the countries of Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, his researchshows that public policy in the post-Soviet context can be used to exclude dissident attitudes from political processes. His fields of interest include comparative politics, sociology of religion, nationalism, civil society, development and theory.

Panel 2: “Gender & Sexuality”

***Women’s (Lack of) Political Participation in Kyrgyzstan***

Mirgul Karimova

The Kyrgyz Republic is a signatory to a number of gender equality promoting international treaties and has contemporary gender-inclusive laws which prohibit any discrimination based on gender in government structures, at the work place, and encourage women's political participation. Within the last decade, the government attempted to implement such laws and accomplished noticeable progress in some areas, reaching a 40% representation of women in public service. However, most of the positions women occupied are at mid- to-lower levels and only 27% are in politics. Also, the trend, as recent gender assessment studies show, is downward looking, with less and less women holding political and senior positions. Even when women participate in politics, they are stereotypically assigned to manage the social sector (eg. 74% positions in the Ministry of Healthcare, 70% in the Ministry of Social Protection of Population), whereas men are predominantly seen representing key budgetary areas, such as agriculture (74%) and transportation/communication (68%). Cultural norms and local traditions only reinforce these circumstances, expecting women's devotion to family and childcare. Thus, the limited efficiency of gender-inclusive laws and mechanisms, such as gender quotas, is explained by the rather intertwined traits of Kyrgyz politics which require not only availability of formal (i.e. legal) access to political power, but also expects the possession of such influential gear as membership in informal (i.e. clan, kinship, patronage) networks. Despite recent outliers, such as female politicians representing the country as top executive, legislative, and judiciary public servants, it is yet unclear if a female politician can reach similar recognition in a general election running as an independent candidate, outside of male dominated routes to power. The analysis of the most recent findings revealed that women’s political participation in Kyrgyzstan is affected by lack of family and society support, area experience, and, only lastly, finance.

**Keywords:** Women’s empowerment, political participation, gender (in)equality, female politicians, political power, social sector, public service, informal access to leadership.

**Title: The Mustache in the Context of Struggle for Sexual Minority Rights in Montenegro**

Branko Banović

**Abstract:** Civil society employs different and innovative strategies in advancing globalization and cosmopolitanism around the world and every globalisation project is shaped by somewhat unpredictable interactions among specific cultural legacies. In that respect, the case of Montenegrin LGBTIQ community is particularly interesting. Namely, on its path to the European Union, Montenegro has experienced shifts on gender issues and enacted legislation to prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. However, the mustache as the symbol of the first Montenegrin Pride Parade have clearly shown that fast change in national gender policies is accompanied by many overheating effects, as well as that different parts of Montenegrin society are moving toward the EU at different speeds. The attempt of the Montenegrin LGBTIQ community to transfer the semantic area traditionally covering the mustache (honour, pride, morality, heroism, bravery, etc.) into the context of contemporary struggles for sexual minority rights, has intensified and accelerated the clash of cultural values. By “claiming their right” to the mustache and by breaking prejudices about who is entitled to wear it, the Montenegrin LGBTIQ community also “claimed their right” to Montenegrin history and tradition, pointing out that sexual minorities must be full and equal members of Montenegrin culture (a kind of the dual struggle, the past-oriented and present-oriented). By contrast, people with opposing views consider this symbolism an attack on Montenegrin identity, tradition, history and national pride, and find this “usurpation” of the mustache aggressive and humiliating.The mustache still carries on its life in the struggle for sexual minority rights in Montenegro. Thus, putting the focus on controversies over the mustache, I want to show how this symbol has gradually become an ally of Montenegrin LGBTIQ community and to point out advantages and disadvantages of this innovative strategy in the struggle for sexual minority rights in Montenegro.

**Brief biography:** Branko Banović, a social anthropologist, is director of the Regional museum Pljevlja, Montenegro and Research Associate at Institute of Social Sciences in Belgrade, Serbia. His research covers many aspects of identity, multiculturalism, masculinity as well as the theoretical and practical aspects of nation-building in societies of former Yugoslavia. As the global era is characterised by local cultural divergences, his main focus has been on local responses to the big questions of transition period in Montenegro (the question of accession to NATO and EU). Banovic is the author of *The Montenegrin Warrior Tradition: Questions and Controversies over NATO membership* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

Panel 3: “Centering Central Asian Perspectives on Civil Society”

**"NGOs and ‘business matchmaking’ in Kazakhstan"**

Bakhytnur Otarbayeva

NGO and business collaboration and partnerships with a purpose to address different social issues become wide spread practice in the developed countries, especially in USA and UK, and many cases of such collaboration became a subject of research in academic literature. Despite the increase in the number of publications, they mostly focus on cases in the developed countries, but there is no research devoted to this problem in developing world, that is why further study is needed.

The focus group methodic was used to collect a data for this paper.

In Kazakhstan, as in other Central Asia states, partnerships between business and NGOs are still at the early stage. There is a lack of systematic interrelation mechanisms between corporate and non-profit sectors, which would contribute to solving social problems and facilitate NGOs service to vulnerable groups of population. Therefore, there is an urgent need to research cross-sector partnerships to develop technologies for the joint implementation socially significant projects, which will bring the balance of interests in society and sustainable development. This could not only academic mission but it should be also in the agenda of business associations and NGO capacity building associations.

The lack of collaboration with NGOs also prevent business companies to realize their social potential and to set up corporate social responsibility strategy. The push for more responsible business practices has caused some corporations to seek out NGOs as partners to help them implement solutions to development problems but on the other hand, business has many special requirements for building partnership relationships. Are NGOs from Kazakhstan ready to be the partners with business companies? What kind expectations business has from NGOs. These issues will be in the focus of the presentation.

Key words: **NGO, Business, partnerships, collaboration, CSR**.

Biography: Bakhytnur Otarbayeva has academic and NGO practice experience. During 1998 - 2008 she worked as president of the PF “National Debate Center”. In 2003, she joined the board of the IDEA, Netherlands. She is a grantee of a Fulbright, the Woodrow Wilson Center and Joel Fleishman Civic Society fellowships, (USA). She has a doctoral degree in political science. Currently she is a professor and a director of NGO Expert Center of ALMA U. She worked out a curriculum of the MBA program “Management of NGO”, which was launched in 2015 .

Potemkin Civil Society in Central Asia

**Abstract**:

The limitations of the civil liberties imposed by the Central Asian authoritarian regimes in order to broaden their prerogatives were accompanied by attempts to mobilize public support for such decisions. Hence, the case of Central Asia calls for more nuanced approach to the problems of civil society. Instead of perceiving the civil society as always favorable to democracy, it seems more appropriate to study empirically the mechanisms employed by the authoritarian regimes and functions played by civil society in order to reproduce the non-democratic systems of government. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the specific functions of Central Asian civil societies which contribute to the stability of these polities. Among the scrutinized functions of Potemkin civil societies are: legitimacy building, neutralizing the opposition and imitation of the social pluralism.

**keywords**: Civil Society, Central Asia, Authoritarianism

Dr Nartsiss Shukuralieva - assistant professor at the Institute of Political Science, Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Poland. Her research is focused on contemporary politics of five Central Asian republics. Her main areas of publication are political systems, political culture, legitimization of power, theories of social memory as applied to the Central Asian states.

**Forms of social movements in modern Uzbekistan: Grassroots Activism of “Tashkent Drivers”**

Akmaljon Abdullayev

While many experts have been focusing on major issues such as transition of power, border management, economic developments in Uzbekistan the significant transformations of relations between society and the state have been taking place. The engagement of society with the state has intensified recent years and virtual platforms have been playing leading role in these transformations. The government had initiated number of these virtual platforms including electronic government (my.gov.uz) which allows individuals as well as organizations can approach the government institutions with claims but genuine contention arose through Facebook group, Drivers of Tashkent (ВодителиТашкента). Utilizing social movement theory developed by Charles Tilly, this paper will argue that this group has combined all elements of social movement in Uzbekistan.

This grassroots activism started in 2013 and has 90000 members who constantly exchange posts. The group has been administered by 6 individuals and initially aimed at exchanging posts to call for improvement of driving rules among its members. However, with the increase of the numbers and their subsequent interests the nature of the posts have transformed into force and started to challenge number of state institutions including road traffic police, road maintenance organizations through specific claims. The significant impact of the group posts can be observed when state institutions respond to those claims and at the same time has been giving meaning to the membership. In addition, the group has been occasionally leaving virtual platforms and members are involved in activities such as supporting elders, celebrating veterans and helping each other when encounter problems. The existing collective claims, repertoires, symbolism, concerted public representations of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment demonstrate that Drivers of Tashkent can be full-fledged social movement which demonstrate how civil society changes landscape in Uzbekistan.

Keywords: drivers of Tashkent,social movement, Facebook

Brief biography: Akmaljon Abdullayev is PhD candidate at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy in Tashkentand has been conducting research on history of social movements in Central Asia. He holds master’s degree in Middle East and Central Asian Security Studies from the University of St Andrews and political science from the OSCE Academy in Bishkek. Akmaljon can be contacted at [Abdullayev\_akmal@mail.ru](mailto:Abdullayev_akmal@mail.ru)

Panel 4: “Media & Citizenship”

**The Representation of Civil Society in the Media in Kyrgyzstan**

Elira Turdubaeva

Between the state and society lies the public sphere, “a network for communicating information and points of view” (Habermas 1996, 360).

John Thompson (2000) has argued that the media have become the major component of the public sphere in the industrial society. Furthermore, if communication networks of any kind form the public sphere, then our society, the network society (Castells 1996, 2004a), organizes its public sphere, more than any other historical form of organization, on the basis of media communication networks (Lull 2007; Cardoso 2006; Chester 2007). In the digital era, this includes the diversity of both the mass media and Internet and wireless communication networks (McChesney 2007).

The aim of this research is to analyze the representation of civil society organizations in the mainstream online news media in Kyrgyzstan.

The key research question of this study is as follows:

How is online news media in Kyrgyzstan reporting civil society activities?

What is the representation of civil society organizations in the online mainstream news media in Kyrgyzstan?

This study analyses the coverage of civil society activities by mainstream online news media such as Akipress.org, Knews.kg, 24.kg, Kabar.kg and Sputnik.kg in Kyrgyzstan for the period January 2016 to December 2016. The search code “Nongovernmental Organizations” was used in the search bars of the online news agencies and collected news about NGOs.

From these, the news articles with a strong civil society showing, in terms of thematic thrust, sources cited, authorship by a civil society practitioner or a civil society organization being at the heart of the story were selected for analysis.

**Keywords: Civil Society, NGO, Kyrgyzstan, news media, online media, democratization, framing analysis, media coverage**

**The War of Billboards: Hijab, Secularism, and Public Space in Bishkek**

Emil Nasritdinov, Nurgul Esenamanova

**Abstract**

In this paper, we explore how religion claims its space in the city of Bishkek. The growing community of practicing Muslims asserts the right to be in the city, live according to its religious ideals, and create Islamic urban spaces. Such claims do not remain uncontested and, because religious identity has strong visual manifestation, religious claims become the subject of strong public debate. This contestation overlaps with socially constructed gender hierarchies – religious/secular claims over the urban space turn into men’s claims over women with both sides (religious and secular) claiming to know what women should wear. Yet, as research shows, Kyrgyz women in Bishkek do not really need fashion advice. The Islamic revivalist movement among women in the Kyrgyz capital has since the 1990s created a strong momentum that has a life of its own and is fairly independent. Muslim women wearing a hijab today has become very visible and influential for urban actors with their own strong claims for the city.

**Keywords**

Kyrgyzstan, hijab, secularism, public space, national identity

**Reflecting the link between citizenship and civil society**

**Jelena Vasiljević**

*Keywords*: citizenship, civil society

*Abstract*

The presentation seeks to explore and problematise conceptual and historical link between citizenship and civil society. Citizenship is political and legal foundation of every political community, regulating and determining statuses and rights. At the same time it affects and mediates identities and belonging within, across and beyond nation-states. It thus shapes the relations between individuals, nation and state, though in many significantly different ways given its different traditions (republican, liberal, national) and forms of organizing political lives of individuals and communities (civic, ethnic, cultural, group-differentiated citizenship etc.). What has been the role of civil society in reconceptualising citizenship and citizenship rights in the second half of the 20th century? Has the growing prominence of civil society in modern political and social theory influenced new normative theories of democratic and global (cosmopolitan, post-national) citizenship? In which ways? Could we claim that the civil society movements predominantly arise as a response to an inherently ambivalent nature of citizenship – an institution which has historically served as a major vehicle of both inclusion (inauguration, development and expansion of citizenship rights) and exclusion (segregation of rights; exclusion of non-citizens). These and related questions will be reflected upon with a special focus on citizenship regimes changes and workings of civil society in Serbia and other post-Yugoslav states.

**Jelena Vasiljević** (PhD in socio-culturalanthropology) is a Research Associate at the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade. Her research lies within thefields of citizenship studies and political and legalanthropology. Her main research themes includetransformations of citizenship in the post-Yugoslavstates, memory politics, culture and rights, politics ofsolidarity. Jelena was a Research Fellow and later aResearch Collaborator for the CITSEE (ERC funded projecton citizenship transformations in the formerYugoslav states) project at the University of Edinburgh. She was also a Research Fellow at the Centre for SouthEast European Studies, University of Graz.

Panel 5: “Centering Kyrgyzstan's Perspectives on Civil Society”

**Foreign Man's Burden? Foreign Aid in Central Asia: Comparative Analysis of Civil Societies**

Reina Artur kyzy

Civil society in Central Asia? Until fairly recently, few would have considered it as a truth for Central Asian states with post-communist and Islamic heritage, let alone a topic for the whole research. However, more than 20 years of independence showed significant changes originating indigenously and from outside in the development of civil society. The 1990s have indicated an increased interest in funding promotion of democratization in post-Soviet area on the part of foreign governments and international organizations. The loudly proclaimed democratic path and development of civil society have been systematically challenged by authoritarian regimes, insecurity,and socio-economic instability.

After almost 27 years of independence and international assistance, what do we know about civil society of Central Asia? Of course, as a non-European area with Islamic heritage, CA cannot be understood with the analytical tools derived from the western historical experience, and neo-liberal idea of civil society is not fully applicable (Sayiid 1997). At the same time, CA countries differ greatly from Arab Muslim world of the Far East, even within CA itself history of Islam varies from country to country (Buxton 2011). It is on the crossroads: between old "law governed states" concept, promoted liberalistic "third sector", community based grassroots and faith based structures; or may be there is completely different form of civil society (Cooper 1998, Artur kyzy 2013, Buxton 2011, jenny 2000, Brian, ed. 2003).

Although hundreds of millions of euros and dollars were spent by western donors on different financial and technical forms almost with the same neo-liberal strategies as in countries with stronger democracy, the outcomes in CA are drastically different. However, answers to why this is so cannot just be provided by recognition of different socio-political, geographical, and economic variances. What were the grounds for fruitful assistance in one region, whereas another region almost failed to promote neo-liberal ideas of freedom of association? What are conceptions of civil society in CA? These and other related questions will be discussed at the conference with a special focus on Kyrgyzstan.

Keywords: *Civil Society, Central Asia, Foreign Aid, Islam*

**Reina Artur kyzy** is an Assistant Professor at the American University of Central Asia, Sociology Department, and currently provides research consultancy to UN Women in Kyrgyzstan, Global Fund and Kyrgyz NGOs "Labrys" and "Kyrgyz Indigo". She holds a Master degree in politics and security of Central Asia and bachelor degree in sociology. Last but not least, she is a feminist and civil activist and a member of Bishkek Feminists Initiatives.

Informality as a form of civil society in Kyrgyzstan

Iliyas Mamadiyarov

Post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan provides a peculiar case when a rich fabric of local informal institutions exert a tremendous role in the operations of the state. Indeed, beginning from clans that impact a regime change and “subversive clientelism” that serves as a tool for political mobilization, informal institutions have been crucial actors in shaping the socio-political landscape of Kyrgyzstan. Thus, a need for a detailed investigation of the phenomenon emerges.

Within the context of this research proposal, I will attempt to deploy the concept of civil society to study the role of informality in Kyrgyzstan. Indeed, inasmuch as civil society exerts influence on social outcome in a state, informal institutions equally contribute to the social output. As a matter of fact, in studying the various dimensions of informality in China, Lily Tsai argues that informal structure has roots that correspond to the a form of civil society . Furthermore, in post-Soviet Central Asia, the non-state social fabric (clans/tribes, regionalism, patron-clien network etc.) has been already explored through the prism of civil society . Hence, in this research proposal, my goal is to attempt to explore the informality as a form of civil society in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan and answer, among other things, the following questions.

1.How are informal institutions effective politically? Do they raise civic awareness?

Are informal institutions closely intertwined with social capital? What are the origins of informality? How does the pattern shape? How do they interact with state political structures?

2. How efficient are informal institutions economically? Do they contribute positively or negatively to the rural development? Do they efficiently substitute free market based institutions?

**‘Protest groups in Kyrgyzstan: stuck between democratic practices of contestation and old institutions’**

Asel Doolotkeldieva

**Abstract**: As recent cases of European anti-austerity civic resistance show this activism is still ‘all about politics’. Recent studies show that new groups within civil society in Europe emerge to express frustration with formal politics and criticize past forms of contestation. These groups gave a way to new types of collective action, often based on anonymous Internet platforms, leaderless structures, horizontal organizations and physical occupation of places (M.Kaldor & S. Selchow, 2015). For groups such as Indignados, Occupy London, Anonymous Germany and others, central to their activism is the *process* of reflecting on and reimagining democracy rather than finding immediate answers, i.e. results. And although critics tend to dismiss these novel forms of contentious politics, most importantly they hint to the new ways citizens view radical democracy and their role in shaping it. These recent cases of civil activism can be useful in drawing parallels and analyzing Central Asian contentious politics. In Kyrgyzstan too, new actors and innovations in collective action emerge with every revolutionary cycle. Kyrgyzstani contentious groups also share frustration with formal politics against the background of general political apathy. Finally, public fatigue with protests, as an easily coopted form of critique, is noticeable. Yet, Kyrgyzstani protests fail to create wider societal resonance and generate public reforms. Based on the ethnographic study of two cases of contentious politics that have emerged in the immediate aftermath of April 2010 in the Kyrgyz countryside, I will focus on practices of public contestation. I argue that while there is an acknowledgement of the need to create new forms and meanings of political engagement, it is in practice difficult to change dramatically current patterns of collective action. I will show that difficulties related to overcoming internal interests of power affect internal structures of contentious groups and their subsequent success in extending membership, creating a wider public resonance and acknowledgment by the formal politics.

**Bio**: Dr. Asel Doolotkeldieva is a Senior Lecturer at Manas University (Bishkek), she holds PhD in Politics from the University of Exeter (UK) and MA in Comparative Sociology from Sciences Po Paris (France). She is largely interested in social mobilizations, state-business relationships, state-religion relationships, electoral politics, extractive industries, and informality.

Panel 6: “Prefigurative Politics”

**The Pedagogy of re-Claiming a New Civil Society**

Creston Davis

Over the past 40 years we’ve seen a massive deterioration of the social “glue” of society from the acids of neoliberalism.  My paper assess how the effects of neoliberalism has eroded education and to offer a positive alternative.  I will be drawing on the tradition of “critical pedagogy” via Paulo Freire and thinkers in his wake as well as my experience starting a school over the past five years.  In the end, it is my hope that a new horizon of a civil society can be restored.

Keywords: Neoliberalism, New Civil Society, Education, Critical and Social Theory

Creston Davis is the Founder and Director of GCAS. Along with Slavoj Zizek, Clayton Crockett, and Jeffrey Robbins, Creston currently co-edits Insurrections: Critical Studies in Religion, Politics & Culture (an academic book series published by Columbia University Press). He has published several books including Paul’s New Moment (with Slavoj Zizek & John Milbank), The Monstrosity of Christ, Hegel & the Infinite (with Zizek and Clayton Crockett), Theology & the Political (with Zizek and Milbank), Theology after Lacan: A Passion for the Real (with Marcus Pound and Crockett), and Contradiction & America (with Alain Badiou) forthcoming.

***Title: Examining Eco-Gentrification through the Prefigurative Politics of Alternative Food Initiatives in Copenhagen***

*Amanda Winter*

Abstract

In this paper, I use prefigurative politics as a conceptual framework to explore two alternative food initiatives and their role in promoting eco-gentrification in Copenhagen. These civil society initiatives, Byhaven 2200, Denmark’s first community garden in a public park, and the Københavns Fødevarefællesskab, a community supported agriculture group, demonstrate the difficult situation for green/environmental activists in what I refer to as the ‘gateway-gentrification paradox’. On the one hand, participation in alternative food initiatives has been deemed as a ‘gateway’ opportunity – in that their prefiguration may lead to a deeper civic engagement with social justice issues. On the other, their ‘greening’ efforts are now exposed to neoliberal cooptation and commodification, and thus may contribute to gentrifying their neighborhood and displacing vulnerable residents. This paradox has general implications for green urban policies and civic initiatives that do not consider unintended social and economic consequences, displaying a rift between ‘green’ and ‘sustainable’. As local food policies and alternative food initiatives increase in popularity and international mobility, eco-gentrification remains an important issue to grasp – especially as it can result from often-romanticized community groups who now face testing decisions in their attempts to prefigure their situated visions of sustainability.

Biography

Amanda Winter is a Post-doctoral Research Fellow at the University of Nottingham, where she explores the urban governance of environmental policies in Nottingham and Shanghai with the interdisciplinary Leverhulme Project ‘Sustaining Urban Habitats’. She has a PhD in Environmental Sciences and Policy from Central European University, with a dissertation entitled ‘Contested Sustainability and the Environmental Politics of Green City Making’. She has taught Environmental Policy at Philadelphia University and as part of Central European University’s Open Learning Initiative for Refugees program.

# The Chilean Student Movement 2005-2015:*Goals, tactics and participatory democracy as mobilization resources*

Gaspar García-Huidobro R.

The question of mass and sustained mobilization is timely and important, especially in face of illiberal democracies and uncivil societies. Using the Chilean Student Movement as my case study, I will propose a more nuanced understanding of the mobilization process by demonstrating that the endogenous factors or inner characteristics of the movement, namely the goals, decision-making, and tactics were primary drivers for the students’ prolonged engagement. First, I will argue that the use of creative and innovative tactics of protest become central for the sense of inclusion and personal contribution, among members and society alike. The students not only used rallies, but also other innovative repertoires, such as carnivals, building gigantic puppets of Presidents and Deans which accompanied the protests, and recreating music video clips, deliberately capturing bystanders' attention and sympathy, as well as creating spaces where different members could participate. Second, I argue that the decentralized decision-making process, or the form of participatory democracy put in place, engaged students in large discussions regarding the possible strategies for the movement, creating an atmosphere that nurtured a sense of ownership, involvement, and mobilization. Third, I aim to show how utilizing the idea of future change its crucial, especially when seeking for structural changes. That is to say, the awareness of operating in the name of a better future for society, rather than for private gains, enables a long-standing and prolonged commitment. Interestingly, all these inner characteristics that fostered students' mobilization are also partly the weakness of the movement. Finally, I argue that the Chilean Student movement offers key insights towards possible strategies to resolve the issue of collective action, as well as provide practical insights on how to mobilize, for long periods of time, people seeking to build a better society, for all.

**Biography**

Gaspar is studying at the School of Public Policy at Central European University in Budapest. He earned his Socioeconomics BA in Chile, where he was an active member of the Chilean Student Movement for almost 10 years. He participated in Chile’s Higher Education Governance Reform, aiming at incorporating students into Universities’ decision-making boards. During this process, he represented students and led negotiations with local officials, academics and faculties. His most recent professional experience was in India, where he worked on social mobilization and political education. In Chile, he worked for the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Economy, and for a research center. Besides social movements, Gaspar’s interests include political economy, local development, education policies, and participatory democracy.

Panel 7: “Conflictual (Pre)figuration: Acts, Images, Visions”

Chair: Igor Štiks

*Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh*

**Revolution Girl Style Now? Notes on the Language of Prefigurative Politics**

**Agata *Lisiak,*** *Institute of Social Sciences, Humboldt University*

Whether they are themselves revolutionary or not, social movements rely considerably on revolutionary aesthetics. The language of revolution, as Ariella Azoulay argues, emerges from gestures performed in a particular place, but is not bound to that place. The images created in streets and squares, in occupied cinemas and factories, travel to other places, both real-life and fictional, and take on new, sometimes entirely different meanings. Revolutionary images do not have to mean exactly the same thing in each of the places in which they appear; they do not have to be identical to share a certain sensitivity and understanding of politics. The image of woman as a symbol of revolution, regardless of whether she entices people to revolt or provokes outrage because of her suffering at the hands of the oppressive regime, functions prominently, alongside countless images depicting women's participation in recent protests movements, as part of the visual language of revolution spoken across the globe. In this presentation I will revisit my earlier work (2014) on girlification of revolutionary imagery, in which I analyze the visual language of recent protest movements (Tahrir, Occupy Wall Street, Gezi, Maidan), and will discuss it in relation to later and ongoing protests including Black Lives Matter in the USA, Czarny Protest in Poland, as well as Rhodes Must Fall and subsequent protests in South Africa.

**Re-appropriating the past, pre-figuring the future: Artistic Activism in the Post-Socialist Balkans**

**Igor Štiks,***Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh*

My paper focuses on the re-appropriation of the formerly official socialist art in the post-socialist artistic practices. These practices themselves are directly related to new social movements, initiatives and actions belonging to the emerging post-Yugoslav “new left”. In other words, we are dealing here with what appears to us *now*, after the end of socialism, as an aesthetics of *once victorious* resistance that was eventually *defeated* after the end of socialist regimes. By affirming the ideals behind that art, it develops a subversive critique of the current liberal-democratic and capitalist regime that has delegitimized socialist ideals behind the partisan anti-fascist victory and annulled the former regime’s social achievements. What used to be the regime art becomes under the contemporaryre-appropriation an activist art reflecting, on one hand, upon the historic socialist victory and the defeat of its social achievements and, on the other, upon our present situation, possible resistances and visions of anti-capitalist future.

***Continuation of Mainstream Politics with Other Means* – Extreme-Right Graffiti and Street Art in Slovenia**

**Mitja Velikonja**,*Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana*

Author analyses graffiti and street-art production of the extreme right-wing groups in Slovenia. Classification of main topics and identification of groups of authors is followed by critical analysis. This production can be understood along the line modern/postmodern fascism. Modern fascism is direct, exclusive, aggressive, while the postmodern one is even more dangerous, because it looks inclusive, conciliatory, its diction seems integrative. However, their final goal is identical: hierarchical, authoritarian, ethnically and culturally homogenous and corporative society. Basic idea of the presentation is that hate-speech on the walls and the one of dominant politics is basically the same: we can speak about the continuation of the same discourse with other means. Everything that is written in graffiti was already said from pulpits of dominant politics. Finally, examples of “decontamination” of public spaces - i.e. removal of extremist graffiti and street art or their creative subversion - are also presented and analysed.

**Presenters:**

**Dr Agata Lisiak** is a postdoctoral researcher at Humboldt University’s Institute of Social Sciences and a lecturer at Bard College Berlin. An urban scholar with background in European studies, literature and comparative cultural studies, Lisiak is interested in everyday urban cultures, visual cultures, spatialities and visualities of migration, and developing methodologies for researching said issues. She is the author of *Urban Cultures in (Post)Colonial Central Europe* (Purdue University Press 2010) and her current research project is titled Immigrant Mothers as Agents of Change.

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**Dr Igor Štiks** is a Leverhulme Early Career Fellow at the Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh. Together with Jo Shaw he edited the collections Citizenship after Yugoslavia (Routledge, 2013) and Citizenship Rights (Ashgate, 2013), and, with Srecko Horvat, Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism: Radical Politics after Yugoslavia (Verso, 2015). His book *Nations and Citizens in Yugoslavia and the Post-Yugoslav States: One Hundred Years of Citizenship* was published by Bloomsbury in 2015.

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**Prof Mitja Velikonja** is the Chair of Cultural Studies at the Centre for Cultural and Religious Studies at the University of Ljubljana. His main areas of research include Central-European and Balkan political ideologies, subcultures and urban cultures, collective memory and post-socialist nostalgia.

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Panel 8: “Memory & Remembering”

**Expulsion of Excellence in the New Turkey: 1453 All Over Again?**

Clyde Forsberg

It has become fashionable in Western Intellectual circles at least to credit the European Renaissance and Enlightenment to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, when Greek scholars in particular were driven from the Byzantine capital, but took with them everything they had learned about their Greek intellectual heritage and classical philosophical tradition, in fact, thanks to the scholarly enterprise of their Muslim scholastic counterparts.  Why the Muslim world appeared to stagnate somewhat, thereafter (but in the intellectual rather than military or imperial sense) failing to keep up as Europe moved steadily toward something scientific and “modern,” suggests that the “purges” that followed Mehmed II military upset and dismantling of the Byzantine Empire proved problematic in the long run. My paper, “Expulsion of Excellence in the New Turkey,” based on my forthcoming book, *Expulsion of Excellence: The Persecution of Professors in the New Turkey, a Facebook Book*, discusses the degree to which the present purge of scholars—foreign and domestic--in Erdogan’s Turkey can be seen as an example of history repeating itself. Erdogan’s campaign to fashion himself in the imagine of the Ottoman Sultan, Mehmed II, the constitutional reforms under consideration at the moment likely to give the former more power than the latter, seem a foregone conclusion. Erdogan’s purge conforms to that of his Ottoman predecessor in one important sense, for they seem certain to facilitate a modern-day expulsion and “brain-drain” on an even larger scale than in 1453, destroying Turkey’s chances of becoming a Islamic democracy and thus prospective member of the European Union. In this case, mind you, it seems likely that neither Europe nor Turkey stand to benefit as the latter slides into despotism and the former into insignificance.

Clyde R. Forsberg Jr. is a Professor in the General Education Department of the American University of Central Asia, formerly a Professor Dr. in the Western Languages and Literatures Department at Karabuk University, Turkey. He is also a Civic Education Project and Open Society Institute Fellow with a personal and professional interest in higher education reforms in emerging democracies in the former Soviet Union and parts of the Middle East. His academic training is highly interdisciplinary, with a PhD in American Social and Cultural History under Klaus J. Hansen at Queen’s University, Canada, an MA in the Philosophy of Religion under the devout Roman Catholic and Bernard Lonergan scholar Hugo A. Meynell, and a BA (magna cum laude) in Religious Studies with a twin concentration in Biblical Studies under Peter C. Craigie and Medieval Islamic Civilization under Andrew Rippin. Forsberg is an internationally renowned scholar in the field of new religions, a Canadian playwright, and jazz musician, conflating the fine arts and liberal arts in an attempt to “get the message out.” Born in the United States, raised and educated in Canada’s capital (Ottawa), before going on to live and teach abroad in Kyrgyzstan, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey, he is that brand of international American Studies scholar who feels most at home when far, far from it. His wife, Cholpon Alieva, is a Central Asian Muslim. They have two children, Acacia and Attila.

**Re/Claiming Bishkek: Contestations and Activisms in the City of Two Revolutions**

Emil Nasritdinov and Philipp Schröder

We have heard many tourists and visitors of Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, saying that they like the city very much. But then, when asked about what exactly they like, many get confused and have difficulties forming a strong answer. There is nothing special about Bishkek’s architecture or its planning (compared to Astana for example), and the city is quite dusty and crowded (compared to all other capitals in Central Asia). Well, Bishkek is green they say, but considering how the city’s oaks have been affected by bugs recently, that would now rather be brownish. One less tangible quality mentioned by visitors is the sense of freedom and the way the feel at ease in Bishkek, but not so much in other Central Asian capitals. This is where the discussion becomes more interesting. Within Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan is often depicted as the “island of democracy in the sea of authoritarian states” with Bishkek then being the main “volcano” of this island – “the city of two revolutions” (in 2005 and 2010). Many are inspired by such image of Kyrgyzstan and its capital, others are more skeptical and critical of it. In this paper, we would like to explore in more depth what such sense of freedom might mean at the level of everyday practices among Bishkek residents. We will do so by looking at various contemporary forms of contestations and activisms. In a city where the central government has less power or desire to control urban life, it is captivating to understand who claims the urban space today and what forms these claims take.

**Keywords**

Bishkek, activism, urban contestation

**TITLE:** Remembering beyond barbed-wire fences – Vehicles of bottom-up, counter-narratives in Armenia and Turkey

**David Leupold, Berlin Graduate School of Social Sciences**

**ABSTRACT:**

Based on my ongoing dissertation on “Bridging Memories on a Contested Geography” I want to discuss in my paper the *limits* of state-orchestrated politics of memory by shedding light on local memory and it’s potential to produce bottom-up, counter-narratives challenging the first. In contrast to totalizing, top-down educational policies of the nation-state I understand local memory as an ongoing dialogue between the individual and its physical and societal environment. In this regard, I will identify*oral narrations, local vernaculars, sites of memory*and *toponomy* as vehicles for local-dwellers to contest – in a bottom-up direction – established narratives on collective violence and the ‘hostile other’ as propagated by both the Turkish and Armenian nation-state. Hereby I will argue that local memory can – in the absence of bilateral diplomatic relations – favor the emergence of cells of resistance opposing homogenizing and exclusivist narratives of nation-states and thus elicit a bottom-up, civic engagement with one’s shared violent past.

During my talk I will rely on my own empirical material which I collected through a one-year field work in both the Republic of Armenia and Turkey. During my stay in Armenia, I have been able to conduct 60 biographical narrative interviews (acc. Schütze, Rosenthal), collecting audio material of over 50 hours. During my two-month research in Turkey I was based in Van and compiled over 40 biographical narrative interviews in four Turkish provinces (Van, Muş, Bitlis, Hakkari). Interview participants comprised different ethnic affiliations (Armenians, Yezidis, Syriacs / Kurds, Alevi Zaza, Turks), generations allowing me to explore the evolution of memory in both a temporal and spatial perspective. Throughout my work my guiding question will be whether local memory accounts can overcome the friend-foe distinction that divides both countries on a state-level and thus yield a meaningful, bottom-up contribution to historical across barbed-wire fences and closed borders.

**KEYWORDS:**bottom-up activism, local memory, history reconciliation

**BIO:** David Leupoldholds a B.A. in Contemporary Middle Eastern Studies from Otto-Friedrich University Bamberg and a M.A. in Comparative Social Sciences from Humboldt University Berlin and Middle East Technical University Ankara. His fields of interest include: collective violence, politics of remembering and forgetting, and memory as a form of local resistance. His PhD project explores memory of violence in light of national myth and multi-collectivity in the contested geography of Eastern Turkey/Western Armenia/Northern Kurdistan. Leupold is currently teaching in the dual-degree program *German-Turkish Masters of Social Sciences* (GeT MA) at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

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