



### CEELBAS Postdoctoral Research

Seven **Postdoctoral Fellowships** have been appointed by the Centre to develop key research themes. A specific focus of these Fellowships is the development of, and reflection on, new approaches across and between disciplines. Thus, the remit of these Fellows is to advance the Centre's specific research objectives and, just as important, to contribute to the development of multi- and interdisciplinary area studies in general. **Ulrike Ziemer** was appointed Postdoctoral Research fellow at UCL SSEES in February 2009.

### Project Summary

This research aims to deliver a better understanding of the complexity of identity shaping processes by investigating the interplay between 'global' and 'local' amongst Armenian youth within and outside the borders of the European Union (Bulgaria and Russia). In Western European countries little is known about transnational experiences of young Armenians in the post-socialist context. While sharing similar starting points in terms of both belonging to the Armenian diaspora, Russia and Bulgaria, as research sites, represent divergent diasporic/transnational experiences for young Armenians.

### Methodology

This research is a sociological investigation, using ethnographic methods together with focus group discussions and in-depth interviews.



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### Aims and Objectives

This research addresses the following questions: 1) How is ethnicity reproduced within Armenian families and kinship relationships across national boundaries? 2) What is the specific influence of the diasporic Armenian community discourse on perceptions of ethnic/cultural difference, gender, local identities and personal future life aims? 3) To what degree do young Armenians engage with transnational cultural products in their search for social and spatial identities?

### Outcomes

These aims and objectives have been explored through case studies in the cities of Rostov (2009) and a follow-up study in Krasnodar (2010). An unexpected and exciting outcome of the fieldwork trips in 2009 and 2010 were the strong transnational linkages between Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh and Armenians in Rostov and Krasnodar krai, Russia. Thus, fieldwork was conducted for three weeks in Nagorno Karabakh in July 2010. Interviews were also taken with Armenian refugees from Azerbaijan living now in Rostov.

### Research Outputs

#### Monograph:

• *Ethnic Belonging, Gender and Youth Cultural Identities in Contemporary Russia* with a foreword by Dr Anoop Nayak, University of Newcastle, Stuttgart: IBIDEM (forthcoming summer 2011).

#### Edited Volume:

• *Diasporas and Cosmopolitanism in Central and Eastern Europe and Beyond*, Routledge, forthcoming in 2012, (ed. Ulrike Ziemer).

#### Articles in Peer-Reviewed Journals:

- 'Minority Youth, Everyday Racism and Public Spaces in Contemporary Russia', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 14(2), April 2011, 229-242.
- 'Belonging and Longing: Armenian Youth and Diasporic Long-Distance Nationalism in Contemporary Russia', *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 10(2), December 2010, 290-303.
- 'Tackling Tensions and Ambivalences: Armenian Girls' Diasporic Identities in Russia', *Nationalities Papers*, 38(5), July 2010, 689-703.
- 'Narratives of Translocation, Dislocation and Location: Armenian Youth Cultural Identities in Southern Russia', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 61(3), May 2009, 409-433.
- 'Young Soldiers' Tales of War in Nagorno Karabakh', forthcoming in a special issue of *Europe-Asia Studies* on 'The Many Different Faces of the Caucasus'.

### Further Research

Further research will focus on the transnational links between Armenians in Russia and Nagorno Karabakh. Nagorno Karabakh is politically and academically an attractive region, being located in the politically unstable Caucasus. In the recent HEFCE proposals for language-based area studies the Caucasus was identified as a region where UK expertise is weak. To date, much of the research on the Caucasus has been conducted from a political and securities studies perspective and everyday realities amongst the ordinary population, in particular young people, has been ignored.



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