

## COMPASS Special Issue 2nd Writing-up Workshop

# 'Hamsoya - united in shadows': The making of resilient communities in Central Eurasia

GCRF COMPASS online workshop, 18 June 2020

COMPASS: Comprehensive Capacity-Building in the Eastern Neighbourhood and Central Asia: research integration, impact governance & sustainable communities (GCRF UKRI ES/P010849/1)



COMPASS Special Issue 2nd writing-up workshop '*Hamsoya -united in shadows*': *The making of resilient communities in Central Eurasia*

Online Workshop,  
18 June

*Concept:* The workshop sets to explore the making of resilient communities in Central Eurasia, both conceptually - by looking anew at the meanings of identity, 'good life', 'peoplehood' and self-governance (resilience); and empirically – by drawing on unique first-hand evidence from focus groups and surveys across the region. This research has been inspired by a new turn of complexity-thinking in IR (Kavalski 2007; Bousquet & Geyer 2011), and its recent applications to the study and practice of governance and resilience as self-organisation (Korosteleva & Flockhart 2020; Chandler, Grove & Wakefield 2020; Chandler & Reid, 2016). With this workshop we aim to develop synergies between the western and eastern ways of thinking, and take our understanding of community, change, governance and resilience to a new level. Herewith we assemble scholars who focus on these concepts both conceptually and empirically, simultaneously being 'international' and 'local', and invariably part of the Global Challenges Fund, UK Research Councils, project COMPASS. This research is interdisciplinary in nature bringing together such disciplines as IR, social theory, philosophy, history, sociology and anthropology while looking broadly into the Central Eurasian space. We hope that this workshop will not only enrich our understanding of Central Eurasia as a particular geography; but also help change the very foundations of our thinking today – how we should govern and stay resilient in the times of transformational change.

This one-day workshop is supported by the COMPASS project. It is relevant to scholars working on the topics of IR, IPE, FPA, Sociology, Area Studies with a focus on the BRI, Central Asia, Eurasian Economic Union and Eastern Partnership Initiative. The key objective of this workshop is to discuss the ongoing research based on the innovative analytical framework to the study of governance and resilience, as well as the empirical analysis of focus groups data.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> writing-up workshop takes place online in Zoom on **18 June 2020**. It will be followed by a 3<sup>rd</sup> COMPASS SI writing-up workshop in August 2020. Submission of the full manuscripts is expected by early September 2020.

\*\*\*

The [GCRF UKRI COMPASS project](#) (ES/P010849/1, 2017-21) is an ambitious UK government capacity-building initiative, aiming to extend UK research globally, to address the challenges of growth and sustainability in the developing countries. Notably, the COMPASS project, together with Cambridge University as its research partner, seeks to establish '**the hubs of excellence**' at the top-level HEIs in Belarus, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, to enable them to act as nodes for knowledge sharing and transfer along the following three dimensions, namely **research integration, impact governance, and sustainable communities**.

**WORKSHOP PROGRAMME 18 June**  
*Zoom link tbc one week before the workshop*

**09.15 – 09.30 Registration**

Welcome and Introduction from **Elena Korosteleva**, Principal Investigator, GCRF COMPASS project (University of Kent) & **Irina Petrova**, Postdoctoral Research Associate (University of Kent)

**09.30 - 10.00**

**Nargis Nurulla-Khodzhaeva** (Moscow State University) – ‘Invitations from Sufi-Hamsoya to redefine our common (de-) colonization’  
*Discussant: David Chandler* (University of Westminster)

**10.00 - 10.30**

**Munira Shahidi** (Tajik National University) – ‘Poetics of civil society of Central Asia: original and veiled’  
*Discussants: Prajakti Kalra & Montu Saxena* (University of Cambridge)

**10.30 - 11.00**

**Kavus Abushov & Azer Babaev** (ADA University) – ‘National identity as a challenge for building resilience in Azerbaijan’  
*Discussant: Andrea Gawrich* (Justus Liebig University Giessen)

**11.00 - 11.30**

**Farrukh Salimov** (Tajik National University) & **Diana Kudaibergenova** (University of Cambridge) – “‘I am Tajik!’ Identity, Community and Selfhood among the Tajik Youth’  
*Discussant: Magnus Marsden* (University of Sussex)

**11.30 - 12.00**

**Bahtiyor Eshchanov** (Westminster International University in Tashkent) & **Diana Kudaibergenova** (Cambridge University) – ‘What does a ‘resilient community’ mean? Mahalla, Family, Social Trust and Everyday life in Uzbekistan’  
*Discussant: Fabienne Bossuyt* (Ghent University)

**12.00- 12.30**

**Victor Pravdivets & Anna Markovich** (Belarusian State University) – ‘Belarus between west and east: building resilience under the pressure of time’  
*Discussant: Grigory Ioffe* (Radford University)

**12.30 – 12.45 Concluding remarks**

## ABSTRACTS AND SPEAKERS' INFORMATION

(in an order of appearance on the programme)

**Nargis Nurulla-Khodzhaeva** (Moscow State University) – ‘Invitations from Sufi-Hamsoya to redefine our common (de-)colonization’

A key lesson from the Central Asian past is that people of this crossroads had a clear commitment towards intellectual and religious multiplicity, and tolerance via intensive circulation of ideas and trade. Such a study makes a particular case of modern communitarian aesthetics in which the narrative follows the development of invitations for de(colonization) motivated by philosophical concerns. The invitations coming from prominent Sufis allow representing Islam not as a network of horrifying mujahideens, but as a real and genuine discourse community of resilience and foresight. The topic of decolonization covers our common East-West colonial heritage as well as the colonial contemporaneity. Thus, in addition to Rumi and Nietzsche, the work relies on philosophers of Khorasan, composers of Tajikistan, and modern philosophers of decolonization to build a strong basis for the topic. In these series of invitations through the prism of heritage of the east-west philosophy, one cannot shelter from the Eurocentric western theory, and must take the opportunity to build a common “beyond-Western” project based on the union between *man and world* (by Ibn Sina, in Tajik-Persian, *odam va olam*), premised on many ways of living, and becoming resilient.

**Nargis Nurulla–Khodzhaeva** is a senior researcher at the Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow (Russia), Professor of Lomonosov Moscow State University (Institute of Asian and African Studies) (Russia), and COMPASS project Advisory Board member. Nargis’ research presently focuses on the concept of global resilience and neighboring community of Central Asia. In a Modern time, communities are still powerful intermediaries and intermediary structures. Monographs: *Community in the Central Asian region (Dialectics of traditions and modernization at the beg. of XXI cent.)* (2012); *Gender stereotypes in Central Asia* (2006). Most recent article: [“Temptation” of Michel Foucault and Sufi’s Wanderings of “Historian”](#) (Voprosy Filosofii, 2019 Moscow, Russia).

Contact: nargis.nurulla@gmail.com

**Munira Shahidi** (Tajik National University) – ‘Poetics of civil society of Central Asia: original and veiled’

A new conceptual approach to the Poetics of civil society in Central Asia and Eurasia discusses the problem of marginalization of the basic paradigms of intercultural capacity of Central Asia in the globalizing world. That gap in international affairs is seen, for example, in the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for International transport corridor (ITC). Though FDI is gradually solving the physical and visible problems of isolation of Tajikistan and the other countries of Central Asia inwardly and outwardly, national and regional moral and psychological problems are still covered by the pure economical ambitions of the countries of Central Eurasia. That strategy of intergovernmental relations misses the *human capacity* of the region and beyond. While there is some ‘hidden’ recognition of that capacity, as presented in the scholarship of the

last century's international academic community, as well as by the new forms of novels, theatre and music as an art of communication, the understanding of its contribution to transforming the world is now in danger. The paper will be the first step to offer solutions for fostering *human capacity* as an art of resilience to ensure more sustainable change on local, national, regional and global levels, in their interconnection.

**Professor Munira Shahidi** is GCRF COMPASS National Team Lead for Tajikistan. Munira Shahidi was trained in comparative literary studies of East and West. Her Ph.D. has been made at the Institute of Oriental Studies of AS of USSR. As a member of the Public Council near the President of RT she is involved into the most important discussions and discourses on the developing and changing policies of the country, of the region and inter-regional communications. She is a fellow of the Swedish Institute, Mazon De Science L'Homme (Paris) and she is an ass. member of Cambridge University. Prof Shahidi has published widely in national and international outlets and initiated the publication of the journal 'Fonus', dedicated to international, intercultural study for peace and development, financed by different organisations (including the Swiss office for cooperation in Tajikistan, UNDP, UNESCO and OSCE). Prof Shahidi's project, actualised in 2016 is 'Music of the Silk Road: from peace-building perspectives of Central Asia, dedicated to centenary of the composer Z. Shahidi'. The project is funded by UNESCO and had a feedback of the number of the countries of the New Silk Road.

Contact: [munira@shahidifoundation.com](mailto:munira@shahidifoundation.com)

### **Kavus Abushov & Azer Babaev (ADA University) – 'National identity as a challenge for building resilience in Azerbaijan'**

This paper asks the question why the process of national self-perception and national identification in Azerbaijan has been much more complex and transformative than that in the other post-Soviet countries. Since its independence, different forms of self-identification such as Azerbaijani, Azeri and Azerbaijani Turk, have emerged, both in political and societal discourses that have at times contradicted each other and caused political tensions, although the differences have subsequently been reconciled in the pursuit of a state vision and strategy to facilitate a bonding sense of 'good life' for community-building. The process has been much shaped by the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict, ever closer ethnic relations with Turkey, especially (but not exclusively) in the context of the latter's support for Azerbaijan, the question of Iranian Azerbaijanis, and last but not least, the historical memory of self-identification from the Soviet and pre-Soviet period. Why this process became more uneven and discursive in Azerbaijan than in other post-Soviet countries makes a central puzzle of the current study. Drawing on focus groups and other data, the paper examines the evolution of Azerbaijani identity since independence, to elucidate why and how a particular type emerged, and how it came to dominate the social and political discourses, in the process of alignment with a 'good life' vision. Why there is still ambiguity and variation around the question of national self-perception despite thirty years' independence, what constitutes the 'we' feelings, and what could turn them into 'peoplehood' to make communities more resilient in the pursuit of the significant and proud 'WE' – these are the questions that the present study seeks to answer in

the case of Azerbaijan.

**Dr Kavus Abushov** is COMPASS project research associate in charge of WP5 ‘Community engagement’. He received his PhD in political science from the University of Muenster in Germany and his MA in politics and economics from the Catholic University of Eichstaett-Ingostadt in Germany. He later completed his postdoc at the Center of international Studies at MIT. He has had teaching and research stays at the universities of Glasgow, Muenster, Freiburg, IFSH Hamburg

His research interests include security studies, ethnic civil wars, state-building and political economy with a geographic focus on the post-Soviet space.

Contact: kabushov@ada.edu.az

**Dr Azer Babayev** is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the School of Public and International Affairs, ADA University (Baku); and an affiliate researcher of the COMPASS project. He received his Doctorate in Social Sciences from the University of Mannheim. Prior to joining ADA University, he held a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt. His current research interests are in the areas of peace studies and conflict resolution as well as international democracy promotion, with a focus on the post-Soviet space.

Contact: ababayev@ada.edu.az

**Farrukh Salimov (Tajik National University) & Diana Kudaibergenova (University of Cambridge) – “I am Tajik!” Identity, Community and Selfhood among the Tajik Youth’**

Drawing on the extensive focus groups data conducted all across Tajikistan, this article focuses on the local perceptions of identity and a sense of community among youth. We challenge the perspective of the top-down state-centred approach to identity, and examine the different sources and changing meanings of “community” on the ground in different parts of Tajikistan. How does identity change over time? Moreover, how does the first generation of young people born after the Soviet Union conceptualize their own identity, their country’s place in the world and their own space in the community, state and the wider region? Based on their “second-hand memories” of a distant “Soviet” time and the Tajik civil war which they had never experienced first-hand, what future do they see for their own country and whom they rely on in building that future? This paper provides an in-depth analysis of identities and formal and informal structures to support the youth faced with growing uncertainty, challenges of reform and global change.

**Dr Farrukh Salimov** is Head of the Department of Diplomacy and Foreign Policy of the Tajik National University, member of the Eurasian Association for International Studies (EAMI) Public Foundation (Kazakhstan) (2017), member of the Journalists Union of Tajikistan (2018), and Director of the Centre for Expert and Analytical Studies at TNU (2019). Farrukh is also member of the GCRF COMPASS project at TNU, in charge of ‘Community Engagement’. He is presently developing textbooks in the area of military, cultural and economic diplomacy, methods and technologies of international negotiations, and analysis and forecasting in international relations. Farrukh’s research focuses on the geopolitical and geo-economic

situation in Central Asia, stability and regional security in Central Asia, politics and interests (political, economic and geopolitical) of Russia and China in Central Asia. He is the author of 3 monographs “Regional Stability in the Context of the Central Asian Strategy of Russia and China”, “Cultural Diplomacy” (2019), “Fundamentals of Military Diplomacy” (2019), and numerous articles.

Contact: farrukh.n.salimov@gmail.com

**Dr Diana T. Kudaibergenova** is the COMPASS Postdoctoral researcher responsible for Sustainable Communities work-package of the project. She is a cultural and political sociologist with main research interest in social theory of power and authority. Dr Kudaibergenova studies different intersections of power relations through realms of political sociology dealing with concepts of state, nationalising regimes and ideologies. Diana received her PhD in 2015 from the Department of Sociology, University of Cambridge. Her first book, [Rewriting the Nation in Modern Kazakh literature](#) (Lexington, 2017) deals with the study of nationalism, modernisation and cultural development in modern Kazakhstan. Her second book, based on her doctoral research, focuses on the rise of nationalising regimes in post-Soviet space after 1991 with prime focus on power struggles among the political and cultural elites in democratic and non-democratic states (forthcoming with Pittsburgh University Press).

Contact: dk406@cam.ac.uk

**Bahtiyor Eshchanov** (Westminster International University in Tashkent) & **Diana Kudaibergenova** (Cambridge University) – ‘What does a ‘resilient community’ mean? Mahalla, Family, Social Trust and Everyday life in Uzbekistan’

The deeply-rooted informal institution of Uzbek *mahalla* presents an outstanding case of a local resilient community. While it has been widely covered, the scholarship has often engaged in the descriptive historical and anthropological studies. This contribution suggests taking a different angle and exploring Uzbek resilient communities from the point of view of Sociology and International Relations. Drawing on focus groups and surveys conducted in Uzbekistan, we investigate how the role of *mahalla*, family and communal ties help today’s Uzbekistan transform into a true pivot of Central Asia, and note that social trust remains closely bound to the family rather than outside family institutions. We trace the value of “trust”, belonging to a community, as well as the networks of social trust and its influence on socio-economic lives of the contemporary Uzbek communities – the issues pertinent to the study of identity. The primary data is further analysed to explain how the vision of “good life” is projected into the future and what sort of social relations are perceived as resilient and desirable. The contribution will discuss how identities and perceptions of “good life” contribute to resilience of local communities – *mahallas*, and the society as a whole. Finally, we will situate a resilient community in the context of national and international challenges and explicate the strategies of effective cooperation among these levels.

**Dr Bahtiyor Eshchanov** is Senior Lecturer at the Westminster International University in Tashkent (Uzbekistan), and a COMPASS project research affiliate. Dr Eshchanov received his PhD in Applied Economics at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel in Belgium in 2013. His research

focuses on Economics and International Relations, in particular, Energy Economics, Environmental Economics and Green Economics, as well as the impact of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) on the states of Central Asia. Dr Eshchanov has over 30 publications, including in journals *Sustainability*, *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, *International Journal of Green Economics* etc.

Contact: [beshchanov@wiut.uz](mailto:beshchanov@wiut.uz)

**Victor Pravdivets & Anna Markovich (Belarusian State University) – ‘Belarus between west and east: building resilience under the pressure of time’**

It is often said that Belarus is a kind of bridge between the European West and the Asian East. Both the centuries-old historical development of the entire region and the current geopolitical situation confirm it. Being a multinational country (about 130 ethnic groups live in the republic, according to the 2009 census), Belarus turned out to be one of the few post-Soviet states who succeeded to maintain peace and avoid ethnic conflicts over the past decades. Traditionally, the Belarusian society combines both Orthodoxy and Catholicism, but also is home to Judaism, and Islam. Belarus thus presents a very modern case of resilience and integration of various ethnic groups into a single social-cultural space of forbearance.

Belarusian Tatars is just a case in point. In spite of their small size (a little more than 7 000 people, or 0.08% of the total population), this ethnic group managed to maintain their cultural identity since the time it appeared on the territory of Belarus in late XIV - early XV centuries. Along with it, the Belarusian Tatars are fully socially and culturally integrated into the Belarusian society and have all the opportunities for self-realization.

The article examines the cases of national, regional, local identities and self-identification of various communities in Belarus, to observe how they manage to adapt and survive. It reconstructs and compares the values of the Tatar diaspora vis-à-vis other minorities in Belarus based on the results of focus groups and nation-wide surveys. The article identifies and compares the factors and strategies that contribute to resilience and social integration of the Belarusian society in general, and the Tatar diaspora, in particular to draw broader conclusions about patterns of adaptation and reliance on state-owned or local resources for survival and change.

**Dr Anna Markovich** is Senior Lecturer at the chair of International Journalism of the Faculty of Journalism of Belarusian State University, Minsk. She has been involved as a researcher in a number of international research projects in Belarus, including the FP7, Erasmus+, INTAS studies, projects for the UNFPA, WB and others. Anna specializes in speech communication, discourse studies and mass media research. She is the author and co-author of over 30 research publications in political discourse studies, discourse of integration, construction of social identity and professional identity.

Contact: [annamarkovich@yandex.ru](mailto:annamarkovich@yandex.ru)

**Dr Victor Pravdivets** is Doctor of Sociology, Principal Researcher at the Center for Sociological and Political Research of Belarusian State University, Minsk, and a research



affiliate to the COMPASS project. He is the editor of three books, author of ten chapters in special issues, author of fifteen peer-reviewed research articles in academic journals. His publications cover a range of topics, including combination of methods in sociological research, value studies, problems of stateless persons, environmental issues, sociology of healthcare, sociology of family, sociology of mass media, electoral studies, sociology of youth. Dr Pravdivets has coordinated and participated in dozens of international research projects in Belarus, including the studies for the UNHCR, UNFPA, WB, FP7, which have provided him with relevant experience for analyzing social processes in the modern Belarusian society and its parts. Victor is a designated lead for community engagement under the GCRF COMPASS project.

Contact: [vpravd1@gmail.com](mailto:vpravd1@gmail.com)

## Hosts and discussants' information

### **Elena Korosteleva**

Elena Korosteleva is Professor of International Politics and Jean Monnet Chair of European Politics, at the School of Politics and International Relations, University of Kent. Elena is LSE IDEAS and College of Europe (Natolin) Visiting Professor; executive member of the GLOBSEC IAB and co-founder/ co-director of the Global Europe Centre at Kent. She is the Principal Investigator of the GCRF COMPASS project (2017-21), and Co-I for the H2020 UPTAKE project (2016-19). Elena's research focuses on the concepts of governance; resilience as self-governance; order and capacity-building in wider Eurasia.

Contact: e.korosteleva@kent.ac.uk

### **Irina Petrova**

Dr Irina Petrova is a postdoctoral research associate at the GCRF COMPASS project, University of Kent and a researcher at the Leuven International and European Studies (LINES) Institute at KU Leuven. Her research concentrates on comparative analysis of the EU and Russia's foreign policy strategies and their perceptions in the Eastern Partnership states. Previously Irina worked as a teaching assistant at the European Studies master program at KU Leuven and an adjunct lecturer at Vesalius College, Brussels. She was a research assistant for the H2020 UPTAKE project and Jean Monnet Network "C3EU: Crisis, Conflict and Critical Diplomacy: EU Perceptions in Ukraine, Israel and Palestine," led by the University of Christchurch, New Zealand.

Contact: i.petrova-217@kent.ac.uk

### **David Chandler**

David Chandler is Professor of International Relations at the University of Westminster, Chair of the COMPASS Advisory Board, and the editor of the journal *Resilience: International Policies, Practices and Discourses*. His most recent monographs are *Ontopolitics in the Anthropocene: An Introduction to Mapping, Sensing and Hacking* (Routledge, 2018); *Peacebuilding: The Twenty Years' Crisis: 1997–2017* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); *The Neoliberal Subject: Resilience, Adaptation and Vulnerability* (with Julian Reid; Rowman & Littlefield, 2016); and *Resilience: The Governance of Complexity* (Routledge, 2014).

Contact: D.Chandler@westminster.ac.uk

### **Prajakti Kalra**

Prajakti Kalra is the COMPASS project's events and communications office, and a Research Associate with the Cambridge Central Asia Forum. She has trained as a historian, political scientist and a psychologist. Her interests are in the areas of the history of the Mongol Empire and Central Asia. She has worked extensively on regional and international organisations (OSCE, OIC, SCO, Eurasian Economic Union and the OBOR). Her focus is building avenues of communication and exchanges based on historical precedents and bringing local narratives into global speak in order to best facilitate interaction and knowledge production.

Contact: pk315@cam.ac.uk

### **Montu Saxena**

Dr Siddharth Shanker Saxena is COI of the COMPASS Project, and Director of the Cambridge Central Asia Programme at the University of Cambridge. He trained as an anthropologist, historian and a physicist and holds PhD degrees both in Experimental Physics and Social Anthropology. His research interests are in the areas of religion and identity, knowledge systems, social and political development and institutional history in Central Asia and the Middle East. Dr Saxena has been involved in field based research in Central Asia, the Caucasus, Russia and China. His work focus is, on the one side, in creation of scientific and industrial technology platforms, while on the other in studying social and economic development in Bukhara, Ferghana Valley, Almaty and Azerbaijan. He was awarded a medal for service to education in Kazakhstan and Presidential Medals by Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and was made Honorary Professor by a number of institutions in Eurasia. He serves on science review committees of many European, American and Asian bodies and has created a number of technology start-ups.

Contact: sss21@cam.ac.uk

### **Andrea Gawrich**

Andrea Gawrich is a Professor of International Integration, Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany. She has been Acting Professor at the Universities of Kiel (Germany) and Duisburg-Essen (Germany), and Associate Professor and Researcher at the Universities of Kiel and Bochum (Germany) as well as Eurofaculty Guest Lecturer at the University of Tartu (Estonia). She has worked extensively on European regional organisations, the European integration of post-socialist states, international democracy promotion and authoritarian regimes.

Contact: Andrea.Gawrich@sowi.uni-giessen.de

### **Magnus Marsden**

Magnus Marsden is Professor of Social Anthropology and Director of the Asia Centre at the University of Sussex. His work is centrally concerned with the study of Asia's Muslim societies. Magnus has conducted extensive fieldwork in Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan, as well as with diasporic communities from this region in the Gulf, Eastern Europe, and China. He is the author of *Living Islam: Muslim Religious Experience in Northern Pakistan* (Cambridge, 2005), and *Trading Worlds: Afghan Merchants across Modern Frontiers* (Oxford, 2015). He also jointly authored with B.D Hopkins *Fragments of the Afghan Frontier* (Oxford, 2015) and has co-edited *Anthropological Approaches to Muslim Worlds* (Springer 2013, and *Beyond Swat* (Oxford 2013). He sits on the International Advisory Board of *Central Asian Survey* and the Editorial Board of *Modern Asian Studies*.

Contact: M.Marsden@sussex.ac.uk

### **Fabienne Bossuyt**

Fabienne Bossuyt is Assistant Professor at the Centre for EU Studies at the Department of Political Science at Ghent University (Belgium). She is also an associate researcher at EUCAM. Her main area of expertise is the EU's relations with Central Asia. Her most recent

research projects focus on various aspects of the EU's relations with and policies towards Central Asia and other post-Soviet countries, including development policy, human rights promotion and connectivity. She has published articles in, among others, *Democratization*, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, *Journal of International Relations and Development*, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, *East European Politics & Societies*, and *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. She is currently co-editing a book on the EU-Russia relationship (Brill), as well as a book on the EU's and China's engagement with Central Asia (Routledge). She was involved in the preparation of the EU's new strategy for Central Asia, including as rapporteur for the EU Special Representative for Central Asia.

Contact: [fabienne.bossuyt@ugent.be](mailto:fabienne.bossuyt@ugent.be)

### **Grigory Ioffe**

Professor Grigory Ioffe was born and raised in Moscow, Russia; graduated from Moscow State University as a specialist in human geography, worked at the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences; in 1989, emigrated to the USA; since 1990 has been affiliated with Radford University in Virginia; authored and coauthored 10 books devoted to the former Soviet Union, including *Historical Dictionary of Belarus*, Third Edition (coauthored with Vitali Silitski Jr.), Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield 2018; *Reassessing Lukashenka: Belarus in Cultural and Geopolitical Context*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2014; *Russia and the Near Abroad*, Dubuque, IA: McGraw-Hill Publishers 2010; and *Understanding Belarus and How Western Foreign Policy Misses the Mark*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield 2008 (and 2014, second edition).

Contact: [gioffe@radford.edu](mailto:gioffe@radford.edu)