

**POLICY ANALYSIS  
IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS:  
IN SEARCH OF METHODOLOGICAL  
INNOVATION**

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**CRRC's 5<sup>th</sup> Methodological Conference  
June 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
Tbilisi, Georgia**



# Policy Analysis in the South Caucasus: In Search of Methodological Innovation

CRRC's 5<sup>th</sup> Methodological Conference  
 June 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> 2017, Tbilisi, Georgia  
 Rooms Hotel Tbilisi, 14 Merab Kostava Street

## DAY 1: Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>

09:00 – 09:30	Registration & coffee
09:30 – 09:45	Opening remarks David Lee, Chair of Board, CRRC
09:45 – 11:15	<b>Keynote speech</b> <b>Deliberate ignorance: The dangers of knowing too much too soon</b> Alexis Diamond, Keck Graduate Institute (KGI), San Francisco, CA, USA <b>Discussion</b>
11:15 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 12:30	<b>Session 1.</b> <b>Spatial Patterns of Emerging Inequalities in Tbilisi, Georgia</b> David Sichinava, CRRC-Georgia <b>Post-oil development scenario for Azerbaijan: Urban concentration as a tool for regional development</b> Fuad Jafarli, Khazar University, Baku, Azerbaijan <b>Moderator:</b> Murad Nasibov, CRRC-Azerbaijan <b>Discussant:</b> Suzanne Elisa Harris-Brandts, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA <b>Discussion</b>

12:30 - 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:30	<p><b>Session 2.</b></p> <p><b>Priming gender in a corrupt environment: Evidence from Ukraine</b></p> <p>Aaron Erlich, McGill University, Montreal, Canada</p> <p><b>Intercity transportation safety in Georgia: Research methods and findings</b></p> <p>Giorgi Babunashvili, CRRC-Georgia</p> <p><b>Negative campaigns and the generation of uncertainty and ambivalence: Evidence from a quasi-experiment and lab experiment replication in the Republic of Georgia</b></p> <p>Dustin Gilbreath, CRRC-Georgia</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Koba Turmanidze, CRRC-Georgia</p> <p><b>Discussant:</b> Alexis Diamond, Keck Graduate Institute (KGI), San Francisco, CA, USA</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
15:30 – 15:45	Coffee break
15:45 – 16:45	<p><b>Session 3.</b></p> <p><b>Framing legitimacy: Epistemological approach to study authoritarian legitimation in Azerbaijan</b></p> <p>Sofya Omarova, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK</p> <p><b>Analysis of factors that affect the intentions to migrate from rural areas of Armenia and Georgia: Based on Caucasus Barometer 2015</b></p> <p>Anna Dalaryan, Agribusiness Teaching Center, Yerevan, Armenia</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Heghine Manasyan, CRRC-Armenia</p> <p><b>Discussant:</b> Tamar Zurabishvili, Research and Development Foundation, Telavi, Georgia</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>

16:45 – 17:00	Coffee break
17:00 – 18:00	<p><b>Session 4.</b></p> <p><b>Analysis of data from interviews in mixed methods educational research (MMER): Issues beyond preconceptions</b></p> <p>Sona Balasyan, CRRC-Armenia</p> <p><b>Profiling tax aware citizen using supervised and unsupervised learning</b></p> <p>Naira Vardanyan, CRRC-Armenia</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b> Tinatin Zurabishvili, CRRC-Georgia</p> <p><b>Discussant:</b> Aaron Erlich, McGill University, Montreal, Canada</p> <p><b>Discussion</b></p>
18:30	Dinner

## DAY 2: Saturday, June 24<sup>th</sup>

09:00 – 09:30	Registration & coffee
09:30 – 11:00	<p><b>Parallel Workshops:</b></p> <p><b>Benefits of web surveys, their major advantages and disadvantages</b></p> <p>Tamar Zurabishvili, Research and Development Foundation</p> <p><b>Synthetic controls and genetic matching: Methods for causal inference in non-experimental settings</b></p> <p>Alexis Diamond, Keck Graduate Institute (KGI), San Francisco, CA, USA</p>
11:00 – 11:30	Coffee break
11:30 – 13:00	<p><b>Parallel Workshops:</b></p> <p><b>The open-ended group discussion</b></p> <p>Alexey Levinson, Yuri Levada Analytical Center (Levada Center)</p> <p><b>What does your data tell you – using likelihood profiling and Bayesian integration to put your results in context</b></p> <p>Lucy Flynn, GeoWell Research</p>
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 16:00	<p><b>Parallel Workshops:</b></p> <p><b>Multiple imputation methods</b></p> <p>Aaron Erlich, McGill University, Montreal, Canada</p> <p><b>Sociology and public policy: A case study in the sociology of health</b></p> <p>Roger Penn, Queen’s University Belfast, Belfast, UK</p>
16:00 – 16:15	Concluding remarks by Koba Turmanidze
18:00	Dinner

# Workshops

## **Workshop 1: Sociology and public policy:**

### **A case study in the sociology of health**

**Instructor: Roger Penn, Queen's University Belfast**

This workshop will focus on the application of innovative sociological methods to probe issues in Public Health programmes in Britain. The workshop will focus on three areas of methodological innovation:

1. Operationalising and determining research questions;
2. The collection of data;
3. The use of graphical and advanced statistical modelling to provide guidance to healthcare professionals on how the health service should target its resources to produce improved health outcomes.

The workshop format will be interactive and participants will be encouraged to present their own research plans and to discuss these collectively. The workshop will also emphasise the difference between research reports and academic publications and probe the best strategy to achieve both.

### **About the instructor:**

Dr. Roger Penn is a Professor of Sociology at Queen's University Belfast. He was previously a Professor of Economic Sociology & Statistics at Lancaster University and Visiting Professor at UC Berkeley, UCLA and the University of Bologna. Elected to the Academy of the Social Sciences in 2003, he is currently a Visiting Professor at the International Centre of Research in International Management (ICRIM) at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano. Dr. Penn has authored 14 books, including *Children of International Migrants in Europe*, *Skilled Workers in the Class Structure*; *Class, Power and Technology: Social Statistics*, and *The Statistical Analysis of Continuous Data*.

## **Workshop 2: Web surveys: to do or not to do?**

**Instructor: Tamar Zurabishvili, Research and Development Foundation**

The workshop will familiarize the audience with the major advantages and disadvantages of web surveys, based on a number of case studies. The workshop will introduce when to and when not to use a web survey, differences in questionnaire design between traditional and web based surveys, sampling for web surveys, non-response, and the uses of big (organic) data.

## About the instructor:

Dr. Tamar Zurabishvili is the Director of the Research and Development Foundation. She has MAs in media studies (The New School, New York City, 2005) and sociology (Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences and Manchester University, Moscow, 1999), and a PhD in sociology (Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia, 2008). She has served as a researcher/consultant for the International Center for Migration Policy Development, the International Organization for Migration, the Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development, the European University Institute, the Europe Foundation (former Eurasia Partnership Foundation), and the Innovations and Reforms Center. Tamar has received research scholarships from OSI, Carnegie Foundation and Heinrich Boell Foundation. She regularly publishes both locally and internationally.

### **Workshop 3: The open-ended group discussion - an effective method of research when focus groups are inapplicable**

**Instructor: Alexey Levinson, Yuri Levada Analytical Center (Levada Center)**

Open-ended group discussion is a methodology invented for studies in fields where many of the standard requirements for focus-groups cannot be met. The method is commonly used for research done in rural areas, at workplaces, and in classes among other locations. Based on the presenter's experience with this methodology, it has proven to be especially relevant for policy research. Although the method allows for dialogue with the audience, the scope of the questions that might be discussed is narrower than with focus group discussions. The workshop will discuss the potential of this methodology, and its applicability to policy research in the South Caucasus. Specific cases will be discussed with the audience.

## About the instructor:

Born 03 May 1944 in Moscow. In 1968 graduated from Moscow State University (Oriental History). Postgraduate studies at the Institute of Concrete Social Research, USSR Academy of Science, 1969-1972 (Theoretical Sociology). Ph.D. in sociology of mass recreation industry in 1981. In 1972-1988, worked as a Senior Researcher, then as Head of Sociological Research in several Moscow research organisations. Main fields of research in this period: urbanisation, leisure and recreation, youth culture etc. In 1988 when VCIOM - first Soviet Public Opinion and Market Research Center was founded, joined VCIOM as a researcher. Since 2003 until now works as Head of Sociocultural Research at Yuri Levada Analytical Center. Author and co-author of 4 books on sociology and social anthropology research in Russia. Author of over 200 articles on social and cultural problems in Russian and international magazines. Columnist to Vedomosti newspaper and NZ magazine. Professor at Moscow Higher School of Economics (State Research University).



## **Workshop 4: Synthetic Controls and Genetic Matching: Methods for Causal Inference in Non-Experimental Settings**

**Instructor: Alexis Diamond, Keck Graduate Institute (KGI), San Francisco, USA**

This workshop will introduce participants to Synthetic Controls and Genetic Matching, two methods of causal inference in non-experimental settings that have become increasingly popular in the previous decade. Synthetic Controls is particularly well-suited to problems in which a single geographical unit (a city, state, country, etc.) is effected by an isolated intervention or occurrence, and a suitable comparison group does not exist. Genetic Matching is a general data-processing procedure that reduces bias and model-dependence by facilitating the comparison of treatment and very similar non-treatment units. A basic familiarity with the free statistical software R is recommended but not required (e.g., topics covered in “Intro to R” on DataCamp.org).

### **About the instructor:**

Alexis Diamond (PhD, Harvard) is one of the world’s leading experts on econometric methods in international development and public policy. For a decade, he was technical lead for impact evaluation at the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private-sector development arm of the World Bank, where he worked in more than 30 countries—including fragile and conflict-affected countries in Africa such as Liberia and Democratic Republic of Congo—and supervised a diverse portfolio of more than 50 program evaluations covering entrepreneurship, regulatory reform, infrastructure, and ICT (information and communications technology). While working for the World Bank, he lived for two years in Hanoi, where he was responsible for all of IFC’s results measurement efforts in the East Asia & Pacific region.

Prior to joining IFC, Alexis worked for The Rand Corporation on syndromic surveillance, and for the German Ministry of Labor on a large-scale evaluation of the multi-billion euro Hartz IV job-training reforms. He has lectured on evaluation at universities and international institutions around the world, including the UK’s Department for International Development (DfID) and Harvard University, where he taught the M.A. and PhD-level course on impact evaluation at the JFK School of Government. He twice won the Gosnell Prize for Excellence in Methodology for developing new and rigorous econometric methods applicable to non-experimental settings. These methods (synthetic controls and genetic matching) have become part of the modern econometrics canon, and his synthetic controls paper was among the Journal of the American Statistical Association’s 10 most cited articles from 2009-11. The methods that Alexis has developed are now widely taught in graduate schools and applied by professional economists worldwide. Alexis is currently a visiting professor at the School of Public Policy at Central European University in Budapest and an associate professor at Minerva Schools at Keck Graduate Institute (KGI) in San Francisco.

## **Workshop 5: What does your data tell you? Using likelihood profiling and Bayesian integration to put your results in context**

**Instructor: Lucy Flynn, GeoWel Research**

When we conduct a study and write an academic paper, we contradict ourselves. While we begin with a literature review of all the relevant studies previously conducted on the subject, we then go on to analyze our own data as though it were the only pertinent information in the world. This workshop will introduce a number of concepts in Bayesian thought that help address this issue including likelihood profiling and Bayesian integration. To do so, the workshop will use a hypothetical program evaluation example, where there are multiple sources of information about program effects on an indicator of interest (agricultural output, income, households' ability to purchase food, etc.). We'll work through a simplified example of how to integrate the information from all of the available data sources to produce the most informed estimate of the program's impact on a given indicator.

### **About the instructor:**

Lucy is a statistical ecologist, who gained the majority of her experience working on sockeye salmon in Alaska. Since moving to Georgia she has been focused on complex survey design, and on teaching the concepts necessary to draw representative samples within the country. Her areas of interest are sample design, sample selection, and data analysis; ecology and harvest management policy; statistical methods and mathematical modeling; and interactive teaching methodologies.

## **Workshop 6: Multiple imputation**

**Instructor: Aaron Erlich, MacGill University, Montreal, Canada**

Data with systematically missing values can lead to biased inferences. A recently published paper in *Political Analysis* has called into question many of the findings of top International Relationship journals on the basis of re-running all of the analyses after imputing missing data. This workshop introduces participants to the concept of multiple imputation and several of the main techniques used to impute values in data with missingness.

### **About the instructor:**

Dr. Aaron Erlich is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at McGill University, where he is a founding member of a new interdisciplinary center for the study of informatics and a member of the Centre for the Study of Democracy Citizenship (CSDC). He has been involved in public opinion polling and randomized control trials across the former Soviet Union and eastern and southern Africa. Before returning to complete his Ph.D., Dr. Erlich lived and worked in Georgia for four years. As part of his dissertation project, Dr. Erlich interviewed over one hundred Georgian politicians about how they view public opinion polling and their own strategic environment. His academic work has appeared in such venues as *American Political Science Review* and *Comparative Political Studies*.



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