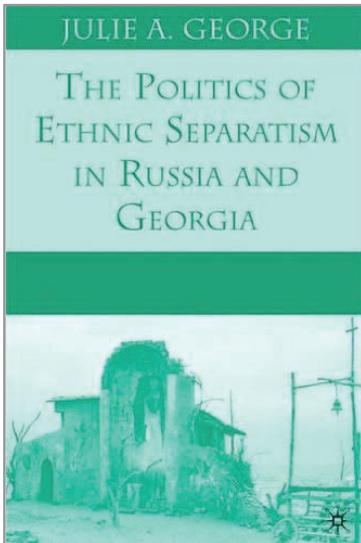


Faculty Profiles

In this issue, we provide an introduction to a few of our newest Graduate Center consortial faculty.



Julie George is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Queens College, and a new Consortial Faculty member here at The Graduate Center in the fall of 2015. George published [*The Politics of Ethnic Separatism in Russia and Georgia*](#) in 2009 with Palgrave-MacMillan.

By Elizabeth Newcomer

Elizabeth: Tell us a little about your work and how you arrived at your specialization.

Julie: My specialty is post-communist politics, ethnic and national identity, ethnic conflict, state-building, democratization, and secession. My expertise is mostly on Georgia, but I also write about Russia, Moldova, and the Caucasus. I started as a Russia scholar but in studying democratization and ethnic

conflict, methodologically I wanted variation, where there were similar cases that ended in war and others that didn't, so I added Georgia. It's so fruitful for doing research and open to scholars, that I ended up staying there.

E: What kind of ethnic politics are at work in Russia's annexation of Crimea and the situation in Eastern Ukraine?

J: I actually don't think ethnic politics has much to do with it at all. It's more of a political divide that gets expressed in ethnic/nationalist terms, as many do. The underlying issues are more base than that, primarily power and money. From Russia's perspective, Putin wants to expand his influence in the region and take back areas of the USSR. And a Western-oriented Ukraine is very threatening to that project.

E: Do you have any predictions as to what's going to happen in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine?

J: If it parallels Russia's behavior in Moldova and Georgia, we can expect them to maintain and perhaps move military bases in Crimea (the Navy is already there) and the statelet areas of Eastern Ukraine. Once the conflict stabilizes, we'll see these areas maintain autonomy with Russian support. They'll remain on the "map" with Ukraine, though they'll be ungovernable from Kiev. Obviously with Russia claiming Crimea, Putin has won there, whereas in eastern Ukraine Russia probably won't make a claim to them. There will be no real resolution, and Russia's interests are served fine without one.

E: You're the new Institutional Review Board (IRB) advisor for the department. What is the most important thing students should know about the IRB process?

J: What IRB does is apply federal regulations to human subjects research. There is an official resource here at the GC – the HRPP, and anyone who needs IRB approval should speak with them as well. My goal is to demystify the process. Many people don't understand the IRB's mission or purpose. IRB helps people craft studies that keep human subjects in mind. No one wants to hurt subjects or put anyone in danger, and the IRB can help researchers design projects that mitigate risk.

E: Do you have any gems of wisdom to share from your international fieldwork?

J: I highly recommend fieldwork. It's very inefficient and it's the hardest work to do, in a way. But it's very rewarding. Physically traveling the country informs my work as much as the quantitative evidence I offer. But it's a style of work that is bittersweet. It disrupts your family life. When I was a graduate student, I didn't realize what I was committing my life to. I don't think I would've changed it, but I would've liked to know. It's exciting of course, and I'm very lucky to be able to do the things I do. But I wish it had come with a warning sticker.



Dr. Julie George
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