

Leila Wilmers

Department of Sociology
Cornell University
Ithaca NY 14853
+1-607-391-5558
lw738@cornell.edu

Postdoctoral associate working across the disciplines of sociology and human geography with interests in nationalism, nation building, identity, diaspora, collective memory and qualitative methods, and a focus on the post-Soviet region. Strong track record of peer-reviewed publications, securing funds and undergraduate teaching. Broader fields of interest for teaching include political geography, political sociology, nations and nationalism, peace and conflict, politics of memory, contemporary Russia, post-Soviet states and societies, qualitative research methods.

Academic Positions

Postdoctoral Associate, Department of Sociology, Cornell University (2021-)

Education

Ph.D. Human Geography, Loughborough University, 2020

Dissertation: *Nationalism as an Engaged Ideology: Negotiating Dilemmas of National Continuity in Russia* (Committee members: Marco Antonsich and Sabina Mihelj)

M.A. International Development: Social Policy and Social Development, University of Manchester, 2010

B.A. (Hons) Modern and Medieval Languages, Newnham College, University of Cambridge, 2007

Publications

Journal articles

Wilmers, L., “Is it really diversity when you can’t study your native language in school?': Negotiating the discourse of a multi-ethnic Russian people from below', *Europe-Asia Studies* (forthcoming)

Wilmers, L. (2023) 'Angharad Closs Stephens (2022) National Affects: The Everyday Atmospheres of Being Political. London: Bloomsbury Academic', *Journal of Language and Politics*, <https://doi.org/10.1075/jlp.23073.wil>

Wilmers, L. (2022) 'How we engage the principles of nationalism in making sense of uncertainty and disruptive social change', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 45:14, pp 2705-2725

Wilmers, L. (2022) 'The local dynamics of nation building: Identity politics and constructions of the Russian nation in Kazan and Ekaterinburg', *Nationalities Papers*, 51:2, pp258-279

Wilmers, L. and Chernobrov, D. (2020) 'Growing up with a long-awaited nation-state: Personal struggles with the homeland among young diasporic Armenians', *Ethnicities* 20:3, pp 520-543

Chernobrov, D. and Wilmers, L. (2020) 'Diaspora identity and a new generation: Armenian diaspora youth on the genocide and the Karabakh war', *Nationalities Papers* 48:5, pp 915 - 930

Book chapters

Antonsich, M., Sotiropoulou, P., Wilmers, L., Zhaxi, C., Hyde, S. (2019) "'Our Nation's Future": Youth visions of a post-Brexit Britain' in *Youth and the Politics of the Present: Coping with Complexity and Ambivalence*, eds: Enzo Colombo and Paola Rebughini, Routledge

Manuscripts in preparation

Wilmers, L., *Ambivalent Nationhood: Homelands, peoples, the state and belonging in Putin's Russia* (Monograph)

Wilmers, L., 'Nationalism and Geography', *The Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, Barney Wharf (ed.)

Media and Public Outreach

Cornell Chronicle (2022) 'People rethink nationalist beliefs in uncertain times', <https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2022/03/people-rethink-nationalist-beliefs-uncertain-times>

San Francisco Chronicle (2022) 'Their home countries are at war. But this Bay Area couple are united by their Ukrainian and Russian roots', <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Their-home-countries-are-at-war-But-this-Bay-16978773.php>

'Re-Imagining Citizenship Activity Book' (2019), produced with Loughborough University Politicized Practice Research Group, exhibited at Venice Biennale 2019, living archive: <https://www.re-imagining.org/>

Impact analysis for Loughborough University (2018), 'Watching Socialism' exhibition, Wende Museum, Los Angeles

Impact analysis for Loughborough University (2017), 'Currency of Communism' exhibition, British Museum, London

'Our Nation's Future: Loughborough Youth Creative Visions' exhibition and public discussion event (2017), with Loughborough University Nationalism Network

Grants and Awards

Society for the Humanities, Cornell University, interdisciplinary monograph writing group award, \$5000 (2022)

Qualitative and Interpretive Research Institute, Cornell University, faculty working group grant, \$2500 (2021)

Royal Geographical Society, Dudley Stamp Memorial Award, £500 (2018)

T S Shipman Prize for development of co-operation and aid between Loughborough University and the local community (2018)

Postgraduate Prize, Ede and Ravenscroft, £1500 (2017)

ESRC Festival of Social Science, Outreach project grant, £1000 for university-community partnership event 'Our Nation's Future: Loughborough Youth Creative Visions' (2017)

Loughborough University, PhD Studentship, £42,888 (2017-2020)

Institute of Armenian Studies, University of Southern California, project grant, \$4500 (2016)

Invited Talks

Kings College London (Russia Institute, 2023) 'The Politics of Existential Threat and the Myth of National Resilience in Russia'

Cornell University (Inequality Discussion Group, Department of Sociology, 2021) 'The local dynamics of nation building: Place-based identity politics in non-governmental actors' narratives of the Russian nation'

Armenian Institute, UK (2020) 'Diaspora identity and a new generation: How today's diasporic Armenian youth re-negotiate past traumas relating to notions of homeland'

International Alert, UK (2019) 'Diasporic engagement with the Karabakh conflict among young Armenians in the digital age'

University of Birmingham, UK (Geography, 2018) 'Narratives of continuity in times of change: Constructions of the nation in two post-Soviet Russian cities'

Ural Federal University, Russian Federation (Applied Sociology, Ekaterinburg, 2018) 'Continuity and change in narratives of the nation'

Conferences and Panel Presentations

Panel: *The War in Ukraine: Assessing Paths to Peace* (Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, Cornell University, (2023), 'How are ethnic politics evolving within Russia?'

Panel: *Nationalism Unsettled* (Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, Cornell University, 2023), 'The myth of national resilience and non-statist imaginaries of the Russian nation'

ASN World Convention (2023) 'The myth of national resilience and non-statist imaginaries of the Russian nation'

AAG Annual Convention (2023) 'Nation building and the diverse city: negotiating the Russian state's discourse of multiethnic nationhood'

ASEEES Annual Convention (2022) 'Precarity and Resilience in Dilemmas of the Russian National Imaginary'

ASN World Convention (2022) 'Russia's ethnic diversity in vernacular discourse: Insights from a multi-ethnic city'

ASA Annual Virtual Meeting (2021) 'Dilemmas of nationalism in contexts of social change: Negotiating national continuity and progress in Russia'

ASN World Convention (2021) 'The local dynamics of nation building: Place-based identity politics in non-governmental actors' narratives of the Russian nation'

ASN World Convention (2020) 'Narrating the unity and continuity of the Russian nation in Kazan, Tatarstan' (convention cancelled due to COVID-19)

BASEES Annual Conference (2019) 'The politics of temporal continuity in personal constructions of the nation in Russia'

Durham University Symposium Nationalism, Ethnicity and Cultural Diversity in the Digital Age (2019), 'Digital media in diasporic relations with the homeland among young Armenians'

ASEN workshop Diaspora Nationalism (2018), 'The diasporic homeland and growing up with a new nation-state in the globalised age: Perspectives of Armenians in France, Russia and the UK'

Royal Geographic Society Annual International Conference (2018), 'Narratives of continuity in landscapes of change: Personal perspectives on the nation in two post-soviet Russian cities'

Loughborough University Nationalism Network International Postgraduate Research Conference Nations and Nationalisms: Theories, Practices and Methods (2018), 'Narratives of continuity in landscapes of change: Perspectives on the nation in two post-soviet Russian cities'

UCL SSEES International Postgraduate Conference (2018), 'On the Ground in the Post-Soviet Search for the Russian Nation'

University of Durham Ustinov Annual Conference Global Citizenship, Nationalism and New Paradigms, (2017), 'Being Russian in times of change: Exploring feelings of continuity about the nation in flux'

Loughborough University Doctoral College Annual Research Conference (2017), 'Diversity, nation and narratives of continuity: urban citizen perspectives on Russia and its people'

Royal Geographical Society Mid-Term Conference (2017), 'Being Russian in times of change: Exploring feelings of continuity about the nation in flux'

University of Sheffield Postgraduate Conference on Migration (2017), 'Being Russian in times of change: Exploring feelings of continuity about the nation in flux'

Teaching

Nationalism and Identity (SOC3170, GOVT3174), Cornell University, Spring 2022 and 2023 (12-15 students each time), course instructor

Qualitative Research Methods, Loughborough University, Fall 2017 and 2018 (60 students each time), TA for course instructors Jessica Robles and Florence Kinnaffick

Russia in a Global Context, Birmingham University, Fall 2018 (20 students), guest lecture, course instructor Paul Richardson

Geographies of Global Economic Change, Loughborough University, Fall 2018 (30 students), guest instructor for 2 seminars, course instructors Sophie Cranston and Marco Antonsich

Professional Development

Associate Fellow of the UK Higher Education Academy (2019)

Cornell Graduate School NextGen Professors Program, academic career development for advancing diversity, inclusion, access, and equity in academia (2021-22)

Service

Panel chair, Association of Study of Nationalities Annual Convention (2023)

Presenter, Cornell QuIRI seminar on qualitative research exchange and small grants (2023)

Evaluator, Mario Einaudi Center Research Travel Grants, Cornell University (2023)

Interview Committee member, Fulbright Program, Cornell University (2021, 2022)

Chair, Nationalism and Identity Working Group for interdisciplinary research exchange, Cornell University (2021-2023)

Ad hoc journal reviewer: *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Ethnicities*, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, *Globalizations*, *Social Currents* (2021-)

Panel chair, Historical-Comparative Section roundtable, ASA Virtual Annual Meeting, (2021)

Training Facilitator, Loughborough University, postgraduate training on ethnography (2019)

Co-organizer, Loughborough University Nationalism Network International Postgraduate Research Conference on Nations and Nationalism (2018)

Co-chair, postgraduate session sponsored by the Political Geography Research Group at the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) Annual Conference (2018)

Postgraduate Representative, RGS Political Geography Research Group (2017-18)

Discussant, Loughborough University Nationalism Network seminar on 'Annexation of Crimea and Lingering Question of Crimean Tatars' (2017)

Current Memberships

American Association of Geographers

Association for the Study of Nationalities

Association for Slavonic, East European and Eurasian Studies

Selected Work Experience

Research Development Officer, Social Sciences, University of Sheffield (2016-17)

Senior Program Design and Assessment Officer, International Alert, London (2014-2016)

Project Officer, International Alert, London (2012-2014)

Trusts Relationship Manager, Tzedek, London (2011-2012)

Program/Fundraising Assistant, MiraMed, Moscow (2007-2009)

Language Skills

Fluent Russian and Spanish, advanced French

References

Mabel Berezin
Cornell University
mabel.berezin@cornell.edu
Postdoctoral mentor

Sabina Mihelj
Loughborough University
s.mihelj@lboro.ac.uk
PhD advisor

Dmitry Chernobrov
University of Sheffield
d.chernobrov@sheffield.ac.uk
Collaborator on Armenian diaspora research project

Irina Troconis
Cornell University
irt23@cornell.edu
Fellow member of Cornell nationalism and identity research exchange group, teaching observer