

**Michele E. Commercio**  
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### **Academic Appointments**

- Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Vermont, September 2012-
- Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Vermont, September 2006-August 2012
- Visiting Research Fellow, Christopher H. Browne Center for International Politics, University of Pennsylvania, September 2005-May 2006
- Postdoctoral Fellow, Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies, Georgetown University, August 2004-May 2005

### **Education**

- Ph.D. 2004 University of Pennsylvania, Political Science
- M.Sc. 1995 London School of Economics and Political Science, Comparative Politics
- M.A. 1994 University of Connecticut, Soviet and East European Studies
- B.A. 1991 Boston College, Political Science, *Magna Cum Laude*

**Fields of Specialization:** Post-Communist Politics, Nationalism, Gender, and Islam

**Work in Progress:** I am working on a book manuscript concerning polygyny in Kyrgyzstan.

### **Publications**

*Russian Minority Politics in Post-Soviet Latvia and Kyrgyzstan: The Transformative Power of Informal Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

### **Peer-Reviewed Articles**

“Structural Violence and Horizontal Inequalities: Conflict in Southern Kyrgyzstan,” 2017, *Politics, Groups, and Identities*. DOI: 10.1089/21565503.2017.1301822.

“Otincharlar – ‘Truly’ Muslim?” in “Book Discussions: Svetlana Peshkova, Women, Islam, and Identity: Public Life in Private Spaces in Uzbekistan” *Central Asian Affairs* 3 (2016): 77-93. DOI: 10.1163/22142290-00301004.

“The Politics and Economics of ‘Retraditionalization’ in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan,” *Post-Soviet Affairs*, 31, 6 (2015): 529-556. DOI: 10.1080/1060586X.2014.986870.

“Emotion and Blame in Collective Action: Russian Voice in Kyrgyzstan and Latvia,” *Political Science Quarterly*, 124, 3 (Fall 2009): 489-512.

“Systems of Partial Control: Ethnic Dynamics in Post-Soviet Estonia and Latvia,” *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 43, 1 (January 2008): 81-100.

“Exit in the Near Abroad: The Russian Minorities in Latvia and Kyrgyzstan,” *Problems of Post-Communism*, 51, 6 (November/December 2004): 23-32.

“The ‘Pugachev Rebellion’ in the Context of Post-Soviet Kazakh Nationalization,” *Nationalities Papers*, 32, 1 (March 2004): 87-113.

### **Book Chapters**

“A Woman Without a Man is a Kazan Without a Lid: Polygyny in Tajikistan,” in Marlene Laruelle, ed., *Tajikistan on the Move: Statebuilding and Societal Transformations* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2018): 171-192.

### **Book Reviews**

2017. “Azan on the Moon: Entangling Modernity Along Tajikistan’s Pamir Highway,” by Till Mostowlansky, reviewed in *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review*,

2013. “Chaos, Violence, Dynasty: Politics and Islam in Central Asia,” by Eric McGlinchey, reviewed in *Slavic Review*, Spring 2013: 202-203.

1998. “Time and Revolution: Marxism and the Design of Soviet Institutions,” by Stephen E. Hanson, reviewed in *Newsletter, the American Political Science Association’s Organized Section in Comparative Politics*, 9, no.2 (Summer, 1998): 22-23.

### **Additional Publications**

“Conflict in Kyrgyzstan?” Occasional Paper #286, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, May 2004: 1-16.

### **Grants: PI for and sole recipient of the following grants\*** Indicates peer-review selection process

- University of Vermont, Louis Rakin Foundation Grant, 2018 (\$2,000.00)
- University of Vermont, Asian Studies Seybolt Award, 2018 (\$2,500.00)
- \*University of Vermont, Joan Smith Faculty Research Award, 2017 (\$7,000.00)
- \*University of Vermont, Humanities Center Summer Research Award, 2015 (\$5,000.00)
- \*University of Vermont, Small Grant Research Award, 2015 (\$3,000.00)
- University of Vermont, Louis Rakin Foundation Grant, 2015 (\$3,000.00)
- \*IREX: International Research and Exchange Board, Short-Term Travel Grant, 2013 (airfare plus \$2,025.00)
- \*APSA: American Political Science Association, Small Research Grant, 2013 (\$2,100.00)
- \*NCEEER: National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, Travel Grant, 2013 (\$3,000.00)
- \*University of Vermont, RANSS Research Award for the Natural and Social Sciences, 2013 (\$2,500.00)
- \*University of Vermont, REACH Grant Award, 2013 (\$5,000.00)
- University of Vermont, Louis Rakin Foundation Grant, 2013 (\$4,000.00)
- \*IREX: International Research and Exchange Board, Short-Term Travel Grant, Summer 2008
- \*APSA: American Political Science Association, Small Research Grant, Summer 2008
- \*NCEEER: National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, Travel Grant, Summer 2005 (research conducted Summer 2007)

- \*IREX: International Research and Exchange Board, Short-Term Travel Grant, Summer 2005
- University of Pennsylvania, School of Arts and Sciences Dissertation Fellowship, 2001-2002
- \*USIP: United States Institute of Peace, Peace Scholar Dissertation Fellowship, 2000-2001
- Middlebury College, The Russian School, Middlebury Grant, 1999
- \*David L. Boren Graduate Fellowship, 1999
- \*NSF: National Science Foundation Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant, 1999
- \*IIE: Institute of International Education, Professional Development Fellowship, 1999
- \*USIP: United States Institute of Peace, Peace Scholar Dissertation Fellowship, 1999 (Declined)
- Ford Foundation, Pre-Dissertation Fellowship related to *Problematics of States and Identities*, a workshop held at the University of Pennsylvania, 1997

### **University Service**

Russian East European Studies, Director (September 2014-)  
 Boren Scholarships Committee (2014, 2015)  
 REACH Scholarship Committee (2014)  
 College Honors Committee (2008-2011)  
 Fulbright Scholarship Committee (2015)

### **Department Service**

Self-Assessment Committee – 2016-2017  
 International Relations Prize Committee – 2013-2016  
 Ad hoc committee on advising – 2013  
 Comparative Politics Prize Committee - 2012  
 International Relations Search Committee – 2011, 2015  
 Curriculum Committee – 2011

### **Academic Service**

Editorial Board, *Government and Opposition* – 2014-

Reviewed tenure file – University of New Hampshire – 2014

Anonymous referee: *Perspectives on Politics* (2018), *Problems of Post-Communism* (2018), *Religion, State, & Society* (2017), *Nationalities Papers* (2016), *Post-Soviet Affairs* (2016), *Social Sciences* (2016), *Central Asian Survey* (2016), *Cornell University Press* (Spector manuscript, 2015), *Slavic Review* 2015, *Central Asian Affairs* 2015, *Government and Opposition* 2014, *Problems of Post-Communism* 2014, 2012, *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 2011, *Political Research Quarterly* 2010, *Comparative Politics* 2009, *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 2008, *Nationalities Papers* 2008, 2007, *Comparative Political Studies* 2003

Association for the Study of Nationalism (ASN)

Program Committee Chair, Eurasia Section 2006-2008, 2012-  
 Advisory Board Member, 2013-  
 Huttenbach Prize Committee, 2017-

Central Eurasian Studies Society (CESS): Graduate Paper Award Committee 2018

Grant Proposal Reviewer: American Council Title VIII Research Program 2017; National Science Foundation 2006; United States Institute of Peace 2005.

### **Public Service – Interviews**

University: WCAX Television Interview, April 17, 2014; *UVM Today*, April 2, 2014; "Ukraine and the Crimean Crisis - Teach In and Panel Discussion" March 26, 2014

National: *Voice of America in Washington*, 2014; *Foreign Policy*, August 3, 2010; *Council on Foreign Relations*, June 23, 2010

International: *Correio Braziliense* April 8, 2014; *El Mercurio*, June 24, 2010; *Milliyet*, June 18, 2010

### **Invited Presentations/Conferences**

- Invited Participant: Workshop on Women and Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia (organized by George Washington University's Central Asia Program, IERES), Washington D.C., October 2018.
- Invited Participant: Conference on Tajikistan: Approaches, Fieldwork, and Topics (organized by the Swedish Institute of International Affairs and the George Washington University's Central Asian Program (CAP), Stockholm, June 2016.
- The Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, Elliot School of International Affairs, George Washington University, *The Rise of Polygamy in Kyrgyzstan: A Consequence of the Country's Post-Soviet Islamic Revival?* April 2016
- Elder Education Enrichment, *Women's Activism in Kyrgyzstan*: February 2015
- Invited Discussant: Conference on Informal Practices and Structures in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, University of Fribourg (Switzerland), 2013
- Unitarian church of Lincoln Nebraska, Winter Lecture Series on Russia and the post-Soviet States: January 2011: declined invitation due to pregnancy
- Elder Education Enrichment, *Muslim Women in Central Asia*: February 2009
- Elder Education Enrichment, *The Russian Question in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan*: September 2008
- Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (Dushanbe, Tajikistan), *Diverging and Converging Experiences of the Russian Minorities in Post-Communist Central Asia*, 28 June 2007
- Kennan Institute, *Exit and Voice in the Near Abroad: Russian Minority Populations in Kyrgyzstan and Latvia*: March 2005
- Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, *Baltic Accession to the EU and Russian Residents of the Baltic States*: September 2005
- Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies, Georgetown University, Fifteenth Annual Nava'i Lecture in Central Asian Studies, *Kazakhstan's Pugachev Rebellion: Ethnic Russians in Central Asia*: December 2004
- U.S. Department of State, Conference on ethnic Russians in the former Soviet Union, *The Impact of Ethnic Russians on Kazakhstani and Kyrgyzstani Domestic Politics*: 2002

### **Conference Papers: Peer-reviewed selection method**

- Central Eurasian Studies Society, October 2018: *Women's Activism in Kyrgyzstan*
- Association for the Study of Nationalities, May 2017: *Polygynous Marriages in Kyrgyzstan: a route to gender violence or gender respectability?*
- Central Eurasian Studies Society, November 2016: *Second Wives in Kyrgyzstan: The Role of Agency in Polygynous Marriages*.
- Central Eurasian Studies Society, October 2015: *The Rise of Polygyny in Kyrgyzstan: A consequence of the country's post-Soviet Islamic revival?*
- Association for the Study of Nationalities, April 2015: *Polygyny and Islam in Kyrgyzstan: A view from the inside*

- Association for the Study of Nationalities, April 2013: *Retraditionalization in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: rejected by elites, embraced by young women*
- Association for the Study of Nationalities, April 2011: *Creating a Replica of the Ideal Soviet Woman in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*
- Association for the Study of Nationalities, April 2008: *Women's Proclivity Toward Islamic Education in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: A Backlash Against Communist Gender Equality?*
- American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, November, 2007: *The Role of Islam in Identity Formation: Education Policy in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*
- American Political Science Association, September 2007: *The Role of Islam in Identity Formation: Education Policy in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*
- Association for the Study of Nationalities, April 2007: *The Role of Islam in Identity Formation: Education Policy in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan*
- American Political Science Association, September 2005: *The Legacies of Soviet Nationality Politics and Divergent Patterns of Post-Soviet Ethno-Political Mobilization: Russian Minorities in the Baltics and Central Asia*
- The Association for the Study of Nationalities, April 2005: *Will the Russians Rebel? The Absence of Conflict in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan*
- Kennan Institute, 2003, Workshop: *Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Conflict in the Former Soviet Union*
- American Political Science Association, September 2003: *Minority Responses to the Collapse of the Soviet Union: The Russian Diaspora in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Latvia*
- Association for the Study of Nationalities, April 2003: *Secession, Autonomy, or Passivity in Central Asia: The Odd Case of the Pugachev Rebellion in Ust'-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan*
- Association for the Study of Nationalities, April 2002: *From Settlers to Immigrants? Russian Emigration from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Latvia*
- American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, November, 2002: *Nation-Building and its Effects on the Russian Populations of Kyrgyzstan and Latvia*

### Field Research

- Research on polygyny: 2018 (Kyrgyzstan: Bishkek)
- Research on polygyny: 2015 (Kyrgyzstan: Bishkek, Osh)
- Research on 'the woman's question:' 2013 (Kyrgyzstan: Bishkek)
- Research on women and Islamic education: 2007, 2008 (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan)
- Follow-up dissertation research: 2005 (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Latvia)
- Dissertation research: 1999-2000 (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Latvia)
- Pre-dissertation research: 1997 (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan)
- Initial visit to Central Asia: 1994 (Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan)
- Extensive travel throughout the former Soviet Union: 1991-2001  
Russia, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan

**Languages:** Russian, professional fluency

### Teaching Experience

- **Department of Political Science, University of Vermont**  
Courses taught: Introduction to International Relations, Politics and Society in the Russian Federation, Central Asian Politics, Post-Soviet Ethnic Conflict
- **Center for Eurasian, Russian and East European Studies, Georgetown University**

Courses taught: Nationalism and Ethnicity in Post-Soviet Conflicts, Contemporary Central Asian Politics

- **Christopher H. Browne Center for International Politics, University of Pennsylvania**

Courses taught: International Politics, Russian Politics, Introduction to Comparative Politics, Post-Soviet Ethnic Conflict

### **Consulting Work: Expert Witness for the following political asylum cases**

**2017** Provided affidavit regarding country conditions in Tajikistan for attorney Benjamin Wiesinger, who represented an individual from Tajikistan seeking political asylum on the basis of political persecution resulting from on-line activities occurring in the U.S.

**2015** Provided affidavit regarding country conditions in Ukraine for attorney Arif Haque, who represented a family from Ukraine seeking political asylum on the basis of anti-Semitism persecution.

Provided affidavit regarding country conditions in Uzbekistan for attorney Alexey Tarasov, who represented a family from Uzbekistan seeking political asylum on the basis of criminal accusations made by the Uzbek state against a relative.

**2013** Provided affidavit regarding country conditions in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan for attorney Donald Brown, who represented a Kazakh Christian woman seeking political asylum on the basis of religious persecution.

Provided affidavit regarding country conditions in Tajikistan for attorney Mike Usher, who represented a Tajik family seeking asylum on the basis of religious persecution.

**2011** Provided affidavit regarding country conditions in Turkmenistan for attorney Gilyana Bovaeva, who represented a gay man seeking political asylum on the basis of sexual orientation persecution.

Provided affidavit regarding country conditions in Tajikistan for attorney Murat Berdyev, who represented a husband and wife seeking asylum on the basis of ethnic minority persecution.

Provided affidavit and oral testimony regarding country conditions in Kyrgyzstan for attorney Murat Berdyev, who represented a Kyrgyz woman seeking asylum on the basis of domestic violence.

Provided affidavit and oral testimony regarding country conditions in Uzbekistan for attorney Murat Berdyev, who represented an Uzbek woman seeking asylum on the basis of domestic violence.

**2010** Provided affidavit and oral testimony regarding country conditions in Uzbekistan for attorney Murat Berdyev, who represented a Russian couple from Uzbekistan seeking political asylum.

**2009** Provided affidavit and oral testimony regarding country conditions in Uzbekistan for attorney Andre Sobolevsky, who represented a Russian from Uzbekistan seeking political asylum.

- 2008** Provided affidavit regarding country conditions in Kyrgyzstan for attorney Lisa Hurlbutt, who represented a Russian from Kyrgyzstan seeking political asylum.
- 2007** Provided affidavit regarding country conditions in Estonia for attorney Matthew Baxter, who represented a Russian lesbian from Estonia seeking political asylum.
- 2006** Provided affidavit and oral testimony in New York City regarding country conditions in Latvia for a political asylum case presented by attorney Dan Pell.
- 2005** Provided affidavit regarding country conditions in Latvia for attorney H. Raymond Fasano, who represented a Russian from Latvia seeking political asylum.
- Provided affidavit and oral testimony in New York City regarding country conditions in Uzbekistan for a political asylum case presented by attorney Andre Sobolevsky.
- Provided affidavit and oral testimony in New York City regarding country conditions in Uzbekistan for a political asylum case presented by attorney Andre Sobolevsky.
- 2004** Provided affidavit regarding country conditions in Uzbekistan for attorney Albert C. Lum, who represented a Meskhetian Turk from Uzbekistan seeking political asylum.

#### **Professional Association Memberships**

- American Political Science Association
- Association for the Study of Nationalities
- Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies
- Central Eurasian Studies Society