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Bundesministerium  
für Bildung  
und Forschung



## Azerbaijan: The three dimensions of national territory

Talk by

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*The event is part of the project Resilience in the South Caucasus: prospects and challenges of a new EU foreign policy concept – JENA-CAUC<sup>1</sup>*  
(<https://www.kaukasiologie.uni-jena.de/jena-cauc/about>)

12 May 2022, 4pm  
Online Event in English

In this talk, I will discuss my previous and current work on identity and territory in Azerbaijan. I begin with the role of borders, using the example of the Azerbaijani-Russian border in the relations with Lezgins, a transborder ethnic group residing in Azerbaijan and Russia (Dagestan). I will then discuss Azerbaijan's efforts at territorialization of the Caspian Sea in the process of Caspian delimitation. Drawing on the concept of resource nationalism, I show how Azerbaijan tried to frame Caspian Sea delimitation in terms of national sovereignty. While only partially successful, this territorialisation of the sea was another element in building a three-dimensional national territory.

In the last part of the talk, I will discuss my current work on the imaginaries of oil in Azerbaijan. Taking the catchphrase 'the Land of Fire' as my point of departure, I will show how in Azerbaijan the spatialities of natural resources and national territory intersect and become expressed in the urban landscape of Baku. This 'petro-spatial complex' often combines representations of fire as a manifestation of subterranean resources and the representations of the nation and political power of the state. Temporally, the petro-spatial complex is projected both onto the immemorial past of Zoroastrianism and the uncertain future of Azerbaijani nationhood.

### Registration and more information:

[https://uni-jena-de.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5lodeCqrz8qGNDXakqe9pQwtQKY\\_0MucxHq](https://uni-jena-de.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5lodeCqrz8qGNDXakqe9pQwtQKY_0MucxHq)

**Bio:** Dr Leyla Sayfutdinova is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow at the Department of Social Anthropology and the Centre for Energy Ethics at the University of St Andrews (<https://energyethics.st-andrews.ac.uk/people/leyla-sayfutdinova/>). Her research project "Turning oil into stone: oil legacies in the narratives of urban continuity and change in Baku, Azerbaijan" examines the multiple ways in which oil has shaped urban space and memory in Baku, one of the earliest oil cities. Leyla has an interdisciplinary background, including Conflict studies (BA, St Petersburg State University) and Sociology (PhD, Middle East Technical University, Turkey) and her research has focused on the postsocialist transition in Azerbaijan, focusing on urban change, nationalism, and post-Soviet industrial restructuring. Her research has been published in *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, *Labor History*, *Work, Employment and Society*, and *Nationalities Papers*.

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