

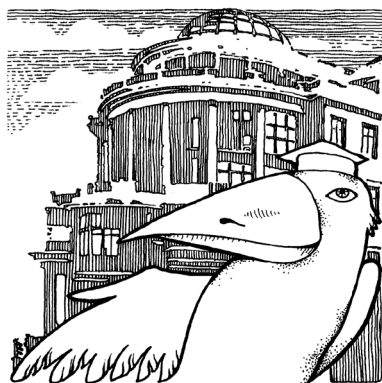


All that is gold does not glitter,  
Not all those who wander are lost.

— J.R.R. Tolkien,  
the Fellowship of the Ring

postdoc is a great opportunity to test the waters before embarking on a lifelong academic journey. It means: doing research, starting up publications, working on interesting projects, building professional networks, and boosting one's own profile. In this and previous issues of The HSE Look, we collated a wide range of different views on the mission of HSE University Postdoctoral Fellowship, including its participants and organizers alike. In our December issue, we provided an institutional perspective: we heard from the heads of the University's research centres who have been hosting international postdocs for several years and reaped the programme's benefits. It includes diversifying the research environment at our institution, building its global profile and attracting new academics. In this issue, we asked several alumni and current participants in the postdoctoral programme to comment on their postdoc experience at HSE University. They also kindly share pieces of advice that could have given them a head start – in the hope that they can provide others with inspiration.

**Yulia Grinkevich**  
Director for Internationalisation



## Post-postdoc trajectories

*Five alumni of the HSE University Postdoctoral Fellowship reflect on their experiences during their postdoc years, and on the role HSE University has played in their development as scholars. They currently work at HSE University, the University of Florida, and the University of Bremen.*

### Seth Bernstein

*After graduating in 2013 from the University of Toronto (Canada) with a PhD in History, Seth took on the role of postdoc at the HSE International Centre for the History and Sociology of World War II and Its Consequences. He has worked as an Assistant Professor of History at HSE University, and since 2020, he has been Assistant Professor at the University of Florida (USA).*

In 2010, through two of my PhD mentors at the University of Toronto, who work on Holocaust history and the history of the Soviet Union, I learned about this specific postdoc. It was the first year of the HSE international postdoc programme. Then I renewed the postdoc with the centre for two more years. The topic I applied to work on was an expansion of my dissertation about Soviet youth culture under Stalin, specifically the Komsomol in the 1930s and 1940s. The main

argument of this work was that the Komsomol became a militarised organisation, and the bigger transformation of the Soviet Union was not so much based on Marxist ideology but on the prewar conditions of 1930s and the war with Nazi Germany. The connection of my topic to the centre's mission was probably the main attraction of my candidacy. Another factor was that I came out of graduate school having two articles, one about the WW2 period.

There was a huge difference between the three years. The first year, we had just a small room for four of us. Then, the centre won an international lab grant and expended considerably. In the second year, it grew into perhaps a dozen people, including premier international scholars such as Dr David-Fox. Then, it became more internationalised in my third year and grew to one of the premier centres for modern Soviet and Russian history in the world. I was there at the ground floor and, I hope, helped in this expansion.

I knew how a Russian university works before I arrived in 2013; I taught English as a Fulbright ETA in Ryazan and Rostov in 2006-2008. One aspect that I noticed when I arrived in HSE University was that I was used to having a supervisor who had been looking at my work and now I came to a place where I was more left alone. When I did reach out, I received a lot of help and feedback, but I had to learn how to do that. A unique thing about the HSE postdoc is that it is embedded in Russian academic culture and you sense that you are part of a team, while in the US or Canada, there is less of sense of belonging at the centre.

The first two years I was working on my first book, which came out in 2017 - *Raised under Stalin: Young Communists and the Defense of Socialism* (Cornell University Press). After that, I began to work on the next project, and the centre sent me to work in archives and libraries in Washington, DC, Toronto, and Kyiv. It really solidified my second book. Beyond my book, the work that I am most proud of that came out of this period was a translation of the book *Agents of Terror*:

*Ordinary Men and Extraordinary Violence in Stalin's Secret Police*. It is a case study by Dr Alexander Vatin, Moscow State University professor, based on arrest files of people from Kuntsevo District during the Great Terror. He was able to recreate what happened with the secret police at the very ground level. During the translation process, we e-mailed back and forth, met and became friends. The book has done well, too, and it is now getting assigned in classes in the USA.

Towards the end of the postdoc, I translated Professor Liudmila Novikova's book *An Anti-Bolshevik Alternative: The White Movement and the Civil War in the Russian North*, and this was probably the most extensive collaboration I had. That book also has gotten excellent reviews. Almost every week we hosted someone from Russia or abroad. It was practically a mandatory pitstop during your archival trip to give

a talk at the centre. The thing I miss the most about being there is that the centre is one of the great meeting places of Russian history in a way that Florida cannot be. I still keep in touch and I am thinking about bringing some of my previous colleagues here through getting a Fulbright grant.

## Michael Rochlitz

*After finishing his Master's studies in Paris and London and his PhD in Economics at IMT Lucca (Italy), Michael did a postdoc with the HSE International Centre for the Study of Institutions and Development (ICSID). Later, he became an Assistant Professor at the HSE School of Politics. In 2017, he left for LMU in Munich and since 2019, he has been Professor of Institutional Economics at the University of Bremen.*

During my PhD, I was probably a bit naïve. I did not have a clear strategy of how to start a career in academia, and was rather thinking about becoming an adventurer, or working in international development. In the last year of my PhD, I met Andrei Yakovlev, the head of ICSID, at a conference in Suzdal who told me about the possibility to do a postdoc at HSE University. Being a postdoctoral fellow at ICSID was a privilege and an opportunity. At the time, a group of international scholars was working closely with their Russian colleagues, spending several months a year in Moscow.

From them I learned a lot about how academia works, much more than during my time as a PhD student. Dr Yakovlev became a real mentor to me, and we still work closely with him and our colleagues from ICSID. Every year in June, we organize a major conference in Moscow, and in the fall - a workshop in a partner institution somewhere else (Munich in 2017, Abu Dhabi in 2018, Bremen in 2019). We hope to organize an event next year and to celebrate ICSID's 10th anniversary.

We also continue to cooperate in research. In December 2020, we submitted a joint grant proposal with Dr Yakovlev and Dr Libman, for a project to study social mobility in the bureaucracy in Russia, China, and the Soviet Union. Last September, Dr Yakovlev became a Research Ambassador at the University of Bremen, a position with the aim to promote academic and scientific exchange between Russia and Germany. I never felt like a stranger in Russia.

I started studying Russian in 2002, and by the time I was spending the last year of my PhD as a visiting lecturer at Ural Federal University in Yekaterinburg in 2012, I was able to communicate freely.

During my time at HSE University, I often took a train during holidays or weekends and went to places like Murmansk, Arkhangelsk or Vorkuta, and then posted my pictures on Facebook, or on my blog 'dustyroadseconomics'. Even today, when I come to Moscow it practically feels like the city where I am most at home, probably because the time from

2013 to 2017 was the longest period during the last 20 years that I have ever stayed in one place. My ambition is to build a centre of institutional economics with a particular focus on the post-Soviet region, Russia, and, probably, China. There is still a lack of political economy research on Russia in Germany, which is surprising, if you consider how important Russia is for Germany, both politically and economically. We have started to build such a centre at the University of Bremen.

At the moment, we have one postdoc, four PhD students and two research assistants. We have a number of grant applications under consideration, and we hope to grow further during the next couple of years. It is a new experience to have your own research team, and I really enjoy it. What I try to communicate to my both PhD students and postdocs is that they should have a certain sense of adventure and discovery when doing research.

This is something I also need myself to remain motivated. It also helps that we are not that far apart age-wise. My PhD students are in their late 20s or early 30s, and I am 39. Sometimes, we meet for a drink or play board games, for example, Carcassonne, a game where you construct a medieval city.

Today, I often think back to my time at HSE University. Without my experience as a postdoc at ICSID, I would probably no longer be in academia. With my colleague Susanne Schattenberg, a historian, we are teaching a class together on politics of memory, and we hope that from next year onwards we can combine our class with a fieldtrip to Russia. And why not having joint classes or summer schools with HSE students? Let's see what the future brings.

## Israel Marques

*After graduating with his Master's and PhD in Political Sciences in 2016 from Columbia University (USA), Israel did a postdoc with the HSE International Centre for the Study of Institutions and Development (ICSID). He is now an Assistant Professor at the HSE School of Politics and Governance.*

By the time my postdoc started, I had been working for HSE University for four years and really liked it. During my PhD studies, I began as a research fellow and spent much of my time in Moscow, an arrangement whereby I would work for Dr Yakovlev's centre in exchange for the possibility of doing fieldwork in Russia. I went from working on social policy in Russia during my PhD to a project on vocational education, as an important component of welfare state policy during my postdoc. We had already started thinking about it with Dr Remington, who is a leading research fellow at ICSID, when I was finishing my dissertation.

We understood that this topic is of interest to Russian policy-makers, as well as the Russian and Western research community, and we were able to develop it into a RNF grant propos-

al with Dr Yakovlev. The three-year project is finished, but the publications are still ongoing. Last year, we had papers published in Europe-Asia Studies and European Journal of Political Economy.

At the Faculty of Social Sciences, postdocs are closer to faculty members. They can provide input to specific projects, as well as into the general workings of the subdivision where they are. The most obvious way a postdoc differs from being a faculty member is that I teach students now, whereas before I would only consult with them.

Rather than helping them because they were interested and I knew something about their topics, now I am helping them as their academic supervisor. At HSE University, students ask questions that I find useful for my own development as both a teacher and a scholar. For example, I recently won a Faculty of Social Sciences research grant. We are looking at service provision across Russia's regions and people's attitude towards the digitalization of services.

This grant was put together with my then Master's student, who is now my PhD student and a core team member on the project. This is the most clear-cut example of this type of interaction, but not the only one. I always use my classes as an opportunity to get students interested in the ICSID projects and, more broadly, to help students to realize how much they can contribute to research.

One of the things I found valuable as a postdoc is the fact that HSE University was very interested in helping me succeed but also in signalling to the outside world that 'this is what someone good can do with the resources we provide'. As a postdoc, I was able to use these resources to do many presentations at conferences and for a popular audience. People have preconceptions and negative stereotypes about teaching and doing research in Russia, and this can be a challenge, particularly for recruiting postdocs. Therefore, it is important for us to go out, present the work we are doing, show that academic life in Russia is robust, and push back on these stereotypes.

If someone says my achievements during the postdoc are solely thanks to my work at Columbia University, I would refute. By the time I was a postdoc I had been at HSE University for four years already. This more or less about the same amount of time I had spent at Columbia. I started working on the vocational education project as a graduate student of Dr Remington, but he was also at HSE University at the time. Could this project have happened without HSE's support?

Absolutely not! Broadly, I would not underestimate the amount of time, energy and resources you get as a postdoc. The goal of a postdoc is to give scholars the time and space to develop into the professional they would eventually become without needing to worry about job security, teaching, and other issues. The HSE's postdoc programme provides exactly this type of time and space for its participants.



## Angelina Lucento

*After graduating with an MA and PhD in Art History from Northwestern University (USA) in 2014, Angelina did her postdoc with the HSE International Centre for the History and Sociology of World War II and Its Consequences. She is now an Assistant Professor at the HSE School of History.*

My degree is in art history; I work on Russian modernism of the 20th and 21st centuries. My postdoc allowed me the time I needed to work in archives, to prepare and publish articles and to begin to remake part of my dissertation into a book manuscript publishable by a major university press in the United States or the UK.

The nice thing about HSE postdoc is that you are required to give presentations. That is how you develop skills, which help you produce articles that are publishable in Web of Science. You do not come out of graduate school, knowing how to do it, you only acquire these skills through trial and error. While I was at the centre, I was also extremely glad to do general public presentations. I always got many questions from the audience; it was such a delight to experience their interaction and enthusiasm. This stuff belongs to you, and there is a lot to be extremely proud of. Yes, avant-garde was crazy and we know now that not everything worked, but it is not the point. The point is innovation, as they are the most creative thinkers of the 21st century.

Sometimes, you meet people who say ‘oh, my great grandfather studied at’ or ‘my great grandfather is Alexey Gastev’. You would not be able to do it if you were not in Russia. Sometimes, you have these babushki in their 80s saying ‘no, no, I was 10 years old in 1935 and I can tell you it’s not what it looked like’ or ‘I used to work in the party administration and I can tell that’s not how it happened’ or ‘Ivan Matsa was my professor at MGU and he always said this’. Oleg Vital’evich and Liudmila Gennadevna also supported me during my time at the centre when I co-organised a major international conference on Soviet photography with another postdoc from the centre and it was successful – we had participants from the former Soviet Union, New Zealand, and the USA. Many good ideas came out of it. Moreover, several articles went to various major journals. When we are able to fully return to campus and international travel resumes, I am looking forward to attending the centre’s offline lectures once again, and am especially looking forward to the informal meetings afterward where we are able to discuss ideas with international scholars one-on-one.

## Alexandra Skripchenko

*After graduating in 2012 with a PhD from the Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics at Moscow State University, Alexandra did her postdoc in France. She returned to Moscow as an HSE University Postdoctoral Fellow, became an associate professor at the HSE Faculty of Mathematics, and in 2020 - its dean.*

When I was a PhD student, I took part in the summer school in Trieste, where I met Artur Avila and Jean-Christophe Yoccoz, the Fields Medalists. I had a math problem that had not been solved for a while.

It was in regards to how electron move in metal, which is affected by a magnetic field. I talked to them twice, and both times the problem was not solved, but they made me ‘a post-doctoral proposal’. I also won a competition of the Association of Mathematical Faculties of France, which provided me with a salary and the opportunity to work in any of the universities belonging to the consortium. I had two supervisors – Dr Artur Avila, a French-Brazilian mathematician, and Dr Anton Zorich, a Russian-French mathematician.

Artur and I solved math problems together, but culturally we were alien to each other. The opposite was true with Anton as we spoke Russian. Pascal Hubert, professor at Aix-Marseille Université, did a lot for my integration too; his children taught me to speak French. He remains my favourite co-author. I now have grant, where we are the principal investigators from the Russian and the French sides.

During that postdoc period, many things were conceived that continue to develop. This would have been hard to achieve remotely. When I arrived in France as a PhD student, I was not yet very good at talking about my mathematics. I remember my first seminar in Marseille – it was a disaster! It took a lot of effort from the people who worked with me to see the potential in our partnership. I am not sure if they could do it digitally when the temptation to turn off the camera and go for tea is relatively strong. We wrote our first article with my former PhD supervisor remotely while I was in France, but we had spent six years together before.

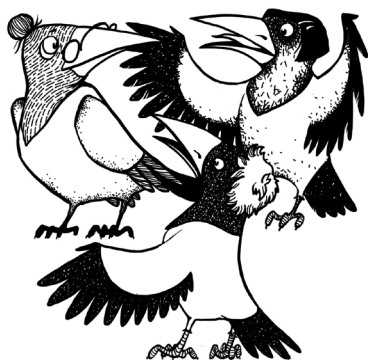
I wanted to expand my research contacts and learned about the HSE postdoc competition. Vladlen Timorin, who was a dean of HSE Faculty of Mathematics before me, confirmed that everything works ‘like in the West’. I decided that, if they accept me I would go home, otherwise I would stay in France. In the end, they invited me, and my mother was delighted. However, upon my return to Moscow, I won the Mechnikov scholarship and went back to France for several months, this time - as an HSE postdoc.

My students do have the feeling of being involved in a global agenda because, at least once every couple of months, they see a revered or even a star international academic. Anton visits regularly since he is a Muscovite himself, and we co-teach a module called ‘Modern Dynamical Systems’ jointly with Skoltech. Artur came to Moscow only once, as he does not like the cold. Once every two years, someone comes in under the HSE’s postdoc programme.

However, we have not been very successful in convincing them to stay longer. They perceive the possibility of coming to Russia as an interesting research endeavour and a short-term ‘extreme light’ experience, but they are not ready in

terms of their family and career plans. I myself felt the same for France. I was sure that I could go home soon after I arrived, but once I learned to speak the language, I realized I could stay. However, I made friends, happily returned home and never regretted that. Mathematicians can work alone,

but it is critical to have a stimulating environment and be able to talk about your ideas. I said earlier that I had a problem with which I came to great people. It seems that we solved this task this year in a group of five, and two teams, Russian and French, sewed the two pieces of this puzzle together.



## A breath of fresh year

*HSE University postdocs share their thoughts on transitioning from PhD studies, as well as individual and collaborative projects they are currently engaged in. The participants include Adam Gemar and Daria Khlevnyuk (PhDs in Sociology), Nikita Lychakov (PhD in Finance), and Amanda Zadorian (PhD in Politics). We also talked to Ekaterina Paustyan, a postdoc at the University of Bremen and an excellent example of the connecting power of HSE University's research centres.*

### On reasons to apply for a postdoc

#### **Amanda Zadorian (International Centre for the Study of Institutions and Development):**

Russia is the country that I research the most. I have done summer fieldwork here for years, but I had never spent more than three months in Russia. I felt that to be a scholar of Russia, when returning to the West, it would be helpful to have extensive experience in the field.

#### **Adam Gemar (Centre for Cultural Sociology):**

If your thesis is impressive, and you think you can get five articles out of it, but they are just not there yet, you need the postdoc to give yourself the opportunity to generate those outputs.

I published a number of articles in the past year plus at HSE, and most of those were backlogged from my PhD data. Ultimately, it is best to finish all the work from one's PhD before the ideas and data become stale.

#### **Daria Khlevnyuk (Poletayev Institute for Theoretical and Historical Studies in the Humanities - IGITI):**

The beauty of the postdoc is that it feels like a breath of fresh air before jumping into a busier and more regulated professor's life.

### On earlier engagements with HSE University

#### **Daria:**

When I was an HSE student, IGITI professors taught me the foundations of academic life and writing. Dr Natalia Samutina, who, sadly, passed away recently, encouraged me to write and publish my first academic article while I was still a BA

student. I had no doubts about whether to return. If a person decides to stay in another country, they must integrate into it, and being a remote postdoc is like standing on two chairs between which you can fall.

#### **Amanda:**

When I started the postdoc, I had already participated in my lab's conferences for several years. In addition, when I did my fieldwork in Russia, HSE University sponsored my humanitarian visa.

#### **Ekaterina Paustyan (University of Bremen):**

I did my MA and PhD in Political Science at CEU in Budapest. I never studied at HSE, but I participated in the Russian Summer School on Institutional Analysis and was at HSE St. Petersburg as a teaching fellow.

In 2018, the HSE International Centre for the Study of Institutions and Development (ICSID) organized its annual workshop on the political economy of development, where I met Michael Rochlitz. A year later, I returned to ICSID as a visiting researcher. After defending my PhD in 2020, I applied for a postdoc position funded by the Central Research Development Fund at the University of Bremen.

I passed a very competitive selection process and was offered a position under supervision of Michael Rochlitz who supported my project.

I am sure that the success of my application was in many ways determined by the connections I established at ICSID, a hub that attracts researchers from Russia and abroad. Currently, I am a visiting lecturer at HSE University Saint Petersburg.

## On differences between doing a PhD and a postdoctoral position

### Adam:

There is more freedom in a postdoc and fewer strict deadlines, even though the overall responsibility of where and how much you publish is a bit higher. However, I feel less of a difference as I got a British PhD, which is quite independent.

### Nikita Lychakov (Centre for Modern Russian History):

The main difference is that as a postdoc you have already gained some experience conducting independent research, and you have already made several mistakes during your PhD studies and have learned from them. Consider my personal experience of submitting an article to a journal, which I specifically chose because of its fast speed of reviewing and accepting articles for publication.

Indeed, my article was quickly reviewed and published online, but then, as I realized to my surprise, it would take another year until it is published in one of the journal's volumes. My publication strategy was flawed, because I did not consider the time it takes from the online to the actual publication. As a postdoc, you tend to make less missteps, but I think you still need guidance from the more experienced researchers.

### Daria:

In the USA, PhD assumes three to four years of coursework and a dissertation. In contrast, a postdoc presupposes more independent research. Moreover, as a postdoc with international academic experience, I can share this knowledge. For example, recently, with colleagues from the institute, we delivered a workshop on preparing publications for foreign journals.

## On the hierarchy between postdocs and their hosts

### Adam:

When I started working on my PhD at Durham, I was just out of my Master's programme, and my supervisor was very senior to me. As time went by, the 'PhD advisor-student' relationship ultimately grew into a collaborative 'peer-to-peer' friendship. It all depends on when you gain a bit more equal footing. When you come in as a postdoc the peer-to-peer nature is more immediate.

### Amanda:

There is a distinction between intellectual hierarchy, of which there is very little, and organizational hierarchy, of which there is quite a lot. For example, I am working on a survey, and there is somebody at every level: senior visiting and Russian scholars, along with students. The organizational hierarchy is much less impactful when you are here for a brief period, whereas if you are an assistant professor, the hierarchy starts to matter quite a bit, as you are on this track to go up that hierarchy.

## On key projects during a postdoc

### Amanda:

My dissertation was mostly about oil governance institutions, and in the current book, I develop a new theoretical concept of financial rentier states. I study the period from 2004 to 2014, and do qualitative (document-based) research. The oil industry produces an enormous amount of textual material, and almost all of it is available online: the press releases, annual reports, and CEO speeches. They are a rich way of understanding a historical period.

One of the most memorable experience for me was the conference of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies in San Francisco in 2019, which used to be a place where I would meet my colleagues from Russia. However, this time, I was coming as a colleague from Russia. The event was in my home country, but it was a different experience, as I was presenting among my fellows from the lab.

### Adam:

I am working with the rest of the centre on how education and occupation can shape social mobility. I work on more quantitative approaches, which is a challenge in the existing sociology of culture as it features more qualitative and theoretical work. One of the big research issues I try to address is how proximity, both physical and psychological, to opportunity effects an individual's trajectory. In the survey data, I have been trying to find out what dispositions and attitudes might lead to an understanding of opportunity. I use the data from a longitudinal survey our lab has been conducting since 2011. It is a good dataset, but it is also massive, and in the first year, I looked for matches between the data and the questions I want to pose.

### Nikita:

My research relates to the economic and financial history of the Russian Empire. From my experience, economic history is highly recurring: businessmen and bankers behave much in the same way today as they did 100 years ago. The beauty of working in the field of economic history is that I can do a historically-inclined paper, based mostly on narrative evidence, or I can do a more quantitative paper, based on numerical data. Best papers often combine both historical and numerical evidence. My most recent work relates to measuring labour productivity in Russian and British factories around the year 1908, just after the First Russian Revolution. My co-authors and I find that Russian factories were just 20 percent less labour productive than their British counterparts. Russia was one of the largest and most efficient manufacturers in the world at that time.

### Daria:

My project concerns how the Stalinist repressions are presented in Russian regional museums. This topic is aligned with the IGITI's focus, since Irina Savelieva, its academic supervisor, and Andrey Poletayev, its founder, wrote one of



the famous Russian books about public history and collective memory, *Why Americans Don't Know History*. My article was just published in the journal *Memory Studies*. There, I suggest the new term 'victim heroes'. The idea is that in regional museum exhibitions about repression, we often observe that the victims of repression are described not just as victims but also as heroes.

#### **Ekaterina:**

My project is about the connections between regional elites in Russia. I will test several fundamental assumptions in the literature on the political economy of authoritarian regimes, namely, that in multilevel autocracies, regional elites perform certain functions, in particular, they mobilize voters to take part in elections to ensure the legitimacy of the regime. To do so, governors rely on political machines, which are based on their informal personal connections.

While this assumption is plausible, no one has tested it in practice, which is my overall goal. I will do a cross-regional study, and then look at several cases, for example, Belgorod Oblast, where the governor was in power for 27 years; it will be interesting to study the networks, which he built.

### **On working as a postdoc remotely**

#### **Amanda:**

It has been going fine for several reasons. First, for a year and a half on campus in Russia, I have built social connections, and it is only a matter of maintaining those. When we get together on a Zoom call, we already know each other in person. Secondly, and luckily, I am between field projects. However, I do wish I had been able to meet my students in person.

#### **Nikita:**

I think the pandemic has a different impact on everyone's work, depending on where you are in your research process. If you need to have access to the historical archives and they are closed, then, certainly, you are at a disadvantage. However, if you are working on an article for which you have already collected data, then the pandemic has little effect on your progress.

### **On the importance of collaboration and ways of finding co-authors**

#### **Nikita:**

In many cases, it is better to join efforts with other researchers. Collaboration does not only accelerate the research process, but it also improves the quality of work. In my view, postdoctoral fellows should strive to co-author with an expert in their field. Finding such people is not always easy, and that is why, a postdoc should devote part of his or her time to finding strong co-authors. In the long run, a co-author might become a mentor, who could guide an early researcher not only through a particular publication, but also throughout

his or her academic career. Most successful researchers are those who are lucky to find a supportive mentor.

#### **Adam:**

As an early career researcher, I like working with other early career researchers since I find the earnestness and the hunger a bit more there. A senior academic is usually busy, and a collaborative paper can be low on their list. This is just the nature of their positions, versus the freedom and nature of the insecurity of where I am. I sometimes cold email international colleagues, and say 'this is the paper I have, I am stuck on XYZ, do you want to jump onboard?' Could I have done this while I did my PhD studies? I do not think so, as you have to have a few publications under your belt, so that they can Google your name and see something legitimate in some solid journals.

### **On examples of collaboration**

#### **Adam:**

I have a couple of research projects with Dmitry Kurakin, director of HSE Centre for Cultural Sociology, that are in various stages, as well as with other individual and collective collaborations with others in the centre. As for collaborations with Dmitry, he is very theoretical, while I am more of an empiricist. In one of the projects, we look at how people's values affect their choices within the Russian educational system. What one values highly in a future job and career – whether it is money or respect or interesting work, and how that shapes one's trajectory. If you want money, do you go onto a vocational track to get more money now or do you pass through all of the degrees to get more money later? What values in your future life do you want and how do they shape specific decision-making processes along your educational and occupational path?

#### **Daria:**

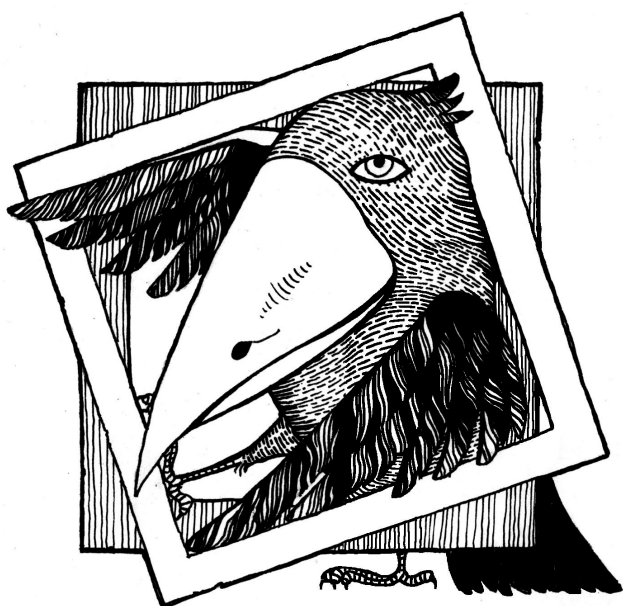
In 2019, Boris Stepanov, Alisa Maximova and I wrote a chapter on local history for an edited volume, which will be published by Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie. The aim of this work, conceived by Vera Dubina and Andrei Zavadsky from Shaninka, is to develop an anthology of public history covering its various forms - museums, theatres, comics, computer games, and local history.

Our task was to describe how public memory and local history are related. It could help, for example, a Master's student to select a dissertation topic and understand where the gaps are. We considered the issue in theoretical terms, but we also took many examples from student sociological expeditions that Alisa has been doing in Russia over the last decade. Alisa and I have also been leading a research group and a series of workshops for the HSE Department of Communications, Media, and Design students on the topic of memory and the Internet. Some of them are already presenting their work at international conferences.

**Amanda:**

In my first year, we did a workshop on state capitalism at the HSE April Conference. I had organized several workshops at the New School, but as a graduate student I dealt primarily with logistics. In terms of writing the programme and doing other intellectual work, this was my first experience with such a high-

level conference. The audience was both Russian and international scholars from Brazil, Hungary, Germany, and the USA. As a result, we put together a journal issue, and I have an article there on the health, safety and environment practices at Rosneft and Petrobras, the two oil companies that I study.



## Welcome aboard, new postdoctoral fellows!

*In this issue, we are continuing to introduce several of the new postdocs who have already started their fellowships in 2020-2021 academic year.*

**Dr Alina Danilevica** (HSE Centre for Market Studies and Spatial Economics) received her PhD in Economics at Daugavpils University (Latvia) in 2018. Her recent article considered the impact of financial development on economic growth in EU countries and was published in *Journal of Security and Sustainability Issues*.

**Dr Deborah Giustini** (HSE Laboratory for Economics of Innovation) received her PhD in Sociology from the University of Manchester (UK) in 2020. She conducts sociological comparative research concerning highly skilled but precarious employment, which often can turn into invisible labour. Her recent article looked at the impact of labour market trends on the working arrangements and employment of R&D personnel. This article was published in *The SSRN*.

**Dr Dinesh Rano** (HSE Tikhonov Moscow Institute of Electronics and Mathematics) received his PhD in Electronics and Communication Engineering at Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology (India) in 2020. His area of re-

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