

**Participants in Forum 22:
Equal Opportunities and the Academic Career:
Chimera, Ideal, or Reality?**

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Forum 22: Equal Opportunities and the Academic Career: Chimera, Ideal, or Reality?

FROM THE EDITORIAL BOARD

It is common for the career path of young academics to involve a good deal of stress and uncertainty. Finding a funded place to do graduate work at a major university is not always straightforward, and the principles of selection are not necessarily transparent. Having struggled to complete their dissertations, the brand-new holders of a PhD then discover that their success is unfortunately no guarantee of further advancement up the career ladder. It is common across Europe and the US these days for permanent appointments to go only to those who are pushing forty years old — even if they completed their research degree many years earlier.

A further issue is that the institutional priorities operating in academia tend both openly and covertly to assume that an applicant for a position or grant should have achievements that are ‘age appropriate’ (should have completed his/her thesis in N years, should have x, y, or z number of publications by that stage (or shortly afterwards), and should have published his/her first book and been appointed to his/her first teaching position (or vice versa) by a certain number of years after completion of the PhD).

This can easily lead to a sense that someone who is in other ways a very promising candidate (and who might, once they were appointed, turn out to have more potential than apparently better-qualified candidates) is somehow ‘behind’ on the career ladder, perhaps for family reasons (caring for young children or sick relatives etc.), or because they have taken ‘career breaks’ on health or other grounds, or because they have not had the same opportunities for CV embellishment (e.g., have studied in a university that is further down the ratings and does not have an in-house journal).

In this way, career development and academic achievements and potential can be at variance with each other. And despite the constant talk of the importance of originality and creativity in academia, the paradox is that the structure of the profession does not always foster the recruitment, retention, and promotion of people who actually are unusually able. Any of us will be able to think of ‘independent scholars’ who are producing excellent work outside the ordinary institutional framework — work that is often every bit as good in scholarly terms as (and sometimes better than) work by people who do hold positions in universities and research institutes. But the influence of these people on the academic establishment tends to be limited by their institutional status, their books and articles may not have the same citation rates (given that citation is often driven by issues such as academic patronage), and because of this may disappear from view.

The statistics on the demography of academia are also far from reassuring. In Russia, Western Europe, and the USA there is a marked asymmetry in appointment to positions of any kind among people from certain ethnic minorities, while progress to the highest levels of academic appointments is much less common among women than among men.¹

All this raises important issues about how to organise study, recruitment, and promotions in order that the candidates who are genuinely the best actually get preferment, and the demands of equal

¹ In the UK, despite more than thirty five years of equality and diversity initiatives, the percentage of women holding chairs is somewhere between 10 and 20 %, depending on the institution (<<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/gender-survey-of-uk-professoriate-2013/2004766.article>>. If one excludes ad hominem appointments (as opposed to statutory professors), the picture looks even worse. The Royal Society (the national academy for scientists) has only 5 % women fellows. In Russia, 42 % of staff in academic appointments are women, but 98 % of members of the Russian Academy of Sciences are male (<http://www.strf.ru/material.aspx?CatalogId=353&d_no=45603#.Ut5WG9LHnVQ>). Across the USA, women make up 46 % of assistant professors (compared with over 50 % of PhDs), 38 % of associate professors, and 23 % of full professors. Women with children are 38 % less likely to be awarded tenure. Notable too is a significant differential in salary rates at every step of the academic career that correlates neatly with gender difference (<<http://chronicle.com/article/The-Pyramid-Problem/126614/>>). In Germany, women comprise 50 % of PhDs, but only 22 % of Habilitierte (those with higher doctoral degrees), and a mere 15 % of professors and 7 % of rectors (<<http://www.humboldt-foundation.de/web/kosmos-opinions-94-1.html>>).

opportunity are satisfied. Participants were asked to address the following five questions:

- 1 *Perceptions of professional academics among their colleagues are likely to be inflected by many different factors, among which age, sex, ethnicity, place of origin (by country, region, city, etc.) will all figure. What are the best ways of addressing the impact of such factors? Should certain groups be targeted as particularly vulnerable?*
- 2 *It is often argued that young scholars are particularly disadvantaged when it comes, say, to grant competitions, invitations to present papers at conferences and take part in prestigious publications, and so on. Should something be done to correct this pattern, or is it inevitable and indeed desirable (you have to 'prove' yourself before you are entitled to anything)?*
- 3 *The commonest way of helping young scholars tends to be through patronage networks (as manifested in the influence of particular intellectual 'schools', and so on). This may act to conceal the problems of career advancement — because so-and-so's students simply don't have difficulties getting jobs. How satisfactory is this situation? Are other mechanisms for redressing inequality, such as quotas and positive discrimination, to be preferred?*
- 4 *Do you regard 'schools' in scholarship as a positive or a negative phenomenon? Do they lead to the inert replication of established ideas and hold back intellectual development, or ensure high-level professional standards? Is the capacity of supervisors/advisors to influence young scholars' career paths good, bad, or simply inevitable?*
- 5 *Please comment on the 'ups and downs' of your own academic career. What was the hardest thing for you about career advancement? Did you succeed in overcoming the difficulties you faced, and if so, how? What advice would you offer others in the same position?*

VLADIMIR BOGDANOV

‘Schools of scholarship’ are a concept in historical writing which is as important as it is hard to define. M. G. Yaroshevsky wrote in 1977 that ‘The term “school”, <...> vague though it is <...>, means, according to the opinion generally accepted among historians, firstly a common training in writing and research methods, and secondly a position maintained by a particular group of scholars in relation to others’ [Yaroshevsky 1977: 86]. While a school is an organisation for *informal* (specifically informal) dialogue amongst scholars of different generations, and for the exchange of ideas and discussion of results, it also serves to transmit the contents of the discipline, and certain cultural norms and values, *from the older generation to the younger one*. Here O. D. She-myakina’s observation on the significant degree of patriarchy within the relationships inside such groups is important: ‘The equality between members of the corporation, combined with the patriarchal traditions which still exist in the university environment, is in many ways reminiscent of the traditions of communal self-government and the responsibilities borne

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by the older members of the family “for the young ones” [Shemyakina 2010: 307]. On the educative level it is important that a school is an instrument for ‘developing a research mentality’ and a certain methodological approach to studying a problem [Yaroshevsky 1977: 29]. V. K. Krivoruchenko [Krivoruchenko 2011] gives a quite extensive description of schools of scholarly activity, but she too leaves many things vague. For example, it is still an open question whether a school presupposes only vertical connexions (between teacher and pupil), i.e. is always a group consisting of different generations, or whether it may also form horizontal ones (between colleagues). If the second definition is also included as ‘a school of scholarly activity’, why is it hardly ever taken into account?

It so happened that the author of these lines once studied the so-called Moscow University school of manuscript studies, to which he regards himself as belonging [Bogdanov 2011]. As a result he drew up a list of the people who had been engaged in research, both in the field and in the university, under the aegis of the Archaeographical Laboratory since the 1960s. Their number was very impressive — over 350 of them. That is, seemingly, a School. However, one interesting detail came to light. It turned out that the school consisted only of the older generation (in effect, its founder, I. V. Pozdeeva), and of constantly changing ‘young researchers’. The middle link was always missing. Moreover, the number of people who had written articles on manuscript studies turned out to be quite limited, no more than fifty individuals, the number of whose publications ranged from one to about 150. By 2010 thirty people had defended candidate dissertations, and ten people doctoral dissertations. But only a fifth of these defences had been in the field of manuscript studies, and to this day no more than five dissertations in the field of manuscript studies have been defended at MGU.¹ That is, we are evidently dealing with a sort of ‘alternative collective’, the overwhelming majority of whom study manuscripts as an interesting pastime, and by no means include themselves in any sort of research community. And if five years ago I was completely confident in calling this collective a school, now I am not so sure.

It is interesting that, vague as it is, the term ‘school of scholarship’ has at present an important institutional significance, in that it constantly figures as one of the paths towards obtaining a grant. Moreover, in the majority of cases the group must be headed by a person with a higher doctorate, who is the ‘engine’ for the project in general and the grant application in particular. However, if we suppose that horizontal connexions have a great significance, then the question must be examined from quite another angle. But the

¹ Moskovskii gosudarstvennyi universitet im. Lomonosova [Moscow State Lomonosov University]. [Eds.].

Forum isn't the place of a long forensic examination on the basis of a brief prepared for days. In this case we shall just draw our respected colleagues' attention to the fact that the problem exists.

1
2

The *Forum*'s first two questions are quite closely similar. And of course, the answer to the question of whether it is worth helping a researcher at the beginning of his or her career can only be yes. How that help might be afforded depends to a large extent who the researcher may be. Some will need the clear hand of a supervisor who very nearly writes their articles for them, others will only have to be told of the existence of such-and-such conferences or such-and-such publications and will move in the right direction under their own steam. The only way in which the scholarly community as a whole can influence matters is by the creation of spaces in which the efforts of young researchers can be employed:

— engaging early-career researchers in large projects where they will work alongside more senior colleagues. This is, in fact, the common scholarly tradition. It is through experienced and novice researchers working together that the accumulated baggage is passed on;

— holding forums for young researchers. The publication of their proceedings, included in RINTs¹ and other bibliometric systems, is the most effective form of support.

One of the oldest such forums is the 'Platonov Readings', which have been held at Samara University annually since 1995, and where young scholars (those who do not yet have a candidate's degree) from various research and teaching centres in the country present papers. The schools organised by the Centre for the Typology and Semiotics of Folklore at RGGU are an excellent platform for folklorists, ethnographers and 'fieldworkers' in general.²

Sometimes the possibility of publication is offered to young researchers in the form of 'collections of papers by research students', etc., but in this case the early-career researchers develop in isolation.

3

Thanks to the burgeoning growth in the accessibility of information, the question of discrimination in publication is becoming less and less acute. Formerly, when an early-career researcher offered an article in person to a respected journal, it was psychologically easier to reject it. But the principle of 'patronage' could come to the rescue, if the young researcher was backed by a formidable supervisor, whose name opened the doors of editorial offices. Now, with the development of electronic mail, and the possibility of using it to send in one's article, the author's personality counts for a great deal less. That is,

¹ The Russian Scholarly Citations Index, a good listing in which is now vital in terms of bureaucratic efficiency drives. [Eds.].

² See their website: <<http://www.ruthenia.ru/folklore/Mast4.html>>.

the publishers pay more attention to the contents of the article, and less to the author's age or the supervisor's reputation. Besides, if the work will not do for one publisher, it is easier to place it with another. Only fifteen years ago, when there were many fewer publishers, this was much harder to do. That is, the social process equalises the possibilities open to researchers from different generations. By no means does it do away with patronage (which in principle is not a dreadful thing), but it enables researchers at the beginning of their career to do without it.

4

Since the very concept of a 'school' is somewhat unspecific, it is hard to formulate one's attitude towards it. However, if we take schools to be a kind of informal collective, then their existence has its pluses and its minuses. One way or another, schools of scholarship may both help the researcher (for example, everyone knows M. N. Tikhomirov's hand in the career of his pupil N. N. Pokrovsky) and hinder him/her. In the first place, every representative of this corporation will be regarded not in isolation, but as a member of the school, the pupil of such-and-such a Teacher. Secondly, conflict is inevitable within any human community; and when the conflict is with the Teacher, the pupil's fate can be a most unenviable one. S/he may be expelled not only from the School, but even from one or another institution. Thirdly, founders of a School are always faced with a choice: whether to leave behind the movement which they began, in the form of many young generations, or so contrive it that the movement should be associated with their name only. In the latter case, his or her pupils will begin to be 'squeezed out'. Fourthly (and this is connected with the third point), the Teacher may use pupils as 'feeders', making them do all the donkey work and publishing the final results under the Teacher's own name.

It could be concluded that these are the defects of 'vertical' connections. But sometimes (though admittedly much less often) horizontal connections may also turn out badly. One has only to remember the discussions of the 1970s about the so-called 'new direction', which brought about a schism between the followers of the 'A. L. Sidorov School': V. I. Bovykin, P. V. Volobuev, and K. N. Tarnovsky...¹

5

Situations of conflict are, alas, not uncommon in human society, and the scholarly milieu is no exception. Added to this, the conflict between 'teachers and pupils', which, in the context of a teaching and research institution can turn into a conflict between superiors and subordinates, is complicated by the fact that the latter can easily

¹ Arkady Lavrovich Sidorov (1900–1966) was a leading economic historian, some of whose pupils, including P. V. Volobuev and K. N. Tarnovsky, pioneered a new treatment of the Russian Revolution as a stochastic event, rather than the consequence of iron laws of historical development, for which they were branded 'revisionists'. [Eds.]

be cast as ungrateful, getting above themselves, breaking the chain of management responsibility, exceeding their powers, etc. In this situation resistance is indeed difficult. The pupil, or the subordinate, cannot use the same methods as the Teacher and Superior. And such conflicts are not unusual if, as indicated in the answer to the third question, the Teacher really does want to pursue a scorched earth policy, and so contrive it that the movement s/he founded should be associated with his/her name only. The only way out of this difficult situation is to fulfil one's work responsibilities to the letter: the research student must write a dissertation come what may, the research associate carry out the tasks allotted from above and make sure the completed work answers in every detail to what was required (preparing a given number of articles or monographs, attending conferences, etc.). Caesar's wife must be above suspicion. That is, it is important not to engage in fruitless discussions (especially when 'the boss is always right'), but to continue what you have begun observing all the formalities (though I myself am chronically averse to pettifoggish proceduralism, and this was the most difficult thing in my own career progression).

* * *

In conclusion, I would add the following remarks. Most likely, the concept of a 'school of scholarly activity' will remain highly amorphous in the future, being but a very general reflection of some sort of scholarly collective that remains active over a long time. The existence of this collective may have a positive or a negative effect on anyone who belongs to it. But 'it's always easier within the group.' Now in particular, belonging to a particular school has started to have a significant effect on the bibliometric profile of authors. If they work 'within the group', their colleagues (fellow-members of the School) are guaranteed to cite him/her. In this context it is instructive that Academician V. L. Yanin, the recognised head of the school that studies medieval Novgorod, of whom the MGU History Faculty site writes: 'sixty people have graduated from the Archaeology Department under his supervision, and his pupils include twenty-five people with candidate's degrees, eight with [higher] doctorates and one corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences,' happens also to be the front runner in the History Faculty for the number of citations in RINTs: the number of publications listed in the index is 128, the number of citations 1996, and the Hirsch index is 16 (as of the beginning of September 2014). Bibliometric results in turn have a strong influence on a researcher's position within an organisation. Belonging to a school thus guarantees a degree of status.

Whatever the career progression of a beginner within a collective, s/he must absorb the experience of older comrades like a sponge:

their attitude to work, their view of the problems, etc., so that in future s/he can either follow them or self-consciously move away. It is moreover important not to forget the 'horizontal' connexions, as well as the 'vertical' ones within the collective. This makes early-career researchers more resilient and integrated into various fields of knowledge. Not only that: although 'vertical' connexions may be more important for an early-career researcher, 'horizontal' ones become more and more important with the passage of time. However, conflicts are inevitable in any collective, and the way out of them depends on the wisdom of both sides. The main thing is not to let personal predilections and ambitions interfere with the common work. To conclude, I must recall the experience of one of my own Teachers, Leonid Vasilyevich Alekseev (1921–2008), a major figure in Russian history and archaeology. He was himself a pupil, indeed one of the first pupils, of Academician Boris Aleksandrovich Rybakov (1908–2001). It so happened that their views diverged in 1968 on account of the events in Czechoslovakia. However, this had no effect at all on their relations as superior and subordinate, and this laid the ground for their reconciliation at the end of the 1980s. Rybakov himself was to say in 1998 that 'Leonid Vasilyevich Alekseev is not only a major scholar, but a real friend.' I would recall that dozens of well-known historians and archaeologists have emerged from Rybakov's school, and all of them have retained a grateful attitude towards their Teacher, even though they have often disagreed with him (for Boris Aleksandrovich himself lived long enough to see his concepts actively revised), particularly over political questions. He himself never set about 'squeezing anybody out', and always regarded the younger generation (even first-year undergraduates) as potential colleagues.

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MARC ELIE

1

It's hard to answer this question, because 'perceptions' are formed quite early in life, well before someone becomes an academic. If it is indeed too late to fight against ethnic, sexual or other prejudices when people enter academia, then schools and research institutions should watch closely over the official hiring and promotion processes: panels of examiners should include people sensitive to the question of diversity, and people themselves representing minorities. It should include a right to appeal against the panel's decisions if the candidate feels discriminated upon on ground of ethnicity, sex, religion, age, handicap and so on.

2

I don't feel that young scholars are particularly disadvantaged in my field and country (History, France). The main disadvantage concerns scholars without a permanent job. Be they young or old, they are badly treated. Yes, measures should be undertaken to change this by opening grant competition to everyone holding a PhD, and more importantly still, by stabilising the career of scholars without a permanent position to make them less vulnerable.

3

In my view patronage is a bad thing when it extends to recruitment practices involving key career positions. Patronage is then a major obstacle to equality. Patronage can be greatly limited by forbidding a university from hiring anyone on a teaching/research position with a PhD degree from that university. Quotas may be a solution, but they may reinforce the sense of inequality.

4

Schools are not a common feature in my field, I think. Maybe more so in the social sciences.

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In history, it is hard to see schools of thought, although active patronage networks are a common thing.

5

I have not encountered any discrimination in my career, since I do not belong to any minority group in my country. The main difficulties I had were as a postdoc, and they were pretty much like the ones experienced by all postdocs in France: applying for jobs, looking for the next grant, little consideration from my seniors and so on.

ELENA FILIPPOVA

The scholarly community in Russia and other countries is a special case, which has its own internal structure and hierarchy, and particular ‘rules of the game’ and codes of behaviour. This ‘factory’, as it were, is internally divided into disciplines, each of which has its own specific features. I shall speak of my ‘immediate circle’, the discipline whose boundaries are delineated by the names of ‘ethnology’ and ‘social and/or cultural anthropology’. Some of the opinions which I shall express also apply to other disciplines (at least within the social sciences and humanities). I shall begin with the known fact that in modern Russian scholarship the middle generation constitutes a very thin layer. This is a problem not only of quantity, but also of quality: one can to a certain extent speak of a break in the tradition of the handing down of knowledge and experience from one generation to the next. The situation is complicated by the ideological and paradigmatic revolution that the humanities embarked upon (but did not by any means complete) at the turn of the century, which also allows one to suppose a ‘break in continuity’. Furthermore, the excessive age difference between the older and younger generations also means that scholars remain ‘young’ until they are about forty, if not longer.

Who ‘makes their way’ in scholarship today, how do they do it, who succeeds, and why? The question of ‘equal opportunities’ asked by the editors of *Forum for Anthropology and Culture*, is a very topical one. I shall try to reflect upon it, starting with certain promptings given in the announcement of the discussion.

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On young scholars

We all know that for the last few decades scholarship in Russia has been financed on the residual principle.¹ A consequence of this is the fall in prestige of scholarly work, and a flow of young people into other spheres of activity or abroad. Incidentally, the situation in Europe and the USA has also got worse recently, and there too, more and more often, young specialists are unable to find work in their own field and have to be content with temporary contracts and post-doctoral fellowships. In France, for example, within my own circle of acquaintance there are at least ten talented young researchers who defended their dissertations during the last six or seven years and have not been able to find a job. In conditions like this it becomes ever harder to remain faithful to one's scholarly vocation, particularly if one has no other source of income and has to feed a family. It is young scholars, who have to begin their lives from scratch and bring up children (an ever more expensive pleasure), who are the first to suffer from this. Salaries in the scholarly field are low, and for junior researchers, particularly those who do not yet have a higher degree, they are simply ridiculous. This means that one must either give up the idea of having a family, or put it off for an indefinite period, or else do one's research in parallel with some other means of earning money. But it is above all at the beginning of one's career that one has to spend a great deal of time on reading, attending seminars and conferences, simply in order to hear what other people are saying, understand what people are currently working on, what theories are being propounded, what direction the discipline is moving in — and not to read one's own paper and leave, as one often sees done.

What can and should be done to improve the lot of young scholars? I shall say at the outset that as a rule I am opposed in principle to any kind of quotas or other forms of 'positive discrimination', be it on the basis of gender, race, ethnic origin or anything else: I regard these measures as ineffective and as undermining confidence in the people who have benefited from them. However, regarding young scholars, and taking into account the material difficulties mentioned above, it seems to me that financial support for conference attendance (waiving the registration fee by the organising committee, or offering a grant to cover it, paying travel expenses) is justified — provided, of course, that papers are selected on a competitive basis. The *a priori* refusal of the organising committees of some conferences to consider papers from undergraduates seems to me discriminatory. I think that everyone should have the opportunity to offer a paper at a conference,

¹ In other words, out of the residuum of the state budget when priority areas (e.g. military spending) have been covered. [Eds.].

and the job of the programme committee is to assess the originality, independence and quality of the papers offered. Moreover, they should be assessed under conditions of anonymity, so that the author's status does not affect the decision. I repeat: live communication, participation in discussions, and the acquaintances made at conferences are an important element in the formation of a researcher, and in his or her initiation on the 'factory floor'.

Incidentally, most existing grants are intended for young scholars (doctoral and post-doctoral students, or limited to persons under thirty, thirty-five or forty), which may be considered a form of 'positive discrimination'. There is also the practice of requiring a collective grant to include a certain proportion of 'young participants' (for example in the recently created RNF (Russian Scholarship Fund), where a group applying for a grant must include two graduate and two undergraduate students), but I know from experience that this does not work well: sometimes the young people are included in the application so as to fulfil the requirements of the awarding body, but are not expected to make a real contribution to the project.

Now that computers and other forms of information technology are universal, institutions in the humanities no longer have support staff. Nevertheless, the technical work still needs to be done: preparing grant applications and reports (which takes up more and more time), organising conferences, editing and publishing... Often these duties fall to the lot of young colleagues. If there is a large volume of such work and it is not a question of one-off tasks but a permanent load, there is a risk that they will not have enough time and energy left for actual research work. The result is a vicious circle: the young scholars do not have enough publications, so the defence of their dissertation is deferred, but at the same time everyone understands that they are doing useful work, so it would be short-sighted and unjust to dismiss them. Therefore they continue to be given what is essentially ancillary work to do, and eventually both they and their colleagues end up by accepting this situation as normal. To 'break out' of such a situation one needs to be powerfully motivated, in order to carry on with proper scholarship in parallel with this technical work. Instead of this, some people simply leave and go to what is essentially office work, but much better paid.

Publications form a topic of their own. Here there are very many problems. Today's young generation of scholars — those who were at school or undergraduates in the 1990s — is the post-epistolary generation, accustomed to expressing itself in the language of text messages. It appears that neither school nor university still teaches people to write coherent texts, still less do they provide the conventions for writing scholarly prose. From my experience of

working at the journal *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, I can say that frequently young authors do not know how to structure an article, do not know how to deal with their sources and the literature that they cite, cannot write footnotes and write in such a style that sometimes the contribution of the editor in preparing the text for publication amounts to co-authorship. I am not referring here to what is frankly shoddy workmanship or plagiarism — articles of that sort can be rejected out of hand. No, I mean those cases where authors appear to have undertaken independent research, and has obtained interesting results, but are incapable of expressing themselves on paper. What are the editors to do? Turn them down? Rewrite the text from scratch? I know that some journals allow research students' articles to jump the queue for publication, because they need to have publications in order to be able to defend their dissertations. Others charge for publishing such articles, and charge a heavy fee — if you want your degree, you must be prepared to pay. It seems to me that this is an inadmissible practice and one that compromises the very idea of a scholarly journal. There is only one way out: teach the authors to write. Ideally, lecturers ought to teach their students, and supervisors their research students — and it would be no bad thing to include a practical class on the writing and structuring of articles among the courses that have to be taken by graduate students. It would be a considerable help to young scholars and graduate students if they could discuss their articles with colleagues (for example, at departmental and research group meetings, etc.), and sometimes they would benefit from co-authorship with more experienced researchers, during which the beginner would acquire the practical skills of working with a text at all stages of its creation. But the requirements for the quality of both the form and content of articles should remain high, making no allowance for age.

On schools of scholarly activity

Judging by the way the editorial board has formulated the questions, 'schools' have rather negative connotations. They are regarded as a system of patronage and suspected of 'reproducing the ideas of the older generation' and 'holding back the evolution of scholarship'. It seems to me that, like any other institution, schools of scholarly activity are in themselves neither harmful nor beneficial: it all depends on the actual people and their ideas. 'Schools of scholarly activity' are an informal institution, they form around strong and authoritative scholars, but include not only their immediate disciples (graduate students, colleagues), but in the wider sense, followers and those who share the leading figure's ideas. A school may continue to exist after the death of its founder — for as long as his or her ideas are influential. It seems to me that schools are a necessary and inevitable feature of scholarly life. They further the development of knowledge,

forcing their opponents to sharpen their arguments and subject their own views to doubt. The problems arise when administrative resources or personal connections are brought into play to block the expression of ‘opposing’ views. But behaviour such as ‘patronage’ — in the sense of giving unjustified privileges in return for personal loyalty — extends far beyond the concept of a ‘school of scholarly activity’.

It seems to me that the fragmentation of the workshop of our discipline is a more serious problem. There are several communities, which are isolated from each other and which are occupied in developing largely unconnected topics, all of which fall under the general heading of ‘ethnology/anthropology’ (which also includes physical anthropologists, but that is a separate matter). The members of these communities meet at their own conferences, publish in the same journals, and cite each other. The result is that the more people are studying the same problem with the same methodological approach, the more influential these communities are. The least advantageous position is occupied by those researchers who are not members of one of these communities. They may be not only ‘independent’ scholars outside the universities and academic structures, but also members of the academic establishment who are engaged in problems far from the mainstream.

Professional training

Abroad, it is the final stage in his or her education that plays the biggest part in the formation of a future scholar, when he or she is effectively doing independent research under the supervision of a distinguished specialist within a laboratory. This gives him or her the chance to see how scholarship ‘works’, and also, when necessary, to consult not only his or her own supervisor, but other scholars too. In Russia, the decision that has been taken to abolish graduate studentships in academic (or should that be former academic?)¹ institutes and concentrate them in the universities has turned the training of research students into a continuation of their undergraduate education with its lectures and seminars. Our universities, alas, in the vast majority of cases do not conduct research (I mean the faculties of the humanities), so that it is impossible to understand how research leading to a higher degree is to be organised and who will supervise it, and how. This reform will finally detach the teaching process from academic activity, and this means that people who have just received their candidate’s degree will find it even harder to make their way in scholarship.

¹ A reference to the major restructuring of Russian Academy of Sciences institutes that has taken place since 2013 as part of an efficiency drive. [Eds.].

On statistics and discrimination

The figures on gender and ethnic inequality in scholarship in various countries, which have been provided to ‘light the fuse’ of the discussion, look impressive. However, the people who study minorities have more than once written about the fact that not all inequality is the result of discrimination, and so I would like to warn against drawing excessively direct conclusions. In any case, if the fact that women are behind on every indicator can be attributed to discrimination, then this discrimination is systemic rather than being the property of the scholarly community as such (one can find a similar distribution when reckoning the number of women in business, politics, senior administrative positions, etc.). Our societies (even European societies, never mind Russia) are still very traditional in how they distribute gender roles in the family. Housework and child rearing are still largely the woman’s responsibility. Not to mention pregnancy and childbirth, which ‘exclude’ women from ordinary life for long periods and hold back their professional and career development. On the other hand, a happy family life and well looked-after children are, in the eyes of society and of women themselves, signs of successful self-fulfilment, which supplements or compensates for scholarly achievements that are not as high as men’s. Can this situation be changed by means of quotas? I think not: this would be more likely to confirm the opinion prevalent in society that women are not capable of achieving the same results as men when they compete on an equal footing.

REVEKKA FRUMKINA**Young People in Scholarship***The problem of ‘schools of scholarly activity’ and the relationship between ‘established’ and ‘early-career’ researchers***3****4**

As a rule, belonging to the same school partly equalises the positions of different scholars, at the beginning or more advanced in their careers, with regard to the ‘outside world’, since within it its adepts all adhere to the same fairly strict conventions both regarding their chosen subject and their choice of methods. As for the subject and methods, agreement is assumed from the beginning (sometimes perforce), but discussions about *values* inevitably arise sooner or later; but most often this means that the school is beginning to dissolve. At this stage of *doubts*

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about the fundamentals (which is inevitable in a living discipline) it is usual for conflicts to break out, not necessarily between the older and younger generations, but rather between people occupying positions with different *prospects*.

Some at least of these conflicts are not always conducive to the progress of scholarship: if it is forbidden to *argue inside the school*, that usually means that the leader's positions have to be accepted without question. If these positions contain anything more than the elementary requirements of scholarly hygiene, then the sooner they start to be revered as axioms, the sorrier the fate of the school. I would point out that the functions of schools may be so different that, even as we accept the concept of a 'school of scholarship' as a useful tool, we must remember that in fact we are dealing with very disparate structures and processes. A 'young', *incipient* school will inevitably divide researchers into 'us' and 'them'. Accordingly, both largely undeserved praise and perfectly reasonable blame are just as inevitable as the dependence of the results on unavoidable external factors or the statistical failings of an eclectic method. Therefore I see the problem not so much as unqualified support for 'us'/'the young ones' just because they are 'us', as the introduction of the habits of 'bareknuckle boxing' into the scholarly sphere.

Being a linguist of the 'storm and stress' generation, I looked up to A. A. Reformatzky, P. S. Kuznetsov, and V. N. Sidorov, the representatives of the Moscow school of phonology, as unquestioned scholarly and, above all, ethical authorities. They were the bearers of the ethics of the Russian intelligentsia. These leaders defended us, the young ones, against the 'system' (our superiors, the party bureau, etc.), and helped us because we were *beginners*, but at the same time they were very demanding with regard to the content of our theoretical constructs, which may have been new, but which were often also highly imperfect and excessively ambitious.

I consider it inevitable that people will have scholarly protégés, and even if we declare it to be an evil, that will not change anything. A future scholar's first steps usually tell us of his or her *potential*, that is, the young author claims to have added to, refined, improved, confirmed or disproved something that had been done in his or her field before and hitherto recognised as important or significant for scholarship. The results will most likely be assessed by another circle or another generation.

When a discipline is developing normally, the question of 'why we study what we study' will in each particular case already have been answered by the leaders, and if this becomes a vital question for a beginner, this usually means that scholarship is not the field to which he or she is best suited. Thus, within the confines of a particular school, *by no means everything is open to doubt*. Such a situation is a potential

source of conflict, but the functioning of scholarship (unlike dogma) assumes that such conflicts will occur. Research supervisors are influential to a large extent because their positions are shared not only by their immediate pupils and disciples, but by a wider circle of colleagues who recognise the school's right 'to study what it studies'. The existence of protégés often either substitutes for a real understanding of what a pupil of such-and-such a scholarly authority is studying (this, I believe, is inevitable), or means that standards are lowered where their results are concerned (this, alas, happens more often than one would like).

Personal Experience

5

It seems to me that the way people work with young scholars at the beginning of their careers differs widely across disciplines. Naturally, the prevailing attitude towards *values* in a given environment plays a great part, as does the actual, rather than the declared position of the scholars within the *socium*.

People usually say that 'younger' scholars depend on 'older' ones, but in my experience it was my dependence on 'younger' people — the existence of 'hands' — which played a much more radical part. For many years productive configurations grew naturally out of my home seminar (see [Frumkina 2003]).

This seminar evolved not only as one scholarly task succeeded another, but also depending on the general background of life in the country; for this reason I shut it down in the autumn of 1991, at the peak of the surge in social activity.

With hindsight I can evaluate the scale of the change in priorities that took place at that time: for some people scholarship remained an end, even if it had been set aside for a time, while for others it had become a means. I too was forced to supplement my income by giving English lessons, but the point is that I was *forced* to. But by the middle of the nineties the former 'young ones', and to an even greater extent those who had 'reappeared', were oriented towards *making a life for themselves* and not towards scholarship as such.

In particular, study for a higher degree in Moscow became first and foremost an effective *means*... For me this meant having to bring all work based on experimental research to a close.

My circle of interests nevertheless expanded. I finished a monograph which was published in the USA, wrote several large summative articles, then my memoirs, and after that a textbook, the fifth edition of which has recently been published, two books of essays, and so on.

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IRÈNE HERRMANN

**The Ups and Downs of the Academic Career
in Switzerland***The weight of history*

In many ways, the peculiarities of Swiss academic life and careers have been moulded by history or, more to the point, by the specificities of Swiss political history and the role held by, or attributed to, Swiss universities in their development during the nineteenth century.

The first university located on Swiss territory was the University of Basel, which was founded in the mid-fifteenth century. A few decades later, as the Reformation was spreading, several Protestant cantons created an 'Academia', in which they intended to train their pastors. Generally, these institutions were no more than faculties of theology. Some of them progressively developed by encompassing other faculties, such as a law school or a faculty of arts. However, until the nineteenth century, most of the young talented and wealthy Swiss studied abroad, either in France or (as was still more likely) in one of the famous German universities [Brändli].

In the early 1830s, most of the Protestant and richest cantons experienced a soft revolution, the so-called 'Regeneration', aiming to promote liberal ideas and political structures. On a very general level, the 'revolutionaries' claimed to uphold the principles of liberty. This extremely vague and multifaceted concept comprised various elements based on and adapted to Swiss realities. From a national point of view, the Swiss liberals planned to consolidate the (very few) central structures of the country. However, they also intended to preserve federalism, and most of them envisioned their lives and political activities exclusively within the tiny framework of their own canton. The importance of federalism was particularly evident in the economic field. Despite their true liberalism, the 'Regenerates' applied a very narrow-minded customs policy, meant solely to defend their home-Canton's agriculture or industry [Herrmann 2014: 390 ff.].

Federalism, however, was not supposed to hinder the setting up of democratic governments. The reformers thus promoted quasi-parliamentarian policy-making and gave the legislative power a decisive role meant to better control the executive branch. Interestingly enough, the cantonal parliaments were elected by universal suffrage. Admittedly, universal did not mean undisclosed and undifferentiated. Only men over the age of majority and, even more importantly, originating from the canton, were able to vote. Yet, for all its restrictions, this right was extremely generous, as it was supposed to give most of the citizens the possibility to have their say in the management of *Res publica* and, hence, to enhance their own lives [Kölz 2006: 374 ff.]. Moreover, in some cantons, the right to vote was not linked to one's wealth, so that even poor people were not irremediably excluded.¹

This explains why, on the level of individuals, more often than not, liberty was also viewed as equivalent to equality. Of course, the 'Regenerates' did not think in terms of social or economic equality. The equality they suggested was 'merely' legal and political. It meant that every (male) citizen had to obey the same rules and enjoyed the same rights, regardless of his family status and/or his means. However, the reformers were also acutely aware that this political agenda might prove risky, as people should know for whom and consequently for what they are voting. In other words, they realised that the (future) citizens should be better able to read, to write, to count and, in short, to think by themselves, without the influence of clergy [Herrmann 2014: 397].

This crucial consideration determined the creation of a compulsory state school system. It was both meant to 'mould' good citizens and to prove the superiority of liberal values. In order to achieve the latter goal, a couple of new universities were created, mostly by enlarging and enhancing the old Protestant Academies. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Swiss academic panorama developed further. After the liberal-radicals seized power at the national (as opposed to the cantonal) level in 1848, the new government founded a 'Federal Institute for Technology'. In 1893, as a late response to the Kulturkampf, the first Catholic university was opened. By the early twenty-first century, Switzerland harboured ten universities and two 'federal institutes for technology'.² Against all odds, and despite a considerable legislative effort, however, all these institutions were still deeply influenced by the various phenomena that had determined the growth of the nineteenth-century Swiss universities, such as federalism, democracy, and egalitarianism.

¹ This was notably the case in Geneva.

² <<http://www.crus.ch/information-programmes/les-universites-suissees.html?L=1>>.

The weight of federalism

Federalism meant that each Swiss university was long financed by its home-canton alone. Consequently, all of them had a relatively broad room for manoeuvre, and developed their own specific academic culture. Despite the Swiss federal government's starting to contribute to their financing as of the 1960s; and despite the adoption of the 'Bologna system' in 1999, these cultural differences remain. It is thus rather tricky to give the 'whole picture' of Swiss academic life and habits [Schenker-Wicki and Hürlimann 2006: 61 ff.]. The intrinsic federalism of the Swiss university system prompts the commentator to do no more than present some general patterns and illustrate them by some examples — here, mostly taken from the various History departments, which I know better than others.

Officially, federalism does not interfere with Swiss academic choices: the only thing that matters is excellence. It is true that the Bologna system has smoothed the possibilities for exchanges between the cantons and with the world. However, especially in History departments, it is obvious that one's geographical origin plays a major role in deciding whether one is offered a position. Interestingly, some universities tend to discard candidates who come from their own canton. By doing so, they probably want to emulate a *modus operandi* they value, such as the American system, that was implemented in and for an incomparably wider academic landscape. More to the point, they want to avoid what they consider 'the trap of localism'. As a result, the students graduating from these universities have almost no chance of finding a position in their alma mater... or anywhere else in Switzerland, as the majority of the other History departments favour local recruitment.

The latter trend is particularly obvious in some universities in the French-speaking part of Switzerland. In these institutions, most professors have completed their PhD in the institute in which they are currently teaching. Arguably, this unwritten rule has lately become more flexible. It is however still perceptible, especially in History. This tendency has various causes. It mostly stems from a 'minority complex', be it in religious and/or political terms. In whichever case, local recruitment is meant to guarantee that the candidate shares the institution's culture, is able to communicate using an appropriate code, will not denigrate his/her predecessors — who were chosen according to the same principles — and, more importantly will be eager to perpetuate the university's values.

Not only does this system disadvantage most of the candidates coming from outside, but it also prompts the formation and consolidation of schools of thought. As one of the main criteria for promoting scholars consists of their having completed their PhD in

the same institution, the selected candidates have mostly long been known to the members of selection committees. Sometimes, they even studied with the professor whom they eventually replaced. In any case, they have been chosen not just because of their academic skills, but also, and above all, because of their eagerness to take up their predecessor's topics, methods or scientific approaches. Some historical institutes are thus tightly linked with a single (Swiss-wide) famous scholar, and it generally takes about twenty-thirty years, or two academic generations, to have his/her name and influence fade away — unless some envious, irritated or tired colleagues decide to radically and rapidly erase it by appointing someone belonging to another school of thought.

While the formation of such schools is not necessarily good for the level and the reputation of the universities concerned,¹ it is difficult to oppose, for disciplinary, structural, and ideological reasons. Switzerland is both small and multifaceted. This means that any academic topic dealing with local realities needs specialists, who are understandably few in number. Moreover, the country's federalism, which both stems from and triggered its diversity, makes it almost impossible to hamper this process from above (i.e. the channels of central government in Bern) or outside. Change must be realised from within, and this mostly proves very tricky, not only because of the somewhat Bourdieusian processes of academic reproduction, but also because of the purportedly democratic organisation of the universities.

The weight of democracy

One of the main goals, if not *the* main goal, of the first Swiss universities was to educate truly responsible citizens, able to purposefully use the democratic rights they were granted. They were also meant to indirectly and directly promote democracy, by providing a technical knowledge worthy of democratic Switzerland, and even more, by teaching history in a distinctively patriotic-democratic way [Herrmann 2010: 144–6]. Yet there was no clear wish to structure or administrate universities more generally according to democratic principles.

Admittedly, more and more universities have come to apply a sort of democratic *modus operandi*, be it because they have replicated the political functioning of their home canton or because they have recently been compelled by law to display more respect for democratic procedures.² As for the former, their democratic concerns

¹ Source: <http://www.universityrankings.ch/institutions?c=Switzerland> (last accessed 13 April 2014)

² See for instance: http://www.geneve.ch/legislation/rsg/f/s/rsg_C1_30.html.

encompass a decision-making process in which the representatives of all academic categories are involved. Considering that most decisions are taken by show of hands (and not by secret ballot), and that the system is otherwise extremely hierarchical and dependant on a few individuals' goodwill, this mechanism generally contributes to reinforcing and reproducing the status quo. As for the universities that have had to 'democratise' their organisation by law, they still are, against all odds, deeply influenced by the German academic system in which the *Ordinarius* held quasi-feudalistic power over the scholars and the students under his/her supervision. Contrary to France, for instance, there are, as one might put it, no permanent positions except for professorial ones (the equivalent of US full professors).¹ Despite the recent creation of new titles such as assistant professors or associate professors, professorial positions remain relatively few in number, and their holders remain extremely powerful.

This is not to say that the Swiss academic system does not try to be democratic: it even tries hard to be this. One of the best examples may be found in the grants delivered by the Swiss Academy of Sciences, which allocates these in such a generous way that it is often the first and only institution from which scholars seek funds.² Most of the postgraduate curricula depend on this financing, which is handed out lavishly. It is possible to have an excellent life living off these grants. The main idea behind this system is, arguably, that those who obtained a grant are brilliant enough to deserve good working conditions and that the latter guarantee a better scientific outcome. Moreover, excellent scientific results should pave the way for permanent positions.

However, these undoubtedly generous grants are strictly limited in time. They are thus unable to compensate for the troublesome and enduring lack of permanent intermediary positions that faces scholars with a zero-sum choice: become professors or, basically, leave the academic world. In this context, most postgraduate students paradoxically live in both luxurious and precarious conditions. Generally, people have no other choice but to apply for these grants, so that they eventually prove unduly senior in terms of the labour market they have to join later on, when they have already got used to the comfortable standard of living they were assured of because of their individual efforts, and according to a more general idea of equality.

¹ This is, of course, comparable with the situation in Germany. [Eds.].

² <<http://www.snf.ch/fr/encouragement/aide-selection-instrument-encouragement/Pages/default.aspx>>.

The weight of equality

Several historians think that the wish for democracy is mainly based on a strong desire for equality [Martin 1980: 174]. Indeed, the ‘Regeneration’ movement intended to guarantee Swiss male citizens’ legal and political equality. Both these equalities were supposed to allow each citizen to reach his ‘natural’ position in society, namely to become as wealthy as his capacities allowed, a situation that was considered acceptable provided he refrained from displaying his potential riches. This frame of mind had multiple consequences, notably in the academic world.

Officially, the concern for equality presupposes that the qualities required in order to get a position are ‘merely’ the candidates’ intelligence, capacity for hard work, and ambition to reach their academic goals. In reality, this system obviously disregards social inequalities or, more to the point, reproduces them. Intelligence, capacity for hard work, and ambition are not sufficient skills if you don’t know how you should implement and display them to best advantage. While this problem is certainly not specific to Swiss universities, it is exacerbated in the Swiss context, because of at least two locally characteristic phenomena.

First, the above mentioned lack of intermediary positions accentuates this trend. This void is typical of the Swiss educational system, which has long been reluctant to endorse the creation of academic curricula leading to very specific professions (except in the case of doctors or lawyers). Finding a way of achieving a desired position is traditionally considered to be an important part of the academic training itself. Now, though, despite the egalitarian intentions that lie behind the suspicion of specialisation, the end result that emerges is anything but egalitarian. The system as it stands favours those who have access to a broad social network and capital, regardless of their political rights or economic situation. In other words, it also contributes to the reproduction of the university and the society as a whole.

Second, the illusion of equal chances also disadvantages so-called minority groups, either literally or symbolically. The first case may be illustrated by the fate of Catholic students in Protestant cantons, and vice versa. Admittedly, with the thriving of cultural secularisation, this configuration becomes less and less noticeable. However, Catholic students who feel strongly about their religion are more likely to avoid Protestant universities and this situation clearly indicates that belonging to a minority makes achieving an academic position more difficult.

This process of disadvantage is even more obvious in the second case, which emerges when one looks at the situation of women in Swiss universities. Whereas female students are the majority (especially in

faculties of arts), their relative number decreases as one goes up the academic hierarchy, constituting about 15 % of full professors.¹ Here again, the situation is progressively improving. This evolution is however very slow, whatever the incentives, recommendations, and threats may be. Of course, this situation is not Swiss-specific and occurs in most countries where the position of a university professor is considered prestigious. However, this trend is particularly obvious in Switzerland because it is based on mechanisms, both material and mental, that are especially important there.

Switzerland's wealth explains why, on average, professors are very well-paid.² Moreover, they often enjoy an enviable social status, probably linked to the size and the anti-aristocratic mindset of the country, which has long made intellectuals all the more noticeable. Understandably, only few men are eager to share these advantages. In this context, the motto of equality is often used in order to discard female candidates.

Most of the time, this operation occurs inadvertently, by applying concealed criteria of excellence, such as obvious self-confidence or 'seriousness', that favour men. Exceptionally however, the criteria may deliberately favour women. Then one of them may be chosen and receive a professorship — but on a strictly one-off basis. This strategy of favouring exceptional individuals, regarded by critics as 'tokenism', has three main (consciously recognised?) functions [Jost and Hunyady 2005]. First, it provides supposed evidence that the academic system is fair, since 'outsiders' do sometimes get appointed. Second, it eradicates all possible solidarity among women, as each of them hopes to be 'the chosen one'. Finally, the exceptional appointment of a candidate who may not in fact be exceptional can be used to argue that for all the supposed existence of political and even economic equality, women are indeed less able to display sufficient intelligence, capacity for hard work, and ambition than men are... Though the perniciousness of this reasoning is becoming increasingly obvious to more and more people, it will take a long time to counter, as it is difficult to express or to denounce it because of the other (inherited) specificities of the Swiss university culture.

Conclusion

The three 'historical' peculiarities mentioned above do not have the same status. Whereas the universities' vaunting of their record of democracy and equality continues to rest on rather shaky foundations, federalism is (still?) a reality. Added to this, federalism is one of the

¹ <<http://www.crus.ch/information-programmes/egalite-des-chances-etudes-genre-programme-cus-p-4/professeur-e-s-module-1.html?L=1>>.

² <<http://www.letemps.ch/Page/Uuid/de148c40-a288-11e1-b46c-1169b052ad18>>.

causes of democracy and equality not being achieved, as it often hampers any external control, and contributes to the formation and consolidation of schools of thought that are inimical to diversity.

This configuration is proving stubbornly resistant to change, notably because of the historical role of the Swiss universities. Since they were precisely supposed from the moment of their foundation to advocate democracy and equality in a federal framework, it is hard for their members, or members of society more generally, to admit or even recognise that they have not achieved these goals, and, more to the point, that their way of striving to achieve them leads to undemocratic and unequal processes, which are especially hard on postgraduate students and, among them, especially on women. Yet, although in the Swiss case, academic federalism seems to be the source of these problems, blaming it alone would be misleading, as federalism does fulfil a true cultural mission in some respects; in addition, countries without federalism face similar difficulties, making it hard to find a plausible alternative model.

That said, the situation is neither desperate nor hopeless. Federalism may still be powerful, but it is certainly doomed to change in a globalised world. Moreover, democracy is gaining more and more importance, and while the tendency to consider everybody's ideas as equally valuable may disconcert some, it will give more weight to the opinion of the post-graduates. Finally, equality is progressing across society generally, so that the universities will soon have no other choice but to accept a better representation of, for instance, female professors, whatever the men working there may say. To put it differently: Swiss universities were meant to change history, but in time, history will change them.

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KATHARINE HODGSON

2

The situation for young scholars has changed a great deal in the UK over the last twenty-five years or so. While in the past postgraduate students were expected to focus on producing their doctoral thesis, and were unlikely to experience any pressure to publish anything at all before they completed it, postgraduates are now encouraged to present their work at conferences, even at quite an early stage in their research, and, if they have ambitions to secure an academic post, they soon learn that it is essential to seek opportunities for publication in reputable peer-reviewed journals. This may be seen as a laudable attempt to give young researchers the chance to progress by taking part in the kinds of activities which are part of academic life and which enable them to learn a good deal about the norms that shape it. Many institutions now organise postgraduate conferences so as to provide a friendly environment in which doctoral students can take their first steps in preparation for the conference circuit, and major international conferences are far more welcoming to young researchers than they once were. The model of 'scholarly apprenticeship' which the PhD followed in the past has evolved, acquiring more explicit elements of professional training.

While these kinds of initiatives appear to provide support for scholars just starting out, they have not taken away the expectation that they should 'prove' themselves in order to be accepted as members of the academic community. Rather, they are being faced with the expectation that they should pursue all opportunities to demonstrate their credentials, collecting together a portfolio of conference presentations and

publications before they can be considered worthy of landing their first job. This opening up of opportunities for young researchers has developed in tandem with the increasing professionalisation of academia, in ways that suggest that what is happening is, on some level at least, less to do with creating a level playing field, rather more to do with inducting doctoral students into an academic culture which has changed significantly over the last two-to-three decades. As UK researchers have been subjected to regular assessment, on a national as well as an institutional level, with particular importance ascribed to achieving high quality publications and grant income, new generations of scholars have come onto the scene for whom the culture of constant assessment is part of the ‘normal’ environment. What has developed is very far from being a culture of entitlement; young scholars have access to various activities, knowing that these activities are part of the ‘unwritten curriculum’, and their performance will play a part in how they are assessed when it comes to applying for jobs. It is not unheard of for candidates for a lecturer post to be expected to have not only a completed doctoral thesis and a journal article or two, but also a book contract with a prestigious academic publisher. In my own subject area of Russian studies, such people were practically non-existent in the early 1990s. They do most certainly exist today.

Professionalisation in itself is no bad thing, and the greater involvement of postgraduates in the intellectual life of academia must be considered a benefit both to the students themselves and their older colleagues. Yet the inflated expectations now faced by researchers who are about to, or have already completed their PhDs, put a good deal of pressure on them. Perhaps one might see this as an appropriate preparation for what awaits those who do secure an academic post, in terms of stress and the expectation of achievement in many different areas at the same time, but at least salaried academics do not face the same financial pressures as those who are yet to secure permanent employment.

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Without a shadow of doubt, the hardest thing about achieving progress in my career was, first of all, finding a lecturing job at a university in my chosen field, then finding a job that did not involve just a short-term contract. As I began my PhD in 1987, I was warned not to expect there to be many, or indeed any job opportunities when I had actually completed it. Four years later, these predictions proved to be true. My realisation that I actually wanted to continue with an academic career came at the same time as my discovery that jobs were very thin on the ground. In the circumstances, luck played a big part in helping me to my first job, a temporary post for one year, which was advertised as I embarked on the final revision of my thesis. I suspect that had I not been given that job, I might well have taken the decision to pursue a different career path, as there was little sign

of any other post becoming vacant, or, even less likely, being created. It took a few years for me to start thinking seriously about any kind of career advancement, as I was preoccupied with the recurring problem of where the next job was coming from. Seven years into my career as a lecturer, I was appointed to a post in a Russian department which, unlike the one I was leaving, had been considered for closure but was not then in fact closed. This did not mean an end to uncertainty about the future, but I was lucky to have been appointed at the same time as another researcher early in her career, and together we helped to secure the future, in so far as any 'small' language operation in the UK can be considered secure.

It seems as though things have not changed a great deal for young researchers in my field today. I have seen excellent job applications from scholars who have managed to piece together a succession of temporary, sometimes part-time posts, at the same time as producing an impressive portfolio of research. It's difficult to know what advice to give to others in the same position as I was when starting out. Though in fact in many ways they are in a somewhat different position: more professional, more aware of the rules of the game. I find myself wondering whether they would be able to offer my 1991 self rather better advice than I am able to offer them now.

BETH HOLMGREN

1 The most vulnerable group among professional academics in the United States also happens to be the fastest growing group — adjunct lecturers and visiting or adjunct assistant professors. This group has burgeoned because the job market in all fields of humanities and many fields in social sciences has been terrible for well over a decade. Academic administrators are constantly looking for ways to provide curricular coverage on the cheap. If a professor retires or goes on leave, she is replaced (that is, *if* she is replaced) by a lecturer or a visitor on the low end of the pay scale. Because so many recent PhDs are desperate for job experience, they pursue these positions and typically labor for two or more years at low pay until they land (in the happiest cases) a tenure-track position, which at least offers the potential of long-term employment. In other cases, a PhD may continue working as a lecturer (in the US this term signifies a rank 'lower' than any professorial position) for most

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of their careers, perhaps eventually achieving the rank of senior lecturer, which usually implies a guarantee of permanent employment, if not the financially remunerative upward arc of advancing from assistant to associate to full professor. Moreover, lecturers, visitors, and adjuncts have very little time to do their own work.

As your readers likely have guessed, a majority of those who work as lecturers or adjuncts in the humanities are women. There is a movement afoot among adjuncts at some universities to unionize so that they may be sure of a set pay scale, health insurance, and other tools/funds a tenure-track academic position usually provides (computer and printing/photocopying equipment, money to attend conferences and workshops). They are waging an uphill battle, since academic administrators depend on attracting adjuncts from elsewhere. It's useful to compare the adjunct scholar/teacher's situation to that of other nomadic workers whose rights are almost never recognized.

2

3

4

Mentoring for young scholars has improved in the Slavic/East European field over the last decade, even as the job situation worsens. It is extremely important a) to encourage a culture of mentoring among established faculty and b) to seek funding — either through universities or through private donations — to support graduate student/junior scholar participation in conferences and competitions (travel, lodging, awards). Most national conventions/conferences in the US include a number of panels or workshops featuring senior scholars who share information about how to get scholarship published, how to revise one's dissertation into a book manuscript, how to network with other scholars, how to approach academic publishers with manuscripts in progress, etc. A good mentor means (almost) everything for a young scholar — a source of moral support, a resource with information about which conferences to attend and journals/publishers to approach, a well-connected colleague who will not only review article drafts, but also include young scholars in special thematic clusters to be published in journals or critical anthologies that they or other senior colleagues are putting together. In the US, and in our conjoined fields, a department's reputation and an advisor's reputation are far more important than the influence of a particular intellectual school in making a young job candidate attractive to a hiring committee. If a graduate student completes her doctorate with Professor X, who has a record of placing strong candidates in decent positions, then she stands a very good chance of finding a job within two to three years of finishing her graduate work.

On the one hand, then, the best senior scholars in our field must wear several hats. It is a foregone conclusion that they will need to be excellent teachers as well as productive, meticulous, interesting scholars. Yet it is also very important that they develop connections

with other colleagues in their peer group and see to their students' careful training throughout their graduate studies. A good mentor needs to be both a rigorous teacher and an energetic, yet discerning professional coach. This means that such a mentor may advise an initially promising student not to continue in academia if she hasn't the talent, drive, stamina, and temperament to succeed.

On the other hand, anyone seeking admission into the various disciplines in Slavic/East European studies on the graduate level must research their choice of universities very carefully. They should find out how well students are trained, professionally mentored, and finally placed after the completion of their graduate work. At this point, it is exceedingly difficult for students to get into the programs with the best mentors; there may be as many as 400 applicants for 10 slots and, of those 10 slots, only 1 is likely to be assigned a Slavic specialist. But I think it is useless to pursue a PhD (professionally speaking) if one is not working with a good mentor.

5

One of my greatest regrets is that I did not take time off between university and graduate studies. My lock-step progression was a mistake, because I wasn't convinced that I wanted to be an academic even as I was writing my dissertation. I had not explored other professional options, and I had no good role model for the kind of scholar/teacher I wanted to become. To a great extent, I lacked that role model because so few women were senior scholars in my field; it was only after I began work as a professor that I realised how much I could improvise my professional persona and interactions according to my odd character.

I will not presume to guess what would be best for students in the Russian academic system. I do not know what financial and professional hurdles a young person faces. I do know, however, that American students today usually need to take a few years to wander intellectually and professionally — by studying/working abroad; pursuing an internship or other employment; obtaining a master's degree that will help them explore other disciplinary or professional options. Doctoral programs rarely accept students who have just completed college/undergraduate studies.

Given the very hard work, modest pay, and long-delayed gratification of a scholar's career, it is vital for a young person to know that this is the path she wants to take. Gone are the days when young people simply became academics for lack of other job opportunities. I tell my students and young peers that they should stay in academia only if they love the work they do — scholarly research, conceptualisation, writing, re-writing; engaging students in seminars or large lectures. My experience has been that if you are not passionate and somewhat obsessive about what you study, write, and teach, then your soul will sour.

ALEXANDRA KASATKINA

5

My own scholarly career is still taking shape and so far has developed relatively successfully. I was fortunate, when still studying at the European University, to receive a permanent post in one of the research institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and now I only have to complete my dissertation and defend it. That is, I am in a situation where my career is being ‘held back’: by normal academic standards, at my age I should have defended my dissertation long ago. A serious obstacle is the specific division of labour, which is connected, among other things, with age, and also the desperate shortage of staff in our academic departments. Each department receives an annual plan of museum work: taking stock of the objects in its collection, and editing the card entries in the electronic database. In some departments, mine included, fulfilling the plan is the ‘natural’ responsibility of the youngest colleagues: the older ones have difficulty coming to grips with the electronic database, and besides, many respected researchers consider it beneath their dignity to engage in monotonous routine work with objects and catalogue cards. And to a large extent they are right: the work often really is mechanical, monotonous and exhausting. In our department there are no technical support workers who could be given this work, which does not require high qualifications, nor is there any prospect of obtaining such staff. Since the subject of my dissertation is not connected either with museum work or with the collections of the department, I have very little time left to devote to it. My work at the institute is my only means of support, and therefore I cannot take unpaid leave in order to finish my dissertation.

I know of many instances where careers are ‘behindhand’ for similar reasons. Graduate students at the Faculty of Anthropology of the European University of St Petersburg, who are orientated towards high-quality, well thought-out and well-founded research, seem never to be able to finish their dissertations in the

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standard three years. The European University now has a programme for supporting promising dissertations with a very good grant for one year that is to be spent writing up. But alas, those of us who finished our studies before it was introduced have to find our own means of support. The most widespread method seems to be going back to university, usually to a master's or doctoral programme in a Western university which will pay a grant sufficient to allow one to spend all one's time on one's dissertation. But this means being held back in one's career yet again, for another three years, or even for another six years, without any clear prospects once one has received one's degree. To be a pupil for a bit longer is not so bad, there are certain advantages to that status. However, there is very great competition in the humanities all over the world, and getting a grant is by no means a guarantee of stable work. This is what restrains me from this path and makes me hold on to my post in the institute. At the same time, it is a lot harder without a higher degree to get any serious grant, or get involved in a research project or visiting scholarship.

2

I have the impression, from my own experience, that in the milieu of the humanities in Russia, it is not so much age that matters when you are trying to get a 'pass' to a prestigious conference, as being connected with that particular circle towards which the organisers are oriented — either because of whom you know or whose pupil you are, or by using the 'secret code', the set of terms and concepts or the style of research accepted in that circle. In that sense 'schools' are an effective means of progression, but only within the confines of a small circle. To obtain entry to the 'sandpit' next door, where they speak a different language and have a different style of thinking, you have to engage in cultural translation and camouflage.

It seems to me that an effective mechanism for the discovery and promotion of young talents would be joint research projects, which would permit them both to display their abilities and to be supported through the various stages of professional socialisation, and acquire the materials and experience to launch them on independent voyages. If a 'school of scholarly activity' forms around a series of such projects, where senior colleagues are working alongside younger ones, this, I think, can only be welcomed. Much, of course, depends on personal relations, the style of leadership, and the older generation's readiness to accept the young researchers' new ideas and interests.

CATRIONA KELLY

1

I write here as someone with fairly extensive exposure to a range of academic cultures in Europe and beyond, but whose career has been spent mainly in the UK, where the attitude to equality and diversity issues has changed significantly during my lifetime. While two key pieces of legislation, the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Sex Discrimination Act 1976, were passed well before I began my career, the spirit of the legislation took some time to work its way through into employment policy. I can well remember that, when I had my interview for the first ever academic job I was shortlisted for (I did not get it) in 1987, a hostile member of the panel referred to my ‘commitments in Oxford’ (the job was in another city), with the clear implication that the ‘commitments’ meant were domestic. This type of question was, in terms of the Act, illegal. However, the advice from the women’s officer at Oxford was ‘don’t make yourself unpopular by complaining’. For the last twenty years and more, the rules have been taken far more seriously, and I recall no occasion at a job interview, either as a member of the panel or as a candidate, where I have encountered a clearly discriminatory question of that kind.

The problem comes when one moves beyond the prevention of discrimination and in the direction of offering special concessions and incentives to members of particular groups. I am sympathetic in principle to this, but in practice it is often difficult to decide between categories of ‘particularly vulnerable’ person. At present, UK academic institutions take trouble to recognise a number of ‘protected characteristics’. The main ones, apart from gender and race, are sexuality and disability. However, there are still differentiating factors that may evade the process of selection and evaluation. For instance, family leave currently provides for the birth of a child, but not for time spent on caring for a terminally sick spouse or parent. The latter can be just as time-consuming, but allowances

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are not made for it.¹ No formal provision is made either for what one might call ‘academic added value’: remarkable achievement on the part of someone who did not start off advantaged in terms of their educational background, which may point to greater potential in the long term than that shown by people who at some early stage in their career seem impressive.

There is also the problem that real human beings don’t always fit into the neat classifications that are set up by well-intentioned policy-makers. For instance, is a member of an ethnic minority who comes from a financially and educationally advantaged background (a medical family in the capital, say) a more or less worthy candidate (in purely moral terms) than someone who belongs to the mainstream nationality, but grew up in a deprived post-industrial city and who had no members of the family in higher education? I don’t think that other academic cultures have solved these problems either — even if they recognise them to begin with. In any case, whether consciously or unconsciously, academic selection committees tend to be heavily influenced by what they see (perhaps wrongly) as ‘objective’ criteria, such as the number of a person’s publications and whether these have appeared in prestigious journals or with high-profile publishers. At most, ‘protected characteristics’ will be used at the selection borderline — to decide whether candidate X should get shortlisted, or candidate Y. That said, making sure that shortlists are diverse is a good start. If they are, then a candidate from a non-standard background has some chance of getting through (at any rate, in a culture which is at some level committed to open selection policy, which the UK universities I have had to deal with actually have been, at any rate over the last fifteen years or so).

A much more complicated issue, and one that is probably unresolvable, is ensuring ‘fairness’ in the sense that the most worthy candidate in the sense of intelligence, research productivity, talent for teaching, and so on, gets selected. Mobility in academic careers is low, and over the course of employment in a given institution, it’s perfectly possible for someone to move between ‘research star’ and ‘ballast’, and indeed back again. What makes for a functioning department is, to my mind, a situation where the contribution made by individuals is properly recognised, whatever it may be. One person may write and publish widely, but not be terribly good at organising, or may be good on paper but a terrible communicator. Someone who gets on extremely well with donors may be deeply unpopular with

¹ That said, it is customary to invite applicants to describe factors which might mean that special consideration should be exercised towards their candidature (for instance, in cases where applicants are ‘normally expected’ to be under forty, or to be no more than three years from the completion of their PhD, etc.). Family circumstances of any kind could be mentioned here. However, formal leave is not available to carers, and so their problems are in a sense ‘invisible’.

students.¹ Over the course of their career, people may stop being so productive in their own right, but become very good at creating an environment where others can work productively. If the criteria for selection and advancement are narrow, and if people acquire a neurotic conviction that it is possible to distinguish a ‘first-class scholar’ at first sight, then sclerosis is likely to ensue. By and large, too, diverse departments are more interesting and lively than homogeneous ones. When I think of people I work with who have an international academic reputation, I see no resemblance at all between them in terms of gender, sexuality, ethnic, educational, or cultural background, class, or anything else. They do have in common that, as well as usually working harder than most people around, they are outward-looking, in the sense that they don’t suppose the place they work in to be the centre of the world.

Whichever way, research is scarcely possible in total solitude. All those autistic mathematical geniuses beloved of the popular press are simply the exceptions that prove the rule. I have come across people who are convinced that only the ‘lone scholar’ can produce important work, but they strike me as deluded (they simply don’t notice or acknowledge the help they get from others). But equally deluded are the university administrators who constantly bang on about ‘collaborative research’ in the sense of everyone mechanically contributing to the study of one specific theme. Group projects provide a very good environment for scholars in some ways, but there needs to be enough flexibility here as well to allow for some level of individuation. Another consideration is, of course, how to encourage such flexibility, but job descriptions that can be renegotiated by mutual agreement, and incentive payments that recognise different types of achievement (rather than rewarding only those who achieve prominence in one fixed way, e.g. by getting outside job offers or large grants) are two possible suggestions. University bureaucrats should hold out against regimentation (which, unfortunately, they currently aren’t doing — in fact, things are going in the opposite direction, with increasing promotion of laughably insensitive indicators of ‘merit’, such as citation indices and so on, not to speak of efficiency courses run by management consultants, and increasing power assigned to ‘teaching and learning’ institutes as well. The latter phenomena are fine when it’s a question of support, but they often stand for control as well).

2 I certainly think it’s vital to provide plenty of funding for those who still have the enthusiasm and energy to use it. The fact that, in today’s UK, it is extremely hard to get funding for doctoral research, writing

¹ Of course, there are professional fundraisers too, but in practice, donors often want to meet academics, since the desire to encounter leading intellectuals is often a motivating factor in their generosity.

up your dissertation, and working at post-doctoral level, is both regrettable and harmful to the country's academic culture, at least in the short term (large numbers of well-qualified young scholars end up going to universities abroad, particularly in the US, rather than UK ones, and every year, a significant proportion of excellent applicants who are given places at the leading universities end up unable to take these up because of lack of money).¹ Once young scholars actually land a job, though, funding is now relatively generous, and it has improved significantly over the last fifteen-twenty years (there are quite a lot of 'starter researcher' competitions around, alongside the high-profile awards such as the Philip Leverhulme Prize, and the Humboldt Foundation, both of which exclude senior researchers, rather than junior ones). A much more complicated situation is that of young (and indeed older) researchers who don't have a permanent job. In the US, there is understandable anxiety about 'adjunctisation', or the spreading practice of employing junior academics short-term, on low salaries and sometimes in disadvantaged conditions (e.g. on 'zero hours' contracts, where the person essentially does academic 'piece-work', with almost no leverage over the circumstances in which he or she works). The rise of the 'adjunct' is probably less widespread in the UK than in US, perhaps because trades unions have rather more leverage. But post-docs and temporary lecturers are explicitly excluded from many grant awards, and it's not unknown for able individuals to end up working part-time for years — a key category of person that is especially exposed to this situation is the parent of young children (most often the mother) whose spouse or partner is working for a university that cannot or will not offer employment to him or her. The UK system also provides very badly for retired scholars, yet sometimes people reach their greatest levels of productivity precisely at this time — once they can work uninterruptedly, and draw on their decades of expertise. While I'm sceptical, as I've already indicated, about the extent to which reforms of employment policy will necessarily always produce better results, I do think that generous funding for research produces results, and targeting it at younger scholars makes sense not just because of their higher energy levels, but also because early exposure to funding competitions will foster the emergence of a cohort of committed and experienced grant-holders once they reach middle age.

3

I haven't come across a single academic culture (UK, Russia, Ireland, Germany, France, the USA, Australia, Scandinavia... I could go on) where patronage doesn't play a role. So far as the UK

¹ To clarify: I'm all for academic mobility, but the current system leads to waste of talent and generational stagnation, as well as impacting badly on diversity — a purely meritocratic system would welcome all, including locals, on the basis of ability, rather than stacking the odds against locals.

is concerned, a strong reference from a supervisor who is known to the committee is without doubt one of the major factors when it comes to a high ranking in the selection process. If a single person has written several references, then the committee usually starts trying — whether explicitly or not — to guess at the rank order that underlies these. Yet one can have legitimate anxieties about the capacity of powerful patrons properly to recognise the talents of associates who challenge their own preconceptions: ‘favourite’ students are by no means always the most able, and the reverse, of course, also applies.

Sometimes the committee will ask for references only after they have ranked the candidates, but that can raise problems also, since precisely a letter of reference can often provide the background detail that allows one to sense, say, whether candidate X’s article in a prestigious journal was actually characteristic of their ability in a more general sense. Letters of reference can also help explain career gaps and so on (i.e. do something to redress the asymmetry of advantage that is discussed in question 1). Conversely, if there aren’t letters of reference, then vast amounts of power rest in the hands of the selection committee — with the associated danger that they will pass superficial and even prejudiced judgment on candidates whose subjects are unfamiliar to them. I really don’t know what the solution to this is. And, while UK universities remain devoted to the face-to-face interview as a third source of evidence on the candidate’s qualities, it’s not at all clear that those capable of impressing a board for thirty minutes are necessarily the best appointments in the long term. It would be simple if one person always came out way ahead by all three criteria, but that far from always happens.

4

Any coherent intellectual and pedagogical system will have the advantage of producing predictable results; that, of course, is also its disadvantage. How does one inculcate shared values and a sense of professional expertise and intellectual confidence without generating standardisation and making people narrow-minded and smug? It’s a tricky question.

Successful academics need a good grasp of what historian of science Thomas Kuhn referred to as ‘paradigms’, but if they are to ‘shift’ these, then their insight has to go further. In practice, it’s quite hard to inculcate concepts and theories in a meaningful way without at some level seeming to endorse these. The result of this can be kind of academic ‘cloning’; but without some sense of direction, students and young scholars may lose their way altogether. I think the way out of this dilemma perhaps lies in the insight that learning about scholarship is about learning from example as well as from explicit instruction (I recall that Lidiya Ginzburg remarked of Yuri Tynyanov that he ‘taught’ in precisely this way, i.e. by providing examples, in

his lectures, of how his analytical process worked, rather than by telling anyone what to do). I would say also that young scholars learn a great deal from their peers — so an academic ‘school’ can end up more diverse than might seem at first sight, because the direct influence of some prominent person may well be mediated (and challenged!) by the ideas and suppositions of others around. And, of course, ideas can shift when their originator is presenting them in a seminar room, which is a more unstable environment than a formal lecture, let alone an article. The opportunity to contest ideas as they are voiced is a major advantage of the traditional, as opposed to the ‘virtual’, university. All in all, ‘schools’ are often more of a subjective phenomenon (people who’ve studied together legitimating their own friendship network) than an objective one.

5

Sometimes one reads an application for graduate work and finds that the person has written, ‘I want to be an academic’. I’m impressed by this level of certainty, but I can’t say I’ve ever felt it myself. I only gradually came to decide that I might have the interest and ability to get a permanent job in academia, and had no real ideas about where and what it was likely to be until I was well into my thirties. Part of the reason for this is, I think, lies in the academic career path itself. Like other nineteenth-century professions (law and medicine are two other cases in point), it demands a long apprenticeship, over the course of which substantial hurdles are encountered, and smaller and smaller numbers are allowed to progress to the next hurdle.¹ For graduate funding you need a top undergraduate degree; only a few graduates progress to funded post-docs; a still smaller proportion of these will gain permanent employment, and of those, yet fewer end up promoted to top university positions. What is more, gaining employment and progressing within it require (though by no means all departments acknowledge this) a particular set of social skills, as well as the intellectual ones. The brilliant but uncooperative (or simply unsocialised) are likely to get passed over. There’s a sense that much of academic life is about saying that so-and-so is ‘not good enough’, and exposure to this can be demoralising. Over the last few years, too, the expectations that go with a permanent appointment have risen (both in terms of numbers of publications, and in terms of teaching skills and administrative load).

The sum of this is to suggest that I’m not the best advisor on steady progression (having not really ‘planned’ my career in a systematic sense). In any case, I think that the academic career is quite a haphazard process anyway — often, patterns only emerge in

¹ This derives, of course, from the history of professionalisation, driven by the need to distinguish the truly competent from dilettantes and gentlemen-scholars in the pursuit of new relationships with the institutions of society and state. It works rather less well when the latter have moved to a position of scepticism bordering on derision towards the nature of the qualifications achieved.

retrospect, when one seemed to be stumbling along at the time. I suppose what worked for me was trying to keep the sense that the intellectual questions I was looking at were worth investigation to begin with, and that at least the work I was doing interested me, even if it didn't necessarily seem very 'commercial'. If you regard being paid for work that you enjoy as a kind of bonus, you are likely to end up happier than if you attempt to second-guess what might be necessary to achieve x, y, or z career objective, since what senior academics regard as 'achievements' can shift in any case.

One main consideration is not to expect anything to happen too quickly. If you want instant results, you should be working in journalism or write a blog. Often, an academic article can seem to have no resonance at all for weeks or even months. And its resonance may be peculiar — a good way of gauging this is to sign up to the site academia.edu, which provides figures for numbers of downloads. I remember talking a few years ago to a scientist colleague who had participated in the national research audit, the RAE (now renamed the REF, but the procedures, and in particular the fixation on bibliometrics and other supposedly 'measurable' criteria, remain much the same). He remarked that the academics who had emerged as outstanding had just one thing in common — they were almost all in their forties. In the circumstances, early success can be problematic — you can end up 'with a great future behind you', and not justifying expectations is a troublesome psychological state to be in. Erich Hobsbawm, in his memoirs, argued that he was actually quite lucky to suffer discrimination in middle age (because of his Communist connections and so on), because that made his senior years less embarrassing than for those whose round of honorary degrees and other awards reflected achievements that were decades old. In my late twenties, I was deeply envious of people who already had jobs (I was thirty three before anything permanent turned up, which was very late by British standards back then, and was turned down for everything I applied for all over the place). Now, I think I was probably lucky to live on research funding and get a good list of publications before I had to start trying to teach *and* research at the same time. Some of the details of academic life vary a lot from place to place, but these considerations — work for yourself, and expect it to be a long haul, with plenty of reversals along the way — are, I think, universal.

ANNA KUSHKOVA

In my opinion, the invitation to the discussion is marred by an excessive degree of generalisation, or, rather ‘averaging’. What is ‘the institutional system of modern scholarship’ — more precisely, which particular system and which particular scholarship do they have in mind? If we are to take the situation in Russia, then, for example, my generation, which graduated from its universities and institutes in the early to mid-nineties, found itself in a situation where it could, on the one hand, continue to pursue its ‘career’ within the old structures (both in the sense of the scholarly institutions, and in the sense of approaches), but, on the other, already had the possibility of studying new disciplines and/or studying in a new manner, first and foremost in such newly founded schools as the European University. If I am not mistaken, there was not a single ethnographer in my ‘cohort’ of ten persons in the Faculty of Ethnology (now the Faculty of Anthropology) in 1997, which means that many people were starting to study a new field, or rather new fields, more or less from the very beginning, thus ‘condemning’ themselves to being ‘behind for their age’ with reference to some arbitrary moment of ‘scholarly maturity’.

Whether this ‘backwardness’ prevented these ‘late students’ from achieving any of their plans outside the academic field is another matter, concerning their personal lives (not that these proceed according to a strict programme either), whereas the topic of the present discussion is formulated to a large extent as ‘looking down’ from the viewpoint of institutional statistics, expected regularities, desirable quantitative results, and so forth. As far as I am concerned, it did not get in my way. In my opinion, ‘scholarly maturity’ does not depend on the researcher’s chronological age, but by the length of time spent in fruitful professional activity and by what the person in question has become in the profession, having begun when and where he or she did.

There is a second important factor, namely the kind of discipline with which we are dealing. My father, who spent all his life studying differential calculus, once told me: 'If at the age of twenty-five a mathematician has not defended his candidate's dissertation and does not have a definite idea of what his doctoral dissertation will be about, he will never be a real mathematician.' This, of course, is also an instance of 'averaging', which reflects the attitude within the discipline to the standard career, but my experience now suggests that there is something more here than just numbers. There is scholarship and scholarship, so to speak. Now, when I have the opportunity of observing social anthropologists aged between twenty-two and twenty-five, with whom I am again sitting 'at the same desk', I constantly feel how important one's personal social experience is in studying the social experience of others. I do not know how to put this better — it is probably one of those things that defies exact formulation — but perhaps it may be compared with the difference between studying the culture of one's own language and that of a language that one has learnt. What Malinowski called 'the imponderabilia' of social life. I do not mean at all that it is 'the later the better' in anthropology and the other social sciences, only that a researcher's professional path cannot be measured with the same statistical measure in the natural sciences and the humanities.

I am not so much embarrassed as confirmed in my apprehensions and everyday observations by the terminology in which the discussion is cast: 'competitiveness', 'progress' and, while we are about it, the very word 'career'. I have no illusions about the total commodification of each and all, within the framework of which everything becomes 'merchandise' (more or less saleable), everything may be evaluated in accordance with set criteria of 'suitability' and 'applicability', and everything has to have its 'outcomes' (including, one might say, the imponderabilia). But the social anthropologist in me cannot help resisting such an approach. I suppose this is why I do not regard work 'outside academe' as something to be frightened of (though the pragmatic in me nevertheless takes a different road).

When I look at those of my colleagues and acquaintances who are deeply 'rooted' in academic structures (both in Russia and America), that is, people who have achieved 'scholarly maturity' and — often — recognition in their field, I am always horrified by the bureaucratic pressure under which these people constantly labour in order to have the possibility of functioning within those structures. Signing 'contracts for educational services' in accordance with the 'technical plan' and the 'certification of the delivery and acceptance of the results of the work'; the accounting that accompanies every step of their professional activity (for example, having to supply 'orders for the conduct of actions' with the 'programmes of the actions, list of those attending, and texts (abstracts, shorthand records) of the

participants' contributions'); alienation (in the classical sense of the word) of the results of their work by academic institutions (for example the compulsory form of registration of works in the Russian Index of Scholarly Citations, indicating the institution where the person works, even if the work has no direct relation to it), etc. — is this not one reason why the position of the 'independent scholar' is so attractive?¹ However, whether it guarantees the latter greater 'success' is another question.

A 'successful' (and 'timely') career has to be paid for. And any idea, however good it is, can be reduced to bureaucratic or other kinds of absurdity. In this context I would like to say a few words on the idea of 'equal opportunities' in scholarship.

I am fortunate enough never in my life to have been the object of 'positive discrimination' under any 'protected category' (and there are many of them, and the list, as they say, is potentially open) — so, at least, I would like to believe. What I have done, I have done with my own hands, and what I have not done also. Of course, people may object (as indeed they sometimes do) that had I not been born when I was, in a major European city, in a well-off academic family, I would never have seen... and so on, another list. That my background embodies the social inequality of that time and place, where I happened to be...

Well then, I am prepared to agree, up to a point. Yes, indeed, had I been born, like someone I know, in the late 1930s, in exile in Kazakhstan, where her family had been deported for no other reason than that her father was an ethnic German (for which he was sent to the camp where he died), whose mother had bribed an official to change her German patronymic to a Russian one in her identity documents, and who afterwards, when she was grown up, managed by hook or by crook to obtain a Leningrad residence permit — there is no doubt that my life would have turned out differently.

That, however, is another matter. No one, neither anthropologists, nor politicians, nor the wo/man in the street, will deny that life is in one way or another 'unfair' (though they will mean different things by this, and have in mind different consequences of that proposition). Everyone has his or her own starting-point (and that includes age, see above), but the formalisation of this evident proposition is already a construct of sorts, from which definite (bio)political conclusions may be drawn. I do not remember the cliché exactly, but the fact that

¹ The quotations are from the 'Agreement on the collective contract for the carrying out of work (provision of services) on the subject of: The solution of complex problems in the area of the science of culture within the framework of the realisation of the Programme for the Strategic Development of the RGGU (project 2.1.4)', which has just come into force.

‘the X tribe in Africa have not had their Pushkin’¹ does not necessarily mean (a) that this is the consequence of the predatory policy of European colonisation or (b) that we must immediately find money for a grant/professorial chair for a representative of the X.

‘Equal opportunities’ — but where and in relation to what? The etymology of the word ‘career’ presupposes movement, as it were, from point a to point b. Like that, lower case, not capitals, because, even if one thinks of some sort of universal Academy, there is no such thing as a single ideal point to which each and all ought to be heading. There are no universal (and that includes cross-cultural) criteria for ‘success’, a ‘correct’ ‘career’, and so forth. *Why*, and for *whom*, is it necessary that they should have their ‘Pushkin’? And what, in fact, does it mean that they do *not* have *‘him’*?

I happened to encounter one particular variant of ‘positive discrimination’ last year, when I received official university ‘access’ to work in the ‘field’ (the decision is made by the American Institutional Review Board after undergoing multiple ‘ethical training’ sessions, filling in countless forms and writing a multitude of proposals). Towards the end of this process the system produced the following question: ‘What efforts will you make to ensure equal access of women and representatives of ethnic minorities to participation in the interviews?’ This was a general question, that is, it was not addressed to me personally, but to all ‘fieldworkers’. In other words, the subject of my (or anyone else’s) research, his or her aims, his or her chronology, etc., took second place — the main thing was ‘to ensure access’. If I had been honest, my answer would have been ‘I shall not make any such efforts.’ I shall be happy to listen to anyone at all who is able to tell me about what interests me, but I am not going to make any special efforts. But that is not how one could answer — how can one do without access? I was saved by the fact that for the most part I talk to old and very old people (among whom women are in the majority), and that I was studying former Soviet Jews: ‘the *majority* of my informants are members of an ethnic *minority*,’ I replied somewhat sarcastically. And the proposal was approved.

I am not against the principle of equal opportunities as such, and not against any form of ‘diversity’, but I am against the idea of making the idea of ‘positive discrimination’ an absolute. The one thing that in my opinion is important is whether what is being done is being done for the sake of the people concerned (for their good — as they understand it), or whether giving them certain privileges helps academic institutions to achieve some ends of their own (an increase

¹ In the sense, a writer of world stature who is also seen as the founding father [sic.] of the national culture. [Eds.].

in the rating of a teaching institution, attracting extra funding, etc.). How is this creation of absolutes to be avoided? The answer to that question probably requires a study of the way meaning is generated within the academic institutions themselves, that is, to a great extent, a study of themselves.

ALEKSANDR NAZARENKO

In the trenches

When commentating on this subject, it is hard not to slip into an emotional critique of the problems that arise for a researcher at the initial stages of his/her academic career. While I was writing my ideas down I had to stop myself on several occasions and interrupt the work, as the text was turning into an evaluation of the measures taken by management structures to support young scholars. I think that these interruptions were beneficial, and enabled me to formulate certain aspects of the academic life of an early-career researcher more exactly. The considerations which follow are supported by examples which I have encountered and continue to encounter over the last three years, when I decided to become involved in scholarship and education. I should add that my own discipline — however provisional this formulation is — is sociology.

Many research students in regional universities remind one of soldiers in the trenches. The soldier sits in a reliably fortified position, obeying his superior's command 'not to stick his neck out', and calmly converses with his fellow-soldiers. The young people carry on engaging conversations about the contribution of this or that theoretician to the topic of their research, ironically discuss some academic event organised by their department, or yet another article by the local DSc. The life of this sort of research student follows its own path, peacefully and regularly, speeding up periodically when it is time for the year's work to be confirmed at a departmental meeting. The result of these accelerations is the required number of articles

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published in journals approved by the Higher Attestation Commission (VAK), two thirds of which will be published in the publications of the university where the student is studying, plus a few articles in the proceedings of regional conferences or else conferences with overseas participation which they do not actually attend. Not all of them reach the finish line (the defence of their dissertation), but those that do invariably pass,¹ after which they have a legitimate right to speak in the name of scholarship.

Can we blame this sort of candidate of science for anything? My answer is no. They did not choose the rules of the game. Moreover, from a formal point of view, they have fulfilled all the requirements leading up to their defence (the 'VAK articles', the conferences, the certificate that there is no plagiarism in the dissertation). What, then, was the point of the preceding paragraph, written with a certain irony? It was intended to demonstrate the vector that the academic career of a young researcher acquires if s/he obeys the command 'not to stick his/her neck out'. In essence, when s/he hears this command, the research student begins to think like this: 'So, my supervisor suggests that I should not be in too much of a hurry to publish my results in *Antropologicheskij forum*, because s/he thinks the material is too 'raw'. It could lead to questions being asked not only of me, but also of them, or so they think. Still, the empirical data that I got were presented at a serious conference, and the people who heard the work I did on them rated it highly. It may be that the criticism that might come either from the editorial board of the journal, or from its readers, would reflect badly on my supervisor's image. It's quite probable that after that our relations would become strained and it would be very hard for me to defend my dissertation successfully at a board where his/her opinion carries great weight. Better leave it all as it is and follow the advice that I'm given.' In my opinion, any researcher who takes such a decision automatically loses the fight for prestige in the academic field. The pragmatic option of writing a dissertation in three or four years and defending it according to the rules proposed by your supervisor appears to be the easiest way to go. But there is another side to the coin: if the researcher never leaves the trench, s/he never enters the communicative field of the academic world. Accordingly, s/he remains unacquainted with new conceptual and methodological developments, s/he has no information about his/her competitors, working on similar topics, the quality of his/her publications in academic editions suffers, and so on.

¹ The procedures that accompany the defence of a dissertation are a subject for a separate discussion. Their fulfilment is a sacred rite in the transition from research student to candidate of science. One person I know, reflecting on the preparations for his defence, remarked that 'When it was all over, I woke up the next day with only one thought in my head: that all the preceding month I had been the victim of violence every hour of every day.'

So we have two alternatives: 1. Stay in the trench, or 2. Leave it and take the risk. The second way is harder and is apt to stretch the prospect of defending the dissertation to a period of five to eight years. Two strategies — two types of researcher.

It is not only the supervisor's position that can stop people leaving the trench. Early-career researchers are put off by the discourse that surrounds prestigious academic journals, or by the expense of conference participation. Yes, there is the problem of 'long queues' at many Russian academic publications. Getting to the place where the conference is happening, and paying for accommodation and subsistence, is no less of a difficulty. It is also true that research students receive their payments from the federal budget for research trips late,¹ and obtaining all the necessary visas takes at least three weeks. The many obstacles to leaving the trench can be listed over and over again.

Despite this, there is a way out. If we are talking of sociology, one can call to mind seven journals in Russia which prefer the quality of publications to their authors' symbolic capital.² It is particularly important that there are hundreds of such publications abroad, and they are open to joint work. Besides, the host institution may pay travel and other expenses for a conference or research visit in part, or in some cases even in full. For this researchers must train themselves in how to find the information. For example, they must make active use of the internet to monitor the announcements made by grant-awarding bodies inviting applications for funding, communications from research centres and laboratories, and portals dealing with the commissioning of services by government agencies or legal persons.

Now I would like to direct my attention towards the age limits that prevent people from occupying better positions in the academic field. Age discrimination against the young researcher or research student may manifest itself in various ways. One of these is the prohibition against disagreeing with senior colleagues' decisions. The situation at departmental meetings when the subjects of undergraduate or masters' dissertations are to be confirmed provides particularly good evidence. I will give one example. A student had suggested a subject the title of which included the phrase 'local socium'. My comment on the vagueness of the semantic limits of this concept was followed by an aggressive reaction on the part of the supervisor, which essentially boiled down to three questions: 'And

¹ Under the terms of many agreements at university level, the research student does not receive the money for his/her research trip until after coming back. [This is standard at US and Western European universities as well. — Eds.].

² The freshest example is the journal *Sotsiologiya vlasti*, which, since it has had its new editorial committee, has started to publish the work of young researchers without higher degrees in large quantities.

what do you know about the *socium*, young man?’ ‘Have you ever picked up a sociological dictionary?’ and ‘What definition can you give yourself?’ Unfortunately I failed the exam. At the point where I was starting to answer the first question, my distinguished colleague offered his own exegesis of the concept of the ‘*socium*’, stressing its ‘local’ attribute in particular.

The most interesting thing for anyone studying manifestations of age discrimination against young researchers is the way they have to undertake different tasks given to them by their supervisor, head of department or other academic agents. These tasks are various, sometimes involve physical labour, and in the opinion of those who are constantly carrying them out, give ‘the green light’ for the defence of their dissertations. Among these may be: meeting members of the dissertation committee at the railway station and accompanying them in the taxi to their hotel; taking practical classes instead of the supervisor on a voluntary basis and in addition to the practical requirements for the degree; working with the printing houses that are printing a monograph by the supervisor or by members of the department to which the research student belongs; writing teaching programmes or research projects in the name of the scholar with the greatest symbolic capital.¹

It has been suggested that age discrimination in Russian academia is particularly widespread in those disciplines where there are only one or two funded places for research students each year, and in those universities where there is little generational movement among the academic staff. This hypothesis might perhaps be modified. Whether it is able to explain the situation can be decided only after it has been tested. Therefore for the time being we shall confine ourselves to a few elucidations.

When there are not many research students, there is not much competition between them for teaching hours, participation in research projects, or finding a post among the academic staff of the department or research group. The lack of any spirit of competition leads to a decline in quality of academic production. In these circumstances the criterion for getting teaching hours or funding is not the researcher’s results, but his/her loyalty to those who have these resources in their gift. As a rule, they are allotted by the professors.

¹ One common research topic is the study of discrimination against young researchers by academic journals. Merton’s ‘Matthew effect’ still operates, which makes it difficult to lessen the distance between researchers rich in symbolic capital and those who have only just begun their struggle for academic recognition. This topic will continue to attract the attention of researchers in various fields within the discipline of sociology. However, by the examples that I am giving I would like to transfer the focus of research on to those practices and patterns of behaviour followed by young people who are experiencing academic discrimination by reason of their age.

The second factor that encourages age discrimination is more obvious. In my opinion, it is more typical of regional universities. When there is only a feeble flow of young researchers into the academic sphere, and when there are not many candidates' dissertations being defended, the change-over of generations within the academic staff takes place very slowly, which results in a high average age. The older generation, being in the majority, sets the rules of the game. Anyone who does not accept them gets out of the trench and migrates towards the major academic centres.¹ Those who remain are those who are prepared to submit to those colleagues who are more respected on account of their years and symbolic accumulations. I might add that a research students' submissiveness to their elders is dictated by their desire for an easy defence. Therefore the relationship between those who aspire to a higher degree and those on whom it depends is organised on the pattern of domination and submission.

I would now like to turn our attention to the measures necessary for supporting young researchers. When such questions are discussed, they are often reduced to the financial stimulus. The logic is simple: if you pay the researcher decent money, you will get results. But how are the results of scholarly activity to be assessed, so as to pay 'decent money' for them? There are various indicators,² which if met guarantee a high income. There is a particular accent on publications, especially in foreign journals. For example, at the Northern (Arctic) Federal University a publication in a journal listed in the 'Web of Science' is worth as many points in the 'efficiency contract' as a monograph.

The size of the payments made in accordance with the fulfilment of normative indicators of academic activity has one serious drawback. It is expressed in the quantitative rather than qualitative assessment of the results of the researcher's work. The result is a paradoxical situation. The number of publications and the amount of conference participation grow, but at the same time these articles and conferences are for the most part published and take place in Russia, not many people know about them, and as a result hardly anybody cites them.

When they follow quantitative logic, the early-career researcher gains financially, but loses in quality. Measures that would free up

¹ Some of them simply give up and leave academia altogether.

² The highest concentration of indicators of academic activity may be found in the blueprints for 'effective contracts' which are gradually being introduced in the Russian higher education system. The introduction of such a method may certainly turn out very productive in the long term. Confirming such a document is quite a painful process, and raised many questions in academic circles within universities. The most serious question in those versions of the 'effective contract' from various universities which I have seen is the lack of any norms in the indicators both for teaching grades and for holders of different degrees.

time for active scholarly work would be highly beneficial. When people can immerse themselves completely in their subject, knowing that they will receive perfectly acceptable payment for it, they can concentrate on their research without having to look for supplementary sources of income.¹ Working on a scholarly project takes a lot of time, which should not be spent producing the ten or more articles required to fulfil the conditions of the grant. This sort of practice has no scholarly value.

A different approach to the effectiveness of scholarly work seems to be more constructive. Over the period of the researcher's work (which may be the time s/he spends as a full-time research student) two or at the most three articles are to be prepared, with a view to publication at home or abroad, but in those journals which are considered the most prestigious in the field.² If this requirement is accepted, the system for the assessment of scholarly activity changes. The question is no longer 'How many articles have you published?' but 'What have you published?' and 'In which journals have they appeared?' Moreover, the system of payment for publication in foreign journals listed in the 'Web of Science' or 'Scopus' may be retained, provided the institution where the researcher works has the financial resources to cover it. It is not a question of vast sums. It is sufficient for them to have a stimulating effect and to push people towards new research practices.

The format of this work does not allow all the measures that would assist the development of the career of a young scholar to be set out in detail. I set out below some possible solutions to the problems with which, in my opinion, early-career researchers are faced. I do not claim that this review is complete, but I will point out that the problems I identify relate primarily to the university system of the Russian provinces.

Problem 1: a lack of publications in prestigious journals at home and abroad. Possible solutions: the development and provision of academic writing courses for bachelors', masters' and higher degrees; the creation of an administrative department in the university with the purpose of informing researchers of the requirements for publication in various journals, teaching them to work with electronic databases of academic publications, and also correcting the manuscripts of scholarly articles destined for publication abroad.

Problem 2: difficulties in planning, carrying out and reporting on research projects supported by grant-awarding bodies at home and

¹ The grants for research students at the European University or the academic research student programme at the National Research University — Higher School of Economics are excellent examples.

² The question of which academic journals are to be considered prestigious, and which are not, is a separate subject which goes beyond the scope of this text.

abroad. Possible solutions: the organisation by university research management of consultations on an ongoing basis concerning various grant-awarding bodies' criteria for the evaluation of research projects, of applications for funding, and research and financial reporting; teaching researchers the basics of the law on taxation and the respective spheres of responsibility of the commissioning and performing sides in research and development.

Problem 3: reduced motivation to engage in scholarly work. Possible solutions: the development by the university directorate of means to stimulate researchers' academic productivity, such as renewing library resources and electronic subscriptions to scholarly periodicals; assistance in publicising events organised by researchers (public lectures, science festivals, conferences, research schools); acquisition of equipment and software; reducing the bureaucratic load; inviting well-known professors from other institutions to lead research projects and give lectures; financial support.

This list is not exhaustive. For example, the problem of the bureaucratisation of academic life in this country is one of the most acute. I have no clearly developed plan of solutions to it at present. But I would specially stress that the bureaucratisation of universities will persist as long as there is an asymmetry between the salaries of the academic staff and the managerial staff. Because of this many researchers prefer to take on an administrative post within the university structure, thereby reducing their own orientation towards the generation of knowledge¹ and increasing the scale of bureaucratisation.

Let us return to the soldier in his trench. At some point he decides to disobey and leave his fortified position. Once he has disobeyed his orders, he becomes an alien element. He is not drummed out of the regiment — on the contrary, they understand that a partisan fighting outside the trenches can bring back invaluable intelligence and attract allies and their resources. On the other hand, his former comrades' attitude towards the disobedient soldier begins to change: in conversation he begins to attract epithets such as 'over-active', 'over-confident', 'rude' and 'impudent'.

This topic is an illustration of my career. It has lasted almost three years in all. It all began with me in rose-tinted spectacles. I was burning with desire to change something, was developing my scholarly competence and forming my ethos, I attended all the dissertation defences relevant to my discipline, followed the publications of local authors, wrote projects for organising educational forum,

¹ Everyone who has been part of academia has probably been faced with the problem of whether to engage in research and teaching or to become a university functionary and create the conditions for improving the university's teaching and research indicators.

gave consultations to students about their fieldwork, trained myself to write and did many other things. Now my aspirations are even stronger, but there is a problem. I do not want to spend my energy and knowledge in the place where I work and study. In my opinion, the development of an academic career depends to a large extent on the place where it is pursued. A researcher must be surrounded by people who care not about increasing their own symbolic capital, but about increasing knowledge. That sort of environment must care about what it is doing, offer ideas and enthuse other people with them. It must not be afraid to criticise or to find answering arguments when it is criticised. The existence of an intellectual environment forms the discourse, participation in which develops the novice's research potential. This environment must not be an example of political games aimed at securing leading positions in the university structure. Its aim must be a model of real devotion to its work. I must say that this is the ideal picture. The real state of affairs in a provincial university is very far from it. Therefore, when reality is depressing, I re-read Max Weber's famous Munich lecture of 1918, or the works of Gaston Bachelard, Bertrand Russell and Karl Popper.

Now a brief word on the realities. If I were asked to express life in academia in a few words, the first of those words would be 'transposition'. Since I have been working in the university I have constantly had to activate different modes of behaviour according to the situation. When you are talking to your supervisor you put on one mask, when talking to the university administration another, and when doing practicals with students yet another. A great number of variations are possible. You constantly have to monitor what you are saying and take note of what the person you are talking to is saying. If you drop your guard the result can be misunderstanding or irony on the part of those you are communicating with, with the concomitant risk to your reputation and future career. All these contexts are brilliantly described by the interactionist tradition.

The second word is 'choice'. Every day I decide in favour of one or another alternative. Whom should I approach with my proposal to organise a conference — the person who could give money, or the person who is well known in academic circles? Which journal should I send an article to, bearing in mind the three 'VAK publications' — one which will publish it quickly, but for a fee, the one which will publish it, but in a year's time, or the one which might not publish it at all, but which will pique your amour-propre with the reviewer's acid comments? Alas, no one who makes a choice is insured against mistakes. They are not necessarily the result of wrongly chosen basic strategies. You can make mistakes out of ignorance or a failure to understand the specific features of academia. When I look back and analyse my moves, I can identify two basic mistakes: writing my thesis in the same place where I did my first degree, and a failure to

understand the importance of knowing foreign languages for the development of an academic career.

Making choices is by no means a simple matter. For example, to stay in the trenches and lose one's chance in the struggle for recognition in the academic field, or to gamble everything (accumulated seniority, regular salary, career prospects) and take the risk. I think I made the right decision.

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1

I have devoted more than a quarter of a century to the effect of sex-related factors on social processes, hence I am mainly competent to answer the questions asked in connexion with the subject of the status of women in the academic community then and now. There is no question of any equality of opportunity between men and women (even though it is proclaimed) in our world; our community is part of Russian society, and therefore reproduces many of its features. It is a little easier for young women in modern academic research institutes than it was for previous generations, but that is only because of the growing feminisation of that sector of the professional market, and this is the direct consequence of low salaries. Those sectors of the economy where there is no possibility for high earnings rapidly become feminised. This is a truism. The particularities of sex-related factors in academic careers have been examined in many of my publications [Pushkareva 1997; 2002; 2005; 2006a; 2006b; 2007; 2008; 2010a; 2010b; 2011; 2012a; 2012b; 2012c; 2013a; 2013b; 2013c], and all seem to confirm the old Russian saying, 'be a scholar — get lots of bother'.¹

The question of whether there is a way out of the situation prompted me to collect the opinions of female representatives of various scholarly professions and disciplines; there is a special article devoted to this [Pushkareva 2014]. Here I shall just give a general summary... The autogynaecography of female scholars (women

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¹ *Idti v nauku — terpet muku* [go into scholarship and experience torment]. [Eds.].

talking about their own lives in unstructured interviews) allows us to arrange the details of their memories of deprivations during their personal and academic lives in particular sequences. Almost every life-story is a text which obeys a sort of hagiographical canon: deprivations, humiliations, complications, obstacles, and then their conquest and deserved success, and recognition (the selection of subjects was of female professors, who were confident in their success in life). The analysis of the sequences highlighted a correlation between the degree of difficulty that had to be overcome and the answer to the question whether women (particularly young women) in academia need help.

The more difficulties there had been, and the harder and more independent their rise in academic life, the more forcefully the respondents rejected the need to create any special organisations, programmes or systems of assistance (which they called ‘the inventions of the maltreated’). Indeed! Programmes and assistance of that sort would lower the price of the status that they have achieved. By contrast, younger women who had not suffered too much on account of the self-sufficiency of their careers, and had heard of western associations that unite female scholars and assist them in achieving an active position in life,¹ stated confidently that ‘some extra help would do no harm’, and listed the sorts of help and support that they would expect. This part of the respondents said that purposeful, directed support could enable a real change in power relations and a fairer position for women in scholarly and administrative structures. That is, they supported the participatory model of academic management, the ideas that women should be encouraged to take part in academic power structures to make sure that ‘women’s voices’ were heard. They stated with conviction that the creation of special organisations to unite female academics would be a way towards real assistance: ‘to help female scholars progress in their discipline, combining it with a family; to provide grants that could be “frozen” in the event of having to take leave for family reasons, to help academic couples to find work in their own specialities in the same city, to create university crèches, where a mother might leave her children and come and visit them during her breaks, and so on...’

2

What use can artificial restraints and limitations be? I see the very way the question is put, the suggestion that it may be ‘natural’ for

¹ This refers not only to the ‘lands of triumphant feminism’ (Norway, Sweden, Denmark and to a certain extent Finland), but also to some Central European countries and even more to the USA — that is, those where such organisations manage to have sanctions applied to deans and administrations that are guilty of some form of discrimination against women (by preferring to send young men to conferences, or failing to provide money for childcare in the name of keeping young women who have just had children in their research projects, etc.).

young people to be held back, as a manifestation of ‘academic *dedovshchina*’¹ (we had it hard when we were young, so you can suffer too). One would have thought that one should do everything possible so as not to crush the activity and aspirations of the younger generation that is following in our footsteps. There is, probably, a fine line between ‘anything goes’ and a certain ‘domestication’ of the younger generation — teaching them how to work in a team, how to write joint grant applications, not to be individualists, to listen to other people and to know how to fit their topics and the perspectives of study that interest them into the problems to be studied by their section of the institute.

Nowadays every door is open to young scholars, the funding bodies award age-restricted grants (up to the age of thirty five), promising young scholars are welcome abroad, and we are anxious to keep them here. There are special prizes for young women who have made a name for themselves in scholarship, of which the best-known is the Prix L’Oréal (unfortunately, not open to researchers in the humanities), and grant-awarding bodies too (the Lise-Meitner-Programm in Austria specially supports young women researchers who have been refused by other bodies; there have been numerous Russians among its recipients).

It is harder not for the youngest talents, but for those who are over thirty five, and sometimes over forty. Caring for their families has meant that these representatives of the academic community have had to slow down their career and professional progression in their youth (it is not customary for us to delay having children until we are ‘about forty’, as it is in Europe and the USA), women cannot receive any particular financial stimulus in our research institutes at that age, and, if they have not managed to obtain a higher doctorate in time, are practically regarded as past it. ‘There is no positive discrimination, but there is a bit of negative,’ sadly concluded one of my respondents when telling the tale of her defence of her higher doctorate. At the same time, this is a time of active scholarship for those women who have already served their time in the bulletproof vest of social decencies, requirements, prohibitions and permissions, and have acquired over the years their own point of view and accumulated their research (and social) experience. They — if we are talking about their scholarly age — deserve special attention: they already know a lot, and there is still a lot that they can do.

3

I think that young female academics are the only people for whom age discrimination is not an imaginary problem. Tell me, who

¹ *Dedovshchina* — the systematic bullying of conscripts prevalent in the Russian army; raw recruits are bullied by those who have been there longer. It survives on the principle that everyone gets to be a *ded*, or ‘senior’, in the course of time. [Eds.].

discriminates against young men in academic institutions? They very nearly idolise them: please, keep on writing, please, don't leave us...

But the problem of patronage is common to post-Soviet academia, and to academia in Europe. (In Germany they say that everybody needs vitamin B — meaning *Beziehungen*, 'connections'.) The higher the status of the supervisor, the easier it is for his or her 'school', or rather, for anyone attached to him or her. He or she need not, after all, have created a school as such (sometimes the concept of the school exists only on paper — on an application for a grant intended for a 'school'), but the advantages enjoyed by those young people who have made the right choice of academic patron are evident. There have been cases where the research students of major administrators have indicated, when submitting their papers to refereed journals, not their 'home port' (their institution or department), but the actual name of their supervisor... It is not unusual for people to choose whom they will consult precisely on account of his or her status (and not because of his or her scholarly reputation or even his or her closeness to the topic that interests them). You can anyway consult a knowledgeable specialist in the subject without paying for it and without having his or her name on all your documentation, and it is so much more useful for a young scholar to have a person with significant 'scholarly epaulettes' as a supervisor (even a nominal supervisor). The patron's 'epaulettes' can help one to be put forward for a prize (and to avoid failure — to make sure that no one else is), or a grant, or to enjoy a special academic administrative immunity (not being 'called on' for the 'general work' that sometimes involves every single research student).

Is this a particular feature of Russian scholarship?

Yes, up to a point. All our rough edges are more apparent, because there is no mechanism for anonymising applications and applicants' names, as is the custom abroad, and people practically never put themselves forward *proprio motu*. (Moreover, it is not every young female researcher who would make up her mind to come to the Academic Council and tell them that she too would like to try her strength and enter her work for a competition or apply for the single place that has been created 'on high' for the protégé of someone in the administration. Even if they might accept her application, it is not this courageous person that they will lobby for, so she will only be wasting her time...)

You can, of course, declare that you personally as a supervisor are above all such exercises in academic corruption. However, by playing according to your own rules (without active 'lobbying'), you place your pupils at a disadvantage in comparison with those who are 'helped'.

4

It is not so easy to create a school of scholarly activity if you work in an academic institute and not in a university. Talented and intelligent candidates for research studentships are first sorted by the directorate. Even when they go directly to particular specialist, they may be dissuaded from so doing and redirected to a different sub-department. But if the obstacles are overcome, then a research student who has come to precisely that field of learning, and to that specialist, that he or she had chosen in advance represents invaluable potential for strengthening the positions of one conception or another. It is understandable that once they have finished their studies, those pupils who ten years ago were timidly copying out definitions and terms from their teachers' works will, now grown up and fully fledged, easily enter into polemics with what the older generation has written. Of course they reproduce their supervisors' ideas, but sometimes with major corrections, and they criticise the founders of the school with the harshness of neophytes trying to seize their place in the sun. Is that something to get upset about?

Some, however, remain forever attached to their teachers' approaches. Among these I could mention the 'Pashutians', who began their careers in the Sector of Ancient States of the Institute of Russian History of the Russian Academy of Sciences (or the Institute of the History of the USSR of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, as it then was), directed by V. T. Pashuto, Corresponding Member of the Academy. Those who were once members of the group for the study of private life (Institute of Universal History of the Russian Academy of Sciences, directed by Yu. L. Bessmertnyi), or the history of mentalities (likewise at the Institute of Universal History, directed by A. Ya. Gurevich) regard their teachers with great veneration.

Schools do not hold back the progress of scholarship at all. They hold it together and serve as mechanisms for the transmission of values, approaches, methods and concepts from one generation of scholars to the next. To be able to lead his or her own school, its creator must have a talent for bringing people together and for personal self-denial. In our Russian conditions the leaders of schools were often specialists without children, without grandchildren, sometimes without any family at all. When pupils replace family, the teacher's care for his or her pupils becomes even more selfless...

The older generation of scholars still remembers what the relations between supervisors and research students were like in days gone by, when the young people often frequented their teachers' homes. A different rhythm of life dictated unhurried conversation over tea, and a different degree of involvement in the works and deeds of the young on the part of their elders. The younger generation imbibed their teachers' habits of thought along with their scholarship, and sometimes (as can be seen in the biographical interviews) their way

of life, sometimes even the way they dressed in its details, and copied the internal as well as the external — the degree to which their teachers devoted themselves to their work, the carefulness with which they dealt with empirical material and with sources.

No modern substitutes for these forms of scholarly co-operation — no temporary research groups, no web communities — can bring those times back or replace the depth to which the founders of those schools and those whom they brought up entered into each other's work. They live on only in the memory of those who were fortunate enough in their youth to be surrounded by like-minded people of all ages, led by the Teacher; and sometimes they can be glimpsed too in their behaviour, and in their relations with their own pupils.

5

Despite the feminist call to speak more of oneself in public, and more often to test the phenomenon under discussion against one's own experience and correlate it with what you have personally lived through ('The personal is the political!'), it is very hard to do this in the Russian context. That sort of story supposes a breaking of the unwritten convention of not talking about oneself (it is unethical to place one's own person in the centre of the conversation) and, given that what has been done has not yet come to its end (one's academic career continues, and continues in the context of its previous surroundings, including the academic administration), it is not without its dangers. As a researcher who has listened to many biographical interviews with 'learned ladies', and who has juxtaposed their experience with my own, I can confirm it: the hardest rung (or rungs...) on the career ladder is the one 'after obtaining a higher doctorate' [Pushkareva 2013b].

Before the 'doctoral' watershed, a woman researcher is considered young, growing, promising, but once she has crossed that border, she loses all practical use, since everyone would prefer to see a man at the head of any of the administrative divisions of an institute.¹ And 'everyone' in the Russian scholarly community, as we know, includes women, who want to be subordinate not to other women, but to men [Bachtold, Werner 1973]. The heads of academic institutes, too, prefer to rely on men (even if posts are confirmed by the academic council, all or most appointments to posts are made initially by the director alone). Besides, as one of the women who answered questions on gender asymmetry in the academic community concluded, 'grants are given to personalities, and the personalities in scholarship are almost always men' [Dezhina].

¹ In Russia, the higher doctorate [*doktorskaya stepen*] is regarded not only or mainly as a confirmation of scholarly standing, but as a stepping stone to an administrative position such as chair of a department. As in, say, the UK, the upshot tends to be that women are given the title of 'professor', but not the responsibilities. [Eds.].

A man might be appointed to head some division ‘in advance’ of his defence — ‘We are entrusting this laboratory to you and we trust that within the next two years the defence of your doctoral dissertation will take place.’ Women cannot even dream of that sort of appointment or that sort of conversation. Female scholars have to be prepared for this: it’s harder for us in a man’s world...

Practically all the respondents from all disciplines, who had obtained their higher doctorates before they were forty (this was the group I selected for one of my projects), said that after they had obtained their degrees nobody offered them anything: no posts, no salary increases (they had to argue for it and obtain it for themselves, and often the administration proposed that they should remain in the same ‘senior’ posts, because the number of ‘leading’ posts in the institute was limited, and they were never really advertised), no membership of the academic council or of grant committees, and least of all promotion to corresponding member of the academy. (An exception was the career of one of those who responded to my questions, who had got into the Russian Academy of Sciences as part of the quota for young people in geography, and incidentally, who proved an exceptionally honest and socially active participant in the protest movement during the ‘reforms’ of the Academy in 2013.)

When I evaluate my own and similar life strategies and behaviour in the academic community, I should like to wish the new generation of female researchers, who come after us, to be bolder and more consistent in defending their own visibility (I shall say nothing of rights), and to be able to find ways to attract attention to their own achievements. As for the life of the academic community itself, then there should be more transparency in the evaluation of the work of individual researchers, female and male, and a longer list of criteria by which their success is to be judged.

It is obvious that no scholar can work with ever-increasing efficiency year by year for his or her whole life. Bibliometric indicators (citation and Hirsch indexes) mercilessly register every period of a falling-off in publication rates and every organisational failure. But no rising career can do without them. What is more important, ‘gaps’ and ‘dips’ may be associated with unexpected indifference to a subject which had shortly before been the centre of attention (say, the history of workers’ protest demonstrations at the beginning of the twentieth century, which sank into oblivion together with the history of the CPSU), and which is now unjustly thrown out into the back yard. A young researcher should also be prepared for a topic that was not long before considered open for discussion suddenly to become a forbidden one (the history and theory of sexual culture, the problems of the LGBT community).

The number of any scholar's publications immediately after the doctoral defence is always great, but moving on to new subjects, particularly those unconnected with the two dissertations (candidate's and doctoral) is a prolonged and onerous process, in which one cannot rely on help from anyone. I would like to warn my young colleagues of these difficulties, and of the inevitable but hard period of scholarly maturing. To warn them, but to give them confidence in their own abilities. And one should not forget that — in the words of the American politician Madeleine Albright — 'there is a special place in hell for women who don't help other women' [Shellenberger 2012]. Not for us. ☺

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ANNA SOKOLOVA

For me the hardest time (both practically and psychologically) in my career progression was the period after the birth of my first child. I was twenty four, I was a research student and I was more than willing to combine motherhood and academic work. Soon, however, it became apparent that the Russian academic community around me was not only unprepared to support my efforts to ‘remain in the saddle’, but was sometimes openly hostile to them. At this time I had the opportunity to participate in a HESP ReSET programme. From my experience of conferences abroad, where I often saw young mothers with their children, I presumed that my little daughter (who at that time of her life was mostly asleep and made no unnecessary noise) would be no hindrance to my participation. But I was mistaken. When they found out that I was intending to come to the first session of the seminar with a baby, the Russian organisers of the programme refused to let me take part, and by the second session it became clear that my place had been given to someone else, of which I had not even been informed. Even the fact that my mother was ready to come with me to allow me more freedom at the time of the sessions made no difference to the situation. This sort of attitude on the part of senior colleagues at the

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very beginning of my academic career, certainly undermined my enthusiasm for academic work. However, now I understand that it was not these particular organisers who were the problem, but the general attitude to young mothers in the academic (and not only the academic) milieu in Russia. Indeed, the attitude is very different in other countries. In Germany, for example, the organising committees of many conferences arrange for a short-stay crèche so that female researchers can also present the results of their research. Many grant-awarding bodies not only do not count time spent looking after a child as part of one's academic career (which is important if the application must be made within a certain time of receiving one's PhD), but also offer additional financial support for children and assistance in finding accommodation for women participants. And this is not only in European countries and America. For example the Belarusian National Library in Minsk has a children's playroom, which allows women not to put off their work indefinitely, but simply take their children with them.

VIKTOR VORONKOV

I Pursue My Career by Not Pursuing It

To understand my point of view regarding academic careers, one must take account of the fact that I worked for more than twenty years in the state institutes of the Academy of Sciences and the same length of time in an institute independent of the state (a non-profit organisation, NPO). I can make comparisons. From my perspective the academic social sciences in today's Russia are divided into the formal, state, official sphere and the independent and informal (from the point of view of the officials who, moreover, are the ones who dictate the rules of existence in scholarship). Russia does not have a unified academic community. Therefore for a researcher in the social sciences the career question is the question of where to pursue this 'career': in a state university (or academic institute), or in a non-state organisation (or even as an independent researcher). And what, in fact, is to be regarded as a career?

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The usual model of a successful professional biography is based on the idea that one's work life is a ladder which one climbs, following the unwritten rules of promotion to ranks with

the corresponding remuneration (in monetary or symbolic form) within the framework of some sort of formal corporation, according to one's age and other ascriptive signs. If we are to continue to orient ourselves on this sort of normative model of professional progress, then young scholars have many difficulties in contemporary society.

I remember the answer given some years ago, at the time of the student protest against poor teaching at the MGU Sociology Faculty, to my good friend — and an excellent professional — Aleksandr Bikbov by Professor Yury Averin, also of MGU. When Sasha had given a critical evaluation of one of the professors, who had managed to publish all kinds of low-quality textbooks and monographs by the dozen, the distinguished professor reproached him: 'How many monographs have you published, young man? When you have written as many as N. has, then you will have the right to criticise him.'

A young scholar does not have many opportunities for research initiatives in this model. They are determined by the rules of the corporation and naturally limited by the barriers between different positions. The easiest way is to 'suck up to the professor', that is, to subordinate one's own scholarly interests to those of the head, or supervisor, who controls the resources. According to the rules of the academic corporation, such a supervisor should be interested in forming his or her own 'school', which is an institution in the academic field which creates extra resources for the increase of reputation and material well-being, both personal and collective. Such schools are characteristic of vertically monitored (Russian) academic institutes. A purely administrative phenomenon with strict rules for their subordinates: 'one step out of line is considered an escape attempt.' Russian state scholarship today is seriously ill. This is particularly visible when one analyses the situation in the social sciences. The rules of a formal career are to a large extent determined by corruption, falsification, plagiarism and cronyism. Alongside honest researchers there are a vast number who have bought or copied their dissertations, but have obtained senior positions thanks to their non-academic social capital. I go to the site of a well-known consulting firm and read their price list for academic work. A candidate's dissertation starts at 110 000 roubles, a doctoral dissertation at 350 000, writing a monograph at 60 000, writing an article for a 'VAK journal' at 5 000 (for a foreign journal with an impact factor, of course, it costs twice as much). There are also various discounts and a premium for urgent work. At other firms the fee for an 'all-inclusive' dissertation may also include guaranteed questions and answers at the defence and even the celebratory banquet. These prices are perfectly affordable for a state official or deputy, so after the heavy labour of statesmanship they can quietly live out their days as professors, if not heads of department. How do you like the rules of the corporate career in Russia?

It seems to me that the questions about the problems of scholarly careers asked by the journal are asked exclusively from the perspective of the state and state-sponsored scholarship — scholarship that was once organised so as to serve the Soviet type of society, and has remained without the necessary forms for the last quarter of a century. But there is now another career model, one where the scholar does not aim to cash in financially, nor for senior posts providing greater resource opportunities. He or she measures his or her achievements primarily by his or her recognition in that part of the professional community whose activity is similarly orientated, and rather by the satisfaction of scholarly curiosity than by money and fame (though for the most part not despising these symbols of merit).

If we drew up parallel ratings of those scholars on whom the state has bestowed formal positions and ranks, on the one hand, and those whom the professional community itself regards as the leading scholars, on the other, I fear that we would end up with two lists of names which would probably have nothing in common. One list would contain the names of important academicians, vice-chancellors, directors of academic institutes, etc., none of whom would be in the alternative ratings (since nobody knows what the scholarly merits of some of them are). A place in the alternative ratings would depend on recognition within a community of scholars orientated towards international standards and participating in international research networks.

I understand that ‘there is no justice on earth, nor is there any above it.’¹ In the career rules of scholarship ‘abroad’ as well, there is much unfairness, for example, in discrimination against women and certain minorities, and obstacles in the way of the young. But Russia ‘is something special’, as my German colleague Ingrid Oswald used to say. The rules for progress in the social sciences here have little to do with scholarly attainments. Nor does it matter where you went to university. It does not even matter whether you have passed the prerequisites for the subject. This is connected not so much with the peculiarities of the career, in sociology in particular, as with the low level at which it is taught in practically all universities from MGU down. Therefore the people who become professional scholars are those rare students who, despite the latent disgust towards sociology inculcated at universities, have obstinately educated themselves and had the good luck to meet a ‘real scholar’ somewhere.

As for the role of ‘independent’ scholarship in society, it will be understood that even if you are a star of the first magnitude, it is not you who are going to make the rules for official scholarship, it is those ‘generals’, many of whom can hardly even be regarded as scholars,

¹ A quotation from Pushkin’s *Mozart and Salieri*. [Transl.].

despite their academic regalia. Nowadays these rules are perfectly appropriate for a country where lawlessness is regarded as the norm.

I do not think that young researchers need preferential treatment in Russian conditions. If they acquire the necessary skills for research work (which are not usually taught at universities, since the teachers themselves do no research), then in modern scholarship the formal career has ceased to be a problem. If you are worth anything, you have all the cards in your hands. Research grants, study trips, invitations to conferences, and not only abroad, in Russia too. The most interesting and significant research in the world is being done by research students while they are writing their dissertations. They are still romantics, happy doing fieldwork, and their motivation is usually unlimited. It is their papers that attract the most interest at those conferences and seminars that attract the new generations of researchers. Here it is not a question of suppressing the young, but rather of discrimination against professors (usually with good reason!). These professors have quite enough official conferences, anyway, where the trivialities that they pronounce are supplemented by the speeches of important officials.

In the independent, non-political social sciences, the aim of which is not to serve the state (I have written about this before: [Voronkov 2009]), prestige depends not on one's place in the corporate hierarchy, not on degrees and appointments, but on significant scholarly achievements. Individualisation, the opportunity to choose practically any biography, and the new kinds of resources available in modern society against the background of the destruction of the traditional rules and values, allows a career to be understood differently — as a growing recognition on the part of colleagues who are likewise independent scholars, members of the 'invisible college', whether they work in state institutions (which is rarer), in NPOs or as freelancers.

Of course, it is hard for them to get any support from the semi-state-run funds (like the RGNF), which were created basically to finance traditional research institutes and universities. Not to mention the peculiar ethical standards according to which these bodies award grants. I once happened to be present during a telephone conversation between one of the experts of a fund and another distinguished scholar. To the expert's question why he had not applied for an extension of funding he replied that he thought it would be extended automatically. After chiding his colleague, the expert asked him to write the formal page of the application without delay (a good two months after the deadline!), because they were holding back the grant for the continuation of research specially for him!

But today's young scholars, with their knowledge of foreign languages, acquaintance with the most recent foreign literature, and their cos-

mopolitan outlook of openness to the world, can find non-traditional sources (from the point of view of the institutionalised professor of the Soviet type) of funding for their own projects. There are hundreds and thousands of funds supporting research in the world. It is not so hard to find interested partners in the West, with whom one can apply for a project, hold the necessary conference, or whom one can visit for a period of study. One can seek support from a business, which does not have its own researchers, but has a potential practical interest in the topic of one's research.

I am far from idealising the opportunities of a scholarly career for young people in Russia. Over recent years the political climate has sharply reduced the possibilities of developing scholarship independently of the state. Foreign funding bodies are leaving. Receiving funding from abroad carries the risk of stigma (invocation of the law on 'foreign agents', even possible accusations of espionage).¹ The state is unambiguously demanding loyalty, under the threat of the disappearance of whole research areas (primarily in the field of politics). Censorship is returning, resulting in ubiquitous self-censorship. A career in state institutions requires compromises which many people regard as incompatible with honest academic work. In an authoritarian state the social sciences are stifled. One may observe a politically motivated rejection of career progression: the brain drain abroad, people leaving the profession, a deliberate delay in symbolic recognition, a refusal of responsibility (a variant of downshifting with a political origin).

I am convinced that no formal career is worth one's liberty. The liberty to research what you want, with those people whose research interests and outlook on life and style of work are close to your own. And in a society that is becoming ever more individualised we have enough resources to construct our own biographies as we wish. This is not easy. Choice implies compromise. But the pessimism of reason must be combined with the optimism of the will. And a career? A career can construct itself. As Evgeny Evtushenko once said, 'I pursue my career by not pursuing it.'

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¹ From the early 2010s, registration as a 'foreign agent' has been required for all non-state organisations receiving funding from abroad. In 2015, the Centre for Independent Sociological Research in St Petersburg was heavily fined for refusing to register as such an organisation. [Eds.].

IGOR YANOVICH

1

Quantitative research in the sociology of science has shown beyond doubt that unfortunately scholars ‘are people too’, and in their professional activity they experience the influence of their own (often unconscious) prejudices against vulnerable groups. For example, a recent article [Milkman et al. 2014] describes an experiment in which American researchers sent the same letter ‘from a student’ to 6 500 university professors, signing it with different names — for example Brad Anderson (the name in all probability of a white man of Anglo-Saxon origin), or Juanita Martinez (a name which marks out its bearer as having indubitable Latin American roots, which is associated in the USA with unskilled work, a low level of education and poverty). The letter appeared to have been written by a student asking for a meeting to discuss the possibility of his or her doing a higher degree. (It should be pointed out that it is very unusual for students in the USA to do a higher degree at the same university where they did their bachelor’s degree, so that it was a matter of the professor’s advising the student, not offering him or her direct support in registering at his or her own faculty.) It would, of course, be easy to suppose that a professor, seeing a letter from a student whose name he or she did not remember from their own courses, would not agree to such a meeting whoever signed the letter. However, the experiment showed something interestingly different: the quasi-student with the male Anglo-Saxon name received a reply more often than any of the others. Thus, while knowing nothing at all about the student, many of the professors assessed his or her prospects in academia to a large extent on the basis of his or her gender and ethnic origin.

Of course, it is very rare for gender and ethnic origin to be the only factor that affects people’s attitude to a particular scholar — or potential scholar. It is only one factor among many, and the quality of the work which a person does also plays its part. But considering the results of

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experiments of this sort, of which there have by now been a considerable number, one can confidently state that representatives, particularly female representatives, of vulnerable minorities have to 'jump higher' in order to be noticed and have their work duly appreciated by their colleagues. And of course this problem is not only characteristic of the USA: imagine the average reaction of a Russian professor to an email from Petr Kuznetsov or from Umbriza Kurbonaseinova. In some cases there will be no difference, but in others, alas... This situation is certainly harmful to the development of scholarship, and no scholar could seriously deny it. Since it aims to be in the vanguard of society, the academic milieu can, indeed must, do something to correct such injustices, given that they are obstacles to the search for truth, in which all of us in academic circles are engaged to the best of our abilities.

But what support, exactly, might be necessary? Briefly, it must, obviously, be the sort that works, and in order to find out what does work, we need to try many different methods. But even today there are things that can be said. For example, it is often very important for early-career researchers of either sex belonging to vulnerable minorities to have access to such a resource as the conversation and advice of their teachers. Almost every scholar today can remember talking with those excellent teachers who ignited his or her interest in research and often helped him or her with advice as the student (as he or she then was) gradually developed and sought his or her way in learning. However, as the experiment described above shows, *ceteris paribus* people from vulnerable minorities receive less attention and, so to speak, less unqualified respect for their aspirations to become scholars than healthy young men from dominant ethnic groups and well educated families. Special initiatives to narrow the gap in the attention they receive cannot help attracting more talent into the profession.

However, one must not forget that any initiative, however good it looks on paper, can only work when the people putting it into practice have a clear understanding of its internal logic and the importance of implementing it. But, as the research by Katherine Milkman and her colleagues again shows, scholars are by no means always free of prejudices. So talking to a mature scholar who is prejudiced may not help, but rather the reverse, only undermine the confidence of even the most talented person. Therefore it is no less important that within the existing academic élite — readers, professors, academicians — there should be constant discussion directed towards the elimination of prejudices and the development of objective criteria for evaluating colleagues and junior comrades.

It is hard to exaggerate the importance of such work in the struggle against unfairness within the university. For example, it is no secret that in many Russian institutions people applying to do a higher

degree are told in so many words that they prefer to take young men — even if in fact the young men they take turn out to be much weaker than the women who applied, and as a result many of them give up without completing their dissertations. There are many known cases in Russia where, when appointments are being made, preference is given to men, on the grounds that ‘they have a family to feed’ (as if women, who include single mothers, do not have to do that...). Therefore besides measures for the special support of vulnerable minorities it would be no bad thing at least to make a beginning of eliminating the direct and conscious discrimination that exists. To this end it is necessary first of all to talk about it: the majority of scholars are firmly attached to the values of honesty and the recognition of other people’s merits, and may often only assent to the existing vicious practices because they are unaware how unfair and ineffective they are from the point of view of the progress of learning.

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Such things could probably be said of many careers. For example, a midwife’s or an electrician’s first years of work will also be the hardest in many respects. Does this mean that all the difficulties encountered by young scholars are natural and useful? Unfortunately, it is not necessarily so: it depends on what sort of difficulties they are. Take conference participation for example. Of course it is easier for an established researcher at a high level to write a good, clear abstract which fully describes high-quality research which is relevant to a given field. A young scholar, being less experienced, may find it harder to do research of such high quality; it is harder for him or her to see the broad perspective for which this research is important; hard to express his or her thoughts extensively and effectively. These are all skills which are acquired with experience. However, at times the acceptance of conference applications does not depend only on their quality. Sometimes the organisers may decide to accept the application of a well-known scholar just because they assume by default that the quality of his or her research will be higher, without particularly analysing the contents of his or her actual application. (Anonymous assessment is particularly helpful against things like this.) The abovementioned skills must be learnt: but often young scholars have no access to the resources that would help them to do that, such as the advice of well-inclined senior colleagues. Young scholars often have a heavier teaching and administrative load, and therefore they may have objectively less time for research and the honing of their professional skills. And, finally, even when the young scholar’s paper is included in the programme, he or she may simply not have the money to travel to the conference, since young specialists’ access to funding is also on average lower than that of their older colleagues.

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It seems to me that it is hard to give a general answer to this question, because there may be too great a difference between the way academic

life is organised in different countries and even in different universities within the same country. As for *institutionalised* schools of scholarly activity I cannot give a competent opinion, since I have had little contact with such a phenomenon. However, even allowing that it may be helpful to a young scholar to belong to a 'school' in some questions, I would note that tying help to this sort of vertical structure is very risky. Firstly, the very idea of a 'school of scholarship' implies a succession of ideas, but what should scholarly innovators do, when, for example, they combine in their work the strong aspects of several research traditions at once? Secondly, the concept of a 'school' implies that the people who head it wield considerable power. However, it is well known that the strength of the academic community to a large extent lies in the fact that responsibility is distributed over a wide community of equals. This distribution helps to smooth over the sort of random fluctuation that occurs when decisions are taken by a single individual. Obviously schools of scholarship should not be demonised: for example, the risks are no less when academic administrative decisions are taken individually by the management in the form of the director of an institute or the dean of a faculty. However, it seems to me that it is important to understand that the creation of institutionalised schools of scholarship does not by itself in any way solve all the problems that there are. The success of such structures will depend on the concrete details of how they are put into practice.

As for quotas, if used properly this is a mechanism that can be very useful, but, again, it does not at all solve all possible problems. From the experience of American universities that have introduced a small number of positions reserved for members of vulnerable minorities, one may state with confidence that from the academic point of view such quotas have produced excellent results. As a result of the general discrimination in the academic labour market the quality of the best candidates belonging to minorities will be better than the average quality of all applicants, therefore it is highly likely that appointing by quota will bring the university an excellent, very talented researcher. It goes without saying that this will still by no means eliminate the fact that in all other procedures for filling positions the same forces of discrimination will lead to the promotion not of the most talented, but of the most socially conformist, the most 'convenient' applicants. In themselves quotas can only make a small correction to the overall balance at the level of the end result, and they do not eradicate the effects of prejudice.

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Perhaps the event that made the deepest impression on me took place in the middle of the first decade of this century when, having graduated with distinction from the Philological Faculty of MGU, I wanted, with the support of my teachers, to register as a research student at the same faculty. The entrance examinations took place in

autumn, but during the summer I got an interesting phone call from the faculty. Like everyone living in Moscow who wanted to register as a research student, I was required... to work for several weeks without pay organising the undergraduate entrance exam. This was called 'practical work', although there can obviously be no question of practical work in such a situation: obviously neither I nor any of the other applicants had any formal relationship with the Philological Faculty of MGU at that moment.

I simply did not turn up for this unlawful 'practical work', though I later found out from my friends that nobody else had dared to do such a thing: they had all worked the required weeks. When I came to put in my application in the autumn, I was told that my entrance examination... would not take place. That is, I would receive no marks and it would not be recorded that I had attended. That is, of course, unless I could suddenly produce the personal permission of the dean of the Philological Faculty to take the examination. It thus became evident that the unlawful exploitation of an unpaid workforce was taking place with the full personal approval of the dean. It was not easy to obtain an audience with the dean to find out whether I would be allowed to take the examinations or whether I would be unlawfully excluded. I had to spend several days trying to find the dean at her place of work, and when at last I was in luck and the dean came to the faculty, I spent five hours in her outer office waiting to find out whether she would agree to see me. I suspect that if it had not been for the assistance of a sympathetic professor, who also had to wait several hours for a meeting with the dean in the same outer office (which, honestly, I also found astonishing: I do not find it normal that a professor should have to wait for hours in the dean's office to resolve some work-related question), and if she had not invited me to come into the dean's office at the same time as she did, I think that I would not have succeeded in seeing the dean that day at all.

At that meeting, the dean did put her signature to the piece of paper that 'admitted' me to the examinations. However, a couple of days later I was astonished to discover that afterwards she had delivered a stern reprimand to the head of my department for... my inappropriately insolent behaviour. (Leaving aside the question of how fair it is for a dean to shout at a head of department because of what a *student* has done, I find it hard to say what my insolence had consisted of. Perhaps my answer to the dean's question as to what I would do if I did not get her signature, to which I honestly replied that I would apply elsewhere...)

As I heard a couple of years ago, the tradition of the unlawful use of unpaid labour at the Philological Faculty of MGU still continues in the same form. I would moreover like to stress that it is hard to accuse yesterday's students of passivity in their acquiescence to unlawful

demands. I was in a way lucky: by the time I was applying to be a research student my curriculum vitae already included speaking at prestigious international conferences, my first working contacts with several leading professors in my field, and even the organisation — together with my fellow-students and research students — of a small international conference in Moscow where the papers were selected competitively by anonymous review by a panel of international experts. Based on the excellent professional relationships I had with colleagues in Russia and abroad, I found it hard to take the illegal demand to ‘work my passage’ to the examinations seriously. But apart from my own work, obtaining this academic experience was to a large extent assisted by my great good fortune. For example, without the huge contribution of my excellent, and very kind teachers, who helped me take my first steps in my academic career, I could not have obtained by the time I graduated that sense of academic community which helped me to resist the illegal demands of the Philological Faculty of MGU. But not all talented people are fortunate enough to find themselves in such favourable circumstances. It is not yesterday’s students who bear the responsibility for the swindling and exploitation of the scholars of the future, but exclusively the employees of MGU, who shamelessly used (and probably still use) administrative resources to achieve unlawful purposes.

References

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THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS DISCRIMINATION — OR IS THERE?

When I proposed this topic to for the ‘Forum’ eighteen months ago, I called it ‘Discrimination in Scholarship’. As the questions were being formulated, the word ‘discrimination’ disappeared from the title. There were different variants of what the topic should be called, among them ‘Success in Scholarship’ (in the sense, what does it depend on, your sex or your age?). Discrimination magically transformed into success! It is a pity that this does not happen in real life.

Why is it bad form to talk about discrimination? It is considered that social equality has been achieved, and that if there is any discrimination, it is reverse discrimination — the oppression of the majority by minorities (cf. what is said in Olga Blinova’s review of Pierre Orelus’s book, published in *Antropologičeskij forum* last year [Blinova 2014], about how it was considered good manners in the USA to avoid mentioning race, because it was supposed that they had already constructed a post-racial society, but then the polemic in the press after Barak Obama’s election victory showed that racial equality was an illusion). One expert declared, in a survey about sex discrimination in the academic milieu on the PostNauka portal, ‘In our country, the *status quo* indubitably is that anyone who so desires can easily engage in scholarship — both men and women.’¹

Twice as many women as men took part in the discussion, and some questions excited more interest than others. The editors’ questions included references to statistics showing that the higher a position is in the academic hierarchy, the less likely it is to be occupied by a woman. Such references could be multiplied. For example, data from Germany published after the questions were compiled show a familiar picture: in faculties of the humanities, where three quarters of the students are women, only

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¹ <<http://postnauka.ru/talks/26589>>.

about a third of the professors are.¹ In their responses to the ‘Forum’ questions, Irène Herrmann notes the same tendency in the Swiss educational system, and Catriona Kelly in Britain.

A certain qualification is needed here. The editors’ questions contained a terminological ambiguity, and could have been understood in two different ways. Two kinds of academic career are to be distinguished: first, the administrative career, or the career in a particular institution, and second, the career in the broad sense, the rungs of which may be understood as ‘no degree — research degree — higher degree’, or ‘written an article — written a book’, or ‘written a paper — published a paper in a refereed journal’ (the career in the sense, ‘growing recognition on the part of colleagues’, as Viktor Voronkov puts it). In the conditions prevailing in academia today, above all in the West, scholars are pushed into the career race by the ‘new academic culture’ described by Katharine Hodgson: every scholar has to display his or her wares in person all the time.² Researchers may regard the pursuit of an academic career with suspicion or even disgust, as Viktor Voronkov writes (cf. also Anna Kushkova on the word ‘career’). However, even if they despise an administrative career, scholars move inexorably up the ladder of ‘growing recognition on the part of colleagues’ as a result of their academic work. And on this ladder, alas, they can unexpectedly encounter those very obstacles which a researcher might think did not exist in a world of equal opportunities.

‘Thanks to the burgeoning growth in the accessibility of information, the question of discrimination in publication is becoming less and less acute,’ writes Vladimir Bogdanov, with reference to the faceless electronic submission of material for publication. Indeed, the author’s ‘absolute’ age, in years, usually remains unknown to the recipients of the article, but his or her ‘academic’ age — for example, whether he or she is a research student or holds a higher doctorate — is often evident from the signature, not to mention whether he or she is from the capital or a provincial, and also of the markers of sex and ethnicity mentioned by Igor Yanovich (whether the article has been sent in by a ‘Petr Kuznetsov’ or an ‘Umriza Kurbonaseinova’). Igor Yanovich mentions anonymous refereeing as something that helps in part against discrimination. Other authors in the ‘Forum’ have also noted that the academic system in Russia lacks a mechanism for disguising the application details and names of the applicants for various opportunities (Natalia Pushkareva). Whereas there is a certain anonymity observed in the communications between authors and referees at refereed journals (although the editors,

¹ <<http://www.thelocal.de/20140730/equality-report-german-women-jobs>>.

² This is connected with the triumph of neoliberalism in modern academia: see, for example, [Klocker, Drozdowski 2012].

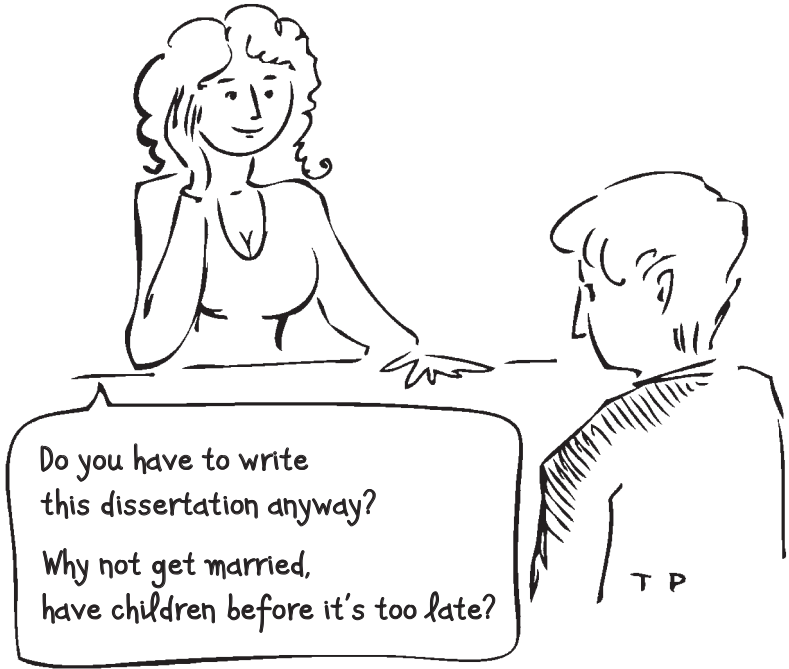
of course, know all about the author, and this, accordingly may influence their decision on publication), in Russia the anonymising of the submission of conference papers (which Elena Filippova wishes for) is almost unheard of. And how grants can be awarded through connections is well described by Viktor Voronkov.

When we examine contemporary academic life more closely, what we see is not a just world, but a world of illusory equal opportunities. ‘Officially, the concern for equality presupposes that the qualities required in order to get a position are “merely” the candidates’ intelligence, capacity for hard work, and ambition to reach their academic goals. In reality, this system obviously disregards social inequalities or, more to the point, reproduces them,’ says Irène Herrmann. One can see how this operates for the experiment to which Igor Yanovich refers: given applicants in absolutely identical conditions, of whom nothing is known but their sex and ethnicity, representatives of certain groups, primarily women, have palpably fewer chances than the rest. Natalia Pushkareva, who has researched in detail the influence of gender on social processes, writes that ‘There is no question of any equality of opportunity between men and women (even though it is proclaimed) in our world.’

Another PostNauka expert, Konstantin Severinov, describes the situation thus: ‘Peak childbearing age for professional women is between thirty and forty. This age coincides with the peak of their academic careers, and they have to make a choice. While a man can have his wife and child at home and work in the laboratory, it is much harder for a woman to do this. This is not sexism, it is the reality of life. It is not fair, but it is hardly possible to change it.’¹ This is all true in principle, but I would make one correction: it is not only possible, it is necessary to change it. Indeed, one of the reasons why women do not reach such elevated positions as men is that they bear the greater part of the labour of reproduction, sometimes against their will (for example, fathers may refuse to take paternity leave or time off work to look after a sick child), and for this reason they are not promoted (what is the point, ‘she’ll only go off on maternity leave?’). The cartoon drawn by Tatyana Russita shows a dialogue in which, I think, every woman engaged in scholarship has played the part of the second speaker (men, the artist suggests that you should audition for this role, see how it feels!).

Discrimination against women because of their reproductive function is not peculiar to academia (‘discrimination is systemic rather than being the property of the scholarly community as such’ — Elena Filippova), but it is possible to discuss the forms that it takes in academic life. On the one hand, maternity for female scholars is more

¹ <<http://postnauka.ru/talks/26589>>.



or less protected in Russia: since scholarship usually takes place within the state sector, where employment law is generally obeyed, women can count on paid maternity leave, time off to care for the child, that their post will be kept open for them, etc. The flexible working hours that most academics and teachers enjoy also make it easier for them to fulfil their duties as parents. On the other hand, low salaries and the impossibility of having more than one job (a common means of earning enough to live on for scholars in this country) during maternity leave reduce a woman's chances of having children and retaining her scholarly position. Moreover, men may also be faced with this difficult choice as a result of the pressure of gender stereotypes ('you must feed your family'). Elena Filippova evidently has in mind the difficulties faced by both sexes when she writes: 'Salaries in the scholarly field are low, and for junior researchers, particularly those who do not yet have a higher degree, they are simply ridiculous. This means that one must either give up the idea of having a family, or put it off for an indefinite period, or else do one's research in parallel with some other means of earning money.'

An important feature of scholarship, distinguishing it from other fields of activity, is the need to go on journeys and study trips to take part in conferences, seminars and summer schools, and in our discipline also to conduct fieldwork. This is indeed the 'sticking point', where it becomes hard to combine motherhood and scholarship (compare this point in the interviews with professors with

children).¹ In her comment, Anna Sokolova writes about the discrimination in connexion with academic mobility which she encountered when she tried to combine her academic career with motherhood. I have also experienced difficulties in a similar situation: firstly, it is impossible to take part in many conferences because one has to pay the travelling and accommodation expenses for the child and for someone to look after the child out of one's own pocket; and secondly, even if you have overcome the financial barriers, there is no escaping the critical remarks that will follow even if the other participants have got so much as a glimpse of the child on the way to the hotel.

Occasionally the system 'lets the cat out of the bag' where discrimination is concerned. Someone I know, who has a candidate's degree in philosophy, was summoned to the VAK after her defence to prove that she had written her dissertation herself; she was told that the reason for this was that she had two small children! The VAK assumed that the mother of two small children could not write her dissertation by herself. Is this not an acknowledgement of the fact that mothers are discriminated against in academic life, in the sense that it is impossible to be a mother and pursue an academic career? It would be interesting to know if even one man has ever been summoned to the VAK for this reason.

The foreign participants' answers to the 'Forum' (Beth Holmgren, Marc Elie) draw readers' attention to another kind of discrimination — discrimination by contract, in the sense that lecturers on temporary contracts have no study trips, insurance, etc. Although this form of inequality is known in this country ('permanent staff versus hourly-paid or replacements'), it evidently does not take such a visible form as abroad. Still, Catriona Kelly points out that the increasing use of temporary contracts is directly age-related.

Natalia Pushkareva's question ('I think that young female academics are the only people for whom age discrimination is not an imaginary problem. Tell me, who discriminates against young men in academic institutions?') is involuntarily answered by Igor Yanovich when he describes his personal experience of age discrimination. Alexandra Kasatkina and Elena Filippova also write that the routine work is 'naturally' loaded onto younger colleagues. Their answers describe the vicious circle in which early-career researchers find themselves: to move up the academic career ladder they have to spend time on research, but all their time is eaten up either by departmental work that is not connected with research or by earning money, for no other reason than that they are young. Moreover, as Katharine Hodgson

¹ <<http://www.newappsblog.com/2014/08/beyond-the-baby-penalty-the-lived-experience-of-mothers-and-a-father-who-are-tenured-academics.html>>.

writes, the modern academic world has growing expectations regarding the contents of an early-career researcher's *curriculum vitae*. It might be said that the path of a scholar at the beginning of his or her career is not the straight road that it seemed, but sometimes more like a hamster wheel, which is easiest to get out of not by going forward, but sideways — that is, by leaving academia altogether.

Aleksandr Nazarenko lists the various kinds of unpaid work that are given to young people to do. It is not so bad when these have some relationship to the topic of research, and do not consist of washing the dishes! Though this often happens too, and for many young people in Russia their first experience of a conference is as unpaid workers, fortunate if they can listen to their masters' papers in the intervals between boiling the kettle for them and clearing away their cups. As one who has been on both sides of the table during the coffee break — both as the woman with the kettle and the woman with the name-card, into whose cup she pours the hot water — and has even once been an 'exploiter of child labour' when, as secretary of the organising committee, I was told to 'attract' some first-year students to help run the conference, I can say that this system is inconvenient and embarrassing. I did not know all the first-year students by name, they, of course, felt no responsibility for their unpaid work, and every morning before the session began I was left worrying which of them would turn up. I would have been more comfortable hiring someone specially, paying him or her money and expecting him or her to be responsible. One of the reasons why this system flourishes is pointed out by Alexandra Kasatkina in her answers: there is no staff, and not likely to be. 'Child labour' is evidently used in academic institutions because there is no money to pay for the work in question, neither as a heading in the budget nor as an idea in people's minds. When there is a lack of resources it is usually the weakest who suffer. Considering the reasons for age discrimination in scholarship, Aleksandr Nazarenko suggests an obvious reason: there are not many young people, and the majority discriminates against the minority.

However, this is not the only reason, and discrimination against young scholars is by no means confined to making them do unpaid work. The topic of your research, or your supervisor, may be changed without consulting you, or your article may be entirely rewritten. During the conference coffee break it is not you whose acquaintance people want to make, but another speaker whose status is higher, even though his or her paper was clearly not as good. The hall where you are accommodated during the summer school does not even have a shower, while your senior colleagues have rooms with all the facilities. You are not given the chance to speak. You are interrupted before you have got a word out. You are advised to be quiet and listen to your elders (see the example given by Aleksandr Nazarenko).

The problem is probably that scholarship, like many corporative occupations, is organised hierarchically, and hierarchical societies assume that those at the bottom will be oppressed for the benefit of those at the top (it is hard not to think of *dedovshchina* in the army — it is no accident that Natalia Pushkareva calls the limitations encountered by young scholars ‘academic *dedovshchina*’). Everyone engaged in scholarship is at any moment in time situated on a particular rung of the ladder: these may be administrative rungs, or the most general ‘no degree — research degree — higher degree’/‘no publications — publications’, as remarked earlier, but it is hardly possible for anyone engaged in scholarship not to be somewhere on the ladder. At the same time research studentships and junior academic posts seem to represent a sort of immediate continuation of the bachelor’s degree, undergraduate thesis and master’s degree (compare what Elena Filippova says about the training of research students as a continuation of their undergraduate education). Young scholars have sometimes been working under the direction of the same people since the final year of school or first year of university. In this sense entering the academic profession is different from starting work as a midwife or electrician, whom Igor Yanovich cites as an example: from sitting at the pupil’s desk one progresses smoothly to professional activity, the roles change imperceptibly, and the people and the surroundings sometimes remain the same. It can happen that you have something to tell your teachers — who are now your colleagues — and they are still in the habit of seeing you as the student who not so long ago was carefully writing down their every word. (Natalia Pushkareva also writes about this.)

How can we help early-career researchers? The editors’ questions opposed positive discrimination and quotas to patronage as different kinds of answer to the problems of young scholars. The majority of the participants in the ‘Forum’ take a negative view of quotas as a means of solving the problem of discrimination. Igor Yanovich’s opinion is an exception: he refers to the positive experience of the use of quotas in American universities, although he too mentions the possible problems. Catriona Kelly says that although she is sympathetic to the policy in principle, it is hard to choose which groups are in need of protection, and which are not: she thinks, though, that there may be some point in positive discrimination in favour of women, given the abundant statistical evidence of under-recognition for them.

‘I consider it inevitable that people will have scholarly protégés,’ writes Revekka Frumkina, ‘and even if we declare it to be an evil, that will not change anything.’ Some participants in the discussion, such as Vladimir Bogdanov, do not see that it is such a dreadful thing. Revekka Frumkina sees the problem ‘not so much as unqualified support for “us”/“the young ones” just because they are “us”, as the introduction of the habits of “bareknuckle boxing” into the scholarly

sphere.’ She continues: ‘The existence of protégés often either substitutes for a real understanding of what a pupil of such-and-such a scholarly authority is studying (this, I believe, is inevitable), or means that standards are lowered where their results are concerned (this, alas, happens more often than one would like).’ From my point of view, it is a bad thing that patronage means that participants in a competition (applicants for a post, say) are on an unequal footing: the cornerstone is not their personal merits or qualities, but the authority of their supervisors. Marc Elie considers that ‘patronage is a bad thing when it extends to recruitment practices involving key career positions. Patronage is then a major obstacle to equality.’ However Catriona Kelly warns that if we exclude letters of recommendation, then merits proven by experience may be eclipsed by the momentary impression that an applicant has managed to make on the committee during a thirty-minute interview. Natalia Pushkareva also notes that a struggle against patronage on the part of supervisors could mean sacrificing their own pupils: ‘You can, of course, declare that you personally as a supervisor are above all such exercises in academic corruption. However, by playing according to your own rules (without active “lobbying”), you place your pupils at a disadvantage in comparison with those who are “helped”.’

Besides patronage, there exist for the ‘support’ of young scholars the ‘trenches’ described by Aleksandr Nazarenko in his answers. There is a hothouse atmosphere in these ‘trenches’: you will not be criticised for the results of your pronouncements, but you must not criticise anyone either, and in this way you may proceed to your defence and get a job without any particular problems. I once happened to observe this sort of ‘support’ at a conference at St Petersburg University, when the chairwoman of a session on her own authority decided that there would be no questions after a certain research student’s paper, so that she would not be afraid to speak. This sort of ‘support’ may do young scholars a bad turn. As Aleksandr Nazarenko writes, ‘if the researcher never leaves the trench, s/he never enters the communicative field of the academic world. Accordingly, s/he remains unacquainted with new conceptual and methodological developments, s/he has no information about his/her competitors, working on similar topics, the quality of his/her publications in academic editions suffers, and so on.’

Many of the participants in our discussion mention the necessity of material assistance to young scholars. Catriona Kelly points to the generous financing of research as one means of supporting them. Elena Filippova and Beth Holmgren think that early-career researchers need financial assistance for conference attendance. Aleksandr Nazarenko discusses the principles on which financial support for young people could be organised, and suggests solutions for certain other problems facing young scholars. Among other things he mentions the fall in

motivation to engage in scholarship. It would appear that this problem cannot be solved from outside: if a young scholar does not have his or her own inner motivation towards scholarly work, no outside measures will help. As Beth Holmgren writes, ‘it is vital for a young person to know that this is the path she wants to take.’

Joint research projects involving both early-career researchers and their more senior colleagues are regarded as a good means of supporting the young by Alexandra Kasatkina and Vladimir Bogdanov, the latter also recommending ‘holding forums for young researchers’, while Elena Filippova suggests that ‘they could discuss their articles with colleagues (for example, at departmental and research group meetings, etc.), and sometimes they would benefit from co-authorship with more experienced researchers.’ Beth Holmgren speaks of the importance of a good mentor in the life of an early-career researcher. All this leads up to the fourth of the editors’ questions: on schools of scholarly activity.

What is a school of scholarly activity? Vladimir Bogdanov defines it thus: ‘a school is an organisation for *informal* (specifically informal) dialogue amongst scholars of different generations, and for the exchange of ideas and discussion of results; it also serves to transmit the contents of the discipline, certain cultural norms and values, *from the older generation to the younger one*.’ He gives examples of how difficult it can sometimes be to define the boundaries of a school.

The majority of the participants in the forum take a positive view of the existence of schools, as, for instance, does Natalia Pushkareva: ‘Schools do not hold back the progress of scholarship at all. They hold it together and serve as mechanisms for the transmission of values, approaches, methods and concepts from one generation of scholars to the next.’ Elena Filippova writes: ‘It seems to me that schools are a necessary and inevitable feature of scholarly life. They further the development of knowledge, forcing their opponents to sharpen their arguments and subject their own views to doubt.’ Vladimir Bogdanov mentions the importance of horizontal connexions within a school, and Catriona Kelly also notes that schools become more diverse as colleagues learn from each other.

In concluding this review of the discussion, which may not have turned out entirely objective thanks to my own personal point of view on the questions discussed, I shall return to the problem with which I started.

Marc Elie writes in his answer to the question on personal experience: ‘I have not encountered any discrimination in my career, since I do not belong to any minority group in my country. The main difficulties I had were as a postdoc, and they were pretty much like the ones experienced by all postdocs in France: applying for jobs, looking for

the next grant, little consideration from my seniors and so on.’ ‘little consideration from my seniors’ is included here amongst the ordinary difficulties which do not count as discrimination, although it could perfectly well be classified as ‘academic *dedovshchina*’. ‘Young scholars’ are a ‘minority’ (or ‘group without rights’) to which all of us have belonged at one time, and the oppression of this group, for example its exploitation for unpaid work, is nothing unusual: we have all been through it, and none of us notices it. The same applies to women: ‘This is not sexism, it is the reality of life,’ as quoted above.

In fact, the problem is that discrimination is invisible. If we exclude discrimination from the general picture of academic life, we get the illusion of equal opportunities mentioned by Irène Herrmann. In a seemingly just world any attempts at positive discrimination look monstrous, and it is no wonder that Anna Kushkova writes ‘I am against the idea of making the idea of “positive discrimination” an absolute.’ If we speak aloud about the flagrant instances of the infringement of our rights, which are still happening, and at every step, and to us personally, and discuss who may be in need of help and for what reasons, there is more chance that the weaker individuals, and those with no access to resources, will get the help they need. As Igor Yanovich wrote, ‘besides measures for the special support of vulnerable minorities it would be no bad thing at least to make a beginning of eliminating the direct and conscious discrimination that exists. To this end it is necessary first of all to talk about it: the majority of scholars are firmly attached to the values of honesty and the recognition of other people’s merits, and may often only assent to the existing vicious practices because they are unaware how unfair and ineffective they are from the point of view of the progress of learning.’

I hope that our discussion has helped to make discrimination more visible. I and the editors are grateful to all who took part.

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*The answers originally in Russian
were translated by Ralph Cleminson*