

## CONFERENCES

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# Global Financial Crises in Post-Socialist Countries: Consumption, Economic Life and Consumer Cultures

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*The research workshop “Consumption and Economic Crises: Post-Socialist Experiences” was held on October 9–10, 2014 at the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow. Organized by Sandy Ross (Senior Lecturer, Leeds Beckett University) and Christopher S. Swader (Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, HSE), the workshop explored experiences of global financial crisis in post-socialist countries with an emphasis on the everyday urban consumption culture in the first decade of the 21st century. The workshop focused on four aspects of post-socialist consumer culture: housing and credit practices; gift-giving, hospitality and reciprocity practices; consumption practices and consumption ethics; and aesthetics. One of the goals of this conference was also to explore the disjunctions and continuities between consumer cultures and experiences of “crisis” within and between post-socialist countries and other countries.*

*Each day of the conference began with a keynote presentation followed by two moderated panel sessions in which relevant and on-going research was presented by invited speakers. At the conclusion of each panel session, the floor was opened for discussion and debate among all workshop participants.*

*The keynote speakers of the workshop were Alya Guseva (Boston University, USA) and Olga Shevchenko (Williams College, USA). The invited speakers were Marta Olcoń-Kubicka (Polish Academy of Science, Warsaw), Ferenc Hammer (ELTE-BTK, Institute for Art Theory and Media Studies, Hungary), Mateusz Halawa (The New School for Social Research, Poland), Elizaveta Polukhina and Anna Strelnikova (HSE, Russia), Costanza Curro’ (University College London, UK), Natalia Khalina and Alina Pishniak (HSE, Russia), Natalia Firsova (HSE, Russia), Vadim Radaev (HSE, Russia), Zoya Kotelnikova (HSE, Russia), Eileen Yuk-ha Tsang (City University of Hong Kong) and Radostina Schivatcheva (King’s College London, UK). Sandy Ross acted as lead moderator. The conference attracted a wide audience, including students and researchers from various different countries.*

**Keywords:** economic crisis; consumption practices; consumer culture; consumption ethics; moral economy; post-socialist countries.

The National Research University Higher School of Economics hosted a research workshop on Consumption and Economic Crises: Post-Socialist Experiences

during October 9–10, 2014. Workshop participants had the opportunity to explore the various ways in which the global financial crisis has been experienced in post-socialist countries with an emphasis on the everyday urban consumption culture of the first decade of the 21st century. The first day of the two-day conference concentrated on financial behavior and reciprocity; the second day was devoted to the broader themes of consumption practices and consumption ethics. Each day began with a keynote presentation that was followed by two thematic panel sessions. In keeping with the “workshop” nature of this gathering, each panel session ended with a generous amount of time devoted to open-floor discussion and debate among the participants.

## Day 1

Sandy Ross (Leeds Beckett University, UK) opened the workshop with a welcoming address acknowledging all participants and guests. She called special attention to the high relevance of the conference topic and expressed her hope that the workshop would generate productive debate and discussion that would inspire future research in this sphere.

### *Keynote Address: Constructing Markets for Payment Cards in the Context of Post-Communism Transitions*

Prof. Alya Guseva (Boston University, USA), author of *Into the Red: The Birth of the Credit Card Market in Postcommunist Russia* [Guseva 2008] and coauthor of *Plastic Markets: Constructing Markets for Credit Card in Eight Post-Communist Countries* [Rona-Tas, Guseva 2014], gave the keynote address.

In her presentation “Constructing Markets for Payment Cards in the Context of Post-Communist Transitions”, Guseva noted that within economic sociology the theme of household consumption has been downplayed as a subject of research in favor of production, profit-making, markets and the firm even though households are well-positioned for the meso-level of analysis, as they mediate the effects of macro processes on individual action. Guseva proposed that consumer credit may be one form of redistribution in society, albeit not from the rich to the poor (as in the case of the welfare state), but from the future to the present. Among the most important consequences of the introduction of consumer credit in post-socialist countries, Guseva noted, was the strengthening of employer’s control over work discipline and the shift of obligations from family and friends to financial institutions (banks). These forces all lead to the formation of a so-called *New Subjectivity*.

The classical theoretical view of cash money is that it is a fungible, divisible and liquid substance (George Simmel and Max Weber). Guseva turns instead to the sociological understanding of money, that it is an embedded element in a social context and guided by social rules and conventions (Viviana Zelizer). The essence of Guseva’s presentation was the notion of *New Sociability* of plastic money. Guseva pointed out the dematerialization and re-embedding of plastic money, and also touched on the notion of credit cards as being a protagonist of globalization. Statistical data on the volume of card issuances and card purchases in the post-socialist countries was presented in support of these ideas.

Guseva then summarized the key results of her empirical study drawing on semi-structured interviews with 91 card-issuing institutions in 8 countries, as well as on analyses of bank materials and industry publications conducted from 2003 to 2007. Using an historical and comparative approach, she came to the conclusion that consumer credit and plastic money lead to greater social control. Guseva also discussed the possibilities for plastic money to encourage more spending and give rise to *New Sociability*.

Guseva’s presentation generated several questions and comments from the audience. In particular, the debate was enlivened by the notions of *New Subjectivity* and *New Sociability* emerging from the growing use of plastic money.

Guseva explained that *New Subjectivity* is a direct consequence of the development of consumer credit practices in post-socialist countries and mainly consists of such characteristics as rational calculation, individual responsibility, self-discipline and a forward-looking mindset. As for the notion of *New Sociability* with regard to plastic money, according to Guseva, this concept implies a dematerialization of society and a re-embedding of money. To explain these processes, Guseva discussed the increased risk of overspending and the decreased possibility for sharing plastic money physically in the household. Since many of the questions raised were concentrated around the notion of re-embedding, Guseva stressed the traceable nature of plastic money that makes its use visible, not only to the issuer, but also to the members of a household or family.

### *Panel Session: Housing and Credit*

The keynote address was followed by a panel session devoted to housing and credit practices in post-socialist countries. The presentations concentrated on the topics of mortgage and financial behavior in the family.

The first speaker, Marta Olcoń-Kubicka (Polish Academy of Science, Warsaw), presented research findings on dynamics and conflict related to money in young families in Poland. In her study “Money and Young Family Households in Post-communist Transitions” Olcoń-Kubicka analyzed Internet threads on online message boards, bringing to light the self-organizing process by which money is handled by each individual, and the creation of a separate way of interacting with others depending on monetary criteria, despite the taboo nature of money in Polish society.

Next, Ferenc Hammer (ELTE-BTK, Institute for Art Theory and Media Studies, Hungary) presented data from interviews with Hungarian mortgage borrowers that show the effects of modern financial products on the everyday life subjectivities of Hungarians. In his presentation “Everyday Economic Projections and the Foreign Currency Mortgage Crisis in Hungary” Hammer described a study based on the scripts and discourses associated with two mortgage products that dominate the Hungarian market: lower-risk state-subsidized fixed-rate mortgages and riskier foreign-currency-denominated mortgages. The study reveals a striking difference between two types of everyday subjectivities with regard to the mortgages in “settled” and “unsettled” times.

The final speaker of the first panel session, Mateusz Halawa (The New School for Social Research, Poland), presented his research on the role of mortgage credit in the life of young middle-class families living in owner-occupied flats in Warsaw and its suburbs. Introducing his study, “Mortgage Households as Carry Traders: The social life of the Swiss Franc in Poland”, Halawa noted that it was inspired by the idyllic short movie *Na kredyt* which tells the story of a young Polish couple suffering from high mortgage payments. Halawa suggested the emergence of a new social phenomenon he calls “the pro-cyclical everyday life”. The idea is that an individual’s space and time expands and contracts with booms and busts of the market. Furthermore, Halawa claimed that the walls of financialized homes are “porous” in the sense that domesticity is made vulnerable to incursions of market forces beyond control.

The presented studies provoked a variety of questions and commentary from the audience, and a lively exchange on the meaning and effect of consumer credit in different countries ensued.

Alya Guseva, the panel’s discussant, raised the question of the specificity of the household mortgage in Russia and other post-socialist countries. She stressed the promising character of the presented studies, but noted an excessive focus on the demand side and evident neglect of the supply side. She also raised the question of differences in the use of primary and secondary housing loans. With regard to Olcoń-Kubicka’s study, Guseva speculated on the possibility for institutional advice in the financial sphere to play a role for young families in Poland and other post-socialist countries. In addition, she introduced into the debate a discussion of the role of modern family values, a conversation that was actively supported by audience participants.

During the discussion period, audience members raised the question of gender differences in financial behavior and mortgage practices. Some workshop participants characterized the mortgage as a hallmark of maturity and adulthood, regardless of gender. The topic of feminist trends in contemporary Poland was touched on as well.

Concluding the discussion period, Ferenc Hammer offered some thoughts on the interrelationships between household mortgage, class and inequality in modern society, taking into account the interplay between market and social forces.

### *Panel Session: Gifts, Hospitality and Changing Reciprocities*

After a break, the workshop resumed with a panel session dedicated to reciprocal exchanges and gift exchanges. The first presentation, given by Elizaveta Polukhina and Anna Strelnikova (HSE, Russia), was entitled “Gifts and Consumption: Exploring the Russian online Reciprocal Communities”<sup>1</sup>. This netnographic study relies on systematic observations of online communities and on semi-structured face-to-face interviews with its members. Polukhina and Strelnikova’s research reveals the existence of two different types of gift-exchanging online communities: instrumental and value-based. The main outcome of their study is the introduction of the notion of *New Sociability* arising within gift-exchanging online communities in Russia. For community members, the activity becomes a way of expanding social links, as well as providing additional criteria to “scale” personal prestige through the formation of a virtual status. The study reveals that involvement in such communities allows people with similar levels of informational, social and cultural capital to create a balance of needs and opportunities.

Costanza Curro’ (University College London, UK), followed with her presentation of a study of food provision and food consumption patterns in contemporary Georgia. “The Host, the Guest, and the Table: Patterns of Consumption in Tbilisi” is drawn on observations of three households located in different areas of Tbilisi and a series of interviews with people of different age, gender, socio-economic status, and educational level. Curro’ described how Georgians today largely rely on “old” models of food provision such as growing their own fruit and vegetables, and exchanging these products within the circle of their acquaintances, as well as purchasing food in traditional marketplaces (from both licensed and unlicensed vendors). Her study reveals that the food perceived and defined as “tasty” and “healthy” is only the food obtained through transactions involving social relationships. Among Georgians there is a general mistrust of impersonal transactions, as reflected in the negative attributes attached to food purchased in a social void, for example, food from supermarkets of the Western type.

The panel’s final speaker, Natalia Khalina (HSE, Russia), presented the research paper “Intra-household Exchange: Money and Benefit Recirculation between Parents and Their Children” (co-authored with Alina Pishnyak (HSE, Russia). Khalina and Pishnyak study intra-family exchanges, including money and benefit transfers from parents to children. Their data is taken from face-to-face interviews with children aged from 10 to 14 and their parents. Khalina highlighted some striking contradictions between the interviewed children and adults. For instance, children demonstrate more economic reasoning and less social reasoning than their parents. The study reveals that market-based relations within a household do exist and that children often have a more economic perception of the relationship than do their parents.

Sandy Ross then opened up the floor for general discussion and moderated a lively exchange among workshop participants.

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<sup>1</sup> Online gift-exchange communities are virtual platforms where users make free of charge exchanges of different daily demand objects such as books, clothing, furniture, etc.

The audience participants focused their questions and comments on redistribution, gift exchange and reciprocity. The study concerning reciprocal exchanges in Russian online communities provoked a lot of questions from the non-Russian participants. Even if similar online platforms do exist in European countries, there are some specific features in Russia which can be hardly found in other countries. For instance, the role of “postmen” who manage the redistribution of the gifts and help to carry them from the sender to the receiver absolutely free of charge is virtually unheard of elsewhere. Speaking about the unique nature of Russian online reciprocal communities, Polukhina and Strelnikova also noted that the described practices may not be the direct outcome of the recent economic crises, as such practices have been existing in Russia for a long time and therefore cannot be reduced to online ones.

Participants showed interest in the research conducted by Costanza Curro’ on the meaning of delicious and healthy food in Georgia, intrigued by the moral character of exchanges of vegetables and fruits in the local communities of Tbilisi. One participant asked about strategies adopted by supermarkets in Georgia to reduce the level of mistrust in the local population. Curro’ described one of the more popular strategies for building customer loyalty, which is to introduce the kind of communication one finds at the traditional market by setting up an imitation open-air market in the produce department. For now, though, this strategy is not very effective.

Finally, the research presented by Natalia Khalina raised some questions about the specific nature of cash flows within the family in Russia. Khalina emphasized some striking features of this type of recirculation. For instance, as the study revealed, the money’s purpose and place for keeping could be different depending on the child’s gender. Khalina also noted the moral taboo against bargaining with children. The participants called forth another interesting characteristic peculiar to Russia grandparents usually continue to support their children and grandchildren with their small but stable income even after the younger generations have started to work.

Rounding up the first day of the workshop, the moderator and audience members formulated some important conclusions, most notably, that a common thread running through all the presentations is the notion of moral economy. That is to say, that there are moral boundaries in economic exchanges, and that “morally right” and “morally wrong” have meaning for the exchange practices of local communities. There was general agreement that this overarching theme deserves deeper investigation, hopefully within the framework of economic sociology in the nearest future.

## Day 2

### *Keynote Address: Delai Sam: Self-Help, Difference and the Common Good*

The keynote speaker of the second day of the workshop was Olga Shevchenko (Williams College, USA), author of *Crisis and the Everyday in Post-Socialist Moscow* [Shevchenko 2009] and *Double Exposure: Memory and Photography* [Shevchenko 2014].

Shevchenko began with a summary of her earlier work *Crisis and the Everyday in Postsocialist Moscow*, an ethnographic study of post-socialist Moscow in the late 1990s that sought to uncover how people made sense of the acute uncertainties of everyday life and how they constructed new identities and competencies in response to these challenges.

Shevchenko went on to present her new study, “Delai Sam: Self-Help, Difference and the Common Good”, which is situated in the larger framework of urban geography in the context of the rapidly changing economic, political, and cultural landscape of post socialist Russia. Based on an empirical case-study of one dacha-

community located in the Moscow suburbs, this research makes a valuable contribution to the body of ethnographic studies on the quotidian experience of post-socialist transformation.

Shevchenko claimed there are distinctions between “deserving” and “undeserving” populations, among appropriate temporal horizons and between the private and the public. She presented some ideas for how social resources of material and power could be organized in relation to shared values in order to achieve a comfortable life.

The dacha-community under study is comprised of former colleagues of a state-owned enterprise and was initially socially homogenous. Although it is set apart, the community is not gated and there are a number of access points to it from the main road. Based on sincere friendships from childhood, and maintained by frequent mutual visits and exchange of gifts, social relationships in the dacha-community were rather tangible and close. Using rich visual ethnographic material, Shevchenko showed the radical change that has occurred in recent years. If previously the landscape was rather homogeneous, today the old modest cottages stand side-by-side with modern luxury villas outfitted with large winter gardens and high fences. This new type of housing is owned by rich newcomers and constitutes a dramatic and persistent contrast with the original inhabitants.

The main focus of the Shevchenko’s study has to do with the establishment of a new social contract between the locals and newcomers concerning the social rules of coexistence. As Shevchenko noted, one strategy for reaching balance is the segmentation of space, as reflected in the construction of solid fences equipped with video-cameras on the perimeter. The initial inhabitants supported the construction of fences, even if it meant losing the ability to communicate freely across the territory. Another very interesting question investigated by Shevchenko concerns the distinction between public and private space, as illustrated in the striking example of the construction of a new playground. The playground was constructed to be utilized only by families with children and to be closed to anyone else. Shevchenko posed that this playground, while not being a public good in the traditional sense, nevertheless improved the infrastructure and attractiveness of the entire community.

In conclusion, Shevchenko noted the important moments that reveal the sharp boundary between “deserving” and “undeserving” populations, a general low level of public-spiritedness in the community, and a sharp transformation towards a neo-liberal community regarding the controversial space.

When the floor was opened to general discussion, Shevchenko’s presentation inspired a particularly lively debate that could have gone on for much longer, if not for the time limitation. Some participants listed the common features of Russian dachas and Georgian and British suburban communities. Costanza Curro’ drew attention to the character of interaction between two newly formed classes. Shevchenko remarked on the persistence of the notion of “undeserved wealth” held by the original inhabitants towards the newcomers. At the same time, there is tangible explicit reluctance to show envy. For this reason, friendly relations between the two groups are maintained, at least nominally, despite the real and significant class division.

The question of public involvement in the infrastructure improvements in the local area was also raised during the general discussion. Shevchenko remarked that the original inhabitants were more active because of their personal attachment to the community. As for the newcomers, they were especially interested in improvements that were in close proximity to their own property.

A member of the audience asked whether interaction with local or regional government played any role. As it turns out, there was no political party representation in the described dacha community; communication with the state was limited to rare interactions with municipal authorities.

### *Panel Session: Changing Russian Consumption Practices*

The first panel session of the day was devoted to recent changes in Russian consumption patterns. The presentations concentrated on the topics of online practices in Russian households and leading trends in alcohol consumption.

Natalia Firsova (HSE, Russia) began with her presentation “What Drives Early Adoption of Doing Things Online in Russian Households? Predictors of Innovative Consumption Practices”, a study based on data from the Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS-HSE)<sup>2</sup> of 2009 (784 respondents). While identifying the main predictors of innovative consumption practices, Firsova takes into account such factors as social capital, available resources and context peculiarities. The main findings of her research are that the status of capital resident accounts for one of the main reasons of early engagement in online consumption practices, along with educational and occupational mobility in the household. Firsova suggested that her study can be considered as a step to a more generalizable result in the theory of diffusion of innovation.

Vadim Radaev (HSE, Russia), followed with a presentation of research focused on changes in the consumption of alcohol in Russia. Radaev’s study “Farewell to Nordic Drinking Culture? Changes in the consumption of manufactured and homemade alcohol in Russia” is based on Rosstat data as well as on two nationwide surveys of households (Russian Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS-HSE) of 2012, and Special GfKRus survey of 2012). As for the volume of alcohol being consumed, Radaev noted a decline in the amount of legal vodka, which is not being compensated by the rise of samogon<sup>3</sup>, and a considerable rise in the amount of beer. One outcome of the study was the identification of two main types of consumers, the “Nordics”, who drink samogon (declining since 2000), and the “Mediterraneans”, who drink homemade wine (introduced recently).

The final speaker of this panel, Zoya Kotelnikova (HSE, Russia), continued on the sensitive issue of alcohol consumption in Russia. Her study “Consumption of Counterfeit Alcohol in Contemporary Russia: the Role of Cultural and Structural Factors” pays special attention to the process of constructing connections between identity, quality and risk in this context. Data from the Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS-HSE) form the basis of this study. Kotelnikova noticed that consumption practices with regard to counterfeit alcohol are significantly different from those of original alcohol. For example, counterfeit alcohol consumption is usually characterized by patterns of heavy and hazardous drinking, as well as by a preference for traditional and homemade alcohol. The study also revealed that social networks serve as a source of consumer trust and information regarding the quality of the alcohol being consumed. It is also worth noting that counterfeit alcohol consumption is mostly an attribute of the lower social classes.

The panel moderator, Christopher S. Swader (HSE, Russia) thanked the speakers and then offered his thoughts on the theoretical basis of the presented research before opening up the floor for the general discussion. As Natalia Firsova had mentioned, her research is situated at the intersection of several social sciences such as macro- and microeconomics, behavioral economics and sociology of consumption. According to Swader, in addition to these theoretical approaches it could be interesting to analyze the theory of innovation and its critique, as well as the theory of social capital applied to the consumption practices. Contributing to the discussion of theoretical approaches, Sandy Ross proposed to rethink control variables in the regression model used in the Firsova’s study. In her opinion, it could be possible that, as with many African countries, in some Russian households the stage of computer ownership is skipped and it might be more reasonable to control for smart phones rather than ordinary computers.

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<sup>2</sup> The Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey (RLMS) is a series of nationally representative surveys designed to monitor the effects of Russian reforms on the health and economic welfare of households and individuals in the Russian Federation. For more information see the link: <http://www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/rlms-hse> (accessed 17 November 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Russian term used to describe high-proof distilled spirits, generally produced illicitly.

Vadim Radaev's presentation sparked a passionate discussion about cultural differences in beverage preferences and styles of drinking. Workshop participants proposed some hypotheses concerning gender differences in alcohol consumption practices. While women align more closely to the Mediterranean drinking pattern, it is possible that men drink in the Nordic style, simply because in masculine culture alcohol is not an ordinary product and drinking is not an ordinary activity. Rather, drinking is a kind of sport and a way of displaying masculinity. As for other differences between the category of samogon and home-made wine, Radaev added an important observation concerning the fact that in Russia samogon can be produced for household use or for sale, while wine is usually made only for household consumption.

Participants of the workshop considered Kotelnikova's work to be very promising and ambitious, but found that some hypotheses needed more clarification and support. Workshop participants provided some valuable and insightful feedback concerning the role of social networks as a source for consumer trust and information.

### *Panel Session: Post-Socialist Consumption Ethics and Aesthetics*

The final session of the workshop was dedicated to the larger framework of consumption ethics and aesthetics. The presentations focused on the notion of the "experience economy" and consumption practices of the middle class in the context of state control.

The first speaker, Eileen Yuk-ha Tsang (City University of Hong Kong), presented her study "Spending without Speaking: China's Middle Class, Governmentality, and Conspicuous Consumption". Tsang looks at conspicuous consumption among China's emerging middle class, and the role of the Communist party in this trend. Hers is a qualitative study based on 50 in-depth interviews with members of the younger generation of the Chinese middle-class of the province of Guangdong. Tsang noted that this younger generation tends to consider consumption not as an option but as a necessity. The ability of this group to consume goods of high quality in high quantities leads to conspicuous consumption. Noteworthy is that the consumption of luxury goods gives these young members of the Chinese middle-class a sense of greater connection with the rest of the world and helps them to overcome the limitations of their physical location. The main outcome of this research is that the Chinese Communist Party is undertaking a social engineering process of controlling its population 'from within' by directing their activities towards the pursuit of hedonistic consumption.

Radostina Schivatcheva (King's College London, UK) followed with her presentation "Booze, Bar Crawls and Bulgaria: the British Tourist 'experience' of the Bulgarian Black Sea Coast". This study looks at the power relations in the tourist "experience economy" of the post-socialist Bulgarian Black Sea coast within the broader context of brand, media and class. Schivatcheva analyzed visual marketing materials for Sunny Beach<sup>4</sup> produced by the Official Bulgarian Tourism Board, the BBC and Channel 4 in the UK. Her study shows that the Bulgarian media and Channel 4 promote two entirely different brands. On one hand, the ads that run in Bulgarian media appeal to the wealthy middle-class consumer and make reference to history and tradition. On the other hand, Channel 4 promotes Sunny Beach only as a label, a signifier without any intrinsic value beyond being a setting for the budget holiday-maker. Advertisements on British television rely on scenes of British teenage culture, showing "low-class" visitors on holiday, young, working-class adults, who are not particularly bright or educated, with simple expectations from Sunny beach as a destination for cheap alcohol and sex. Schivatcheva showed how this type of consumption can be perceived as a volatile site of personal development, achievement and self-creation. The main finding of the research is that in contemporary British media and TV-production, attributions of immorality, irrationality and stupidity are condensed and projected onto the body of the working-class.

<sup>4</sup> Sunny Beach is a major seaside resort on the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria, located approximately 35 km north of Burgas in Nessebar municipality, Burgas Province. It is the largest and most popular holiday resort in Bulgaria, and is home to over 800 hotels with more than 300,000 beds.

Olga Shevchenko, discussant for this panel, offered her thoughts before opening up the floor to general discussion. Shevchenko praised the rich theoretical foundation underlying Tsang's study while suggesting that for analyzing consumption under state control, it could be fruitful to take into account not only French theory, but also ideas from the Frankfurt school. As for Schivatcheva's research, Shevchenko highlighted the originality of the study and then encouraged participants to offer ideas and discuss further their own understanding of the "experience economy" in the final general discussion.

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The workshop "Consumption and Economic Crises: Post-Socialist Experiences" organized by the National Research University Higher School of Economics explored the highly relevant issues related to how the global financial crisis is being experienced on the ground in post-socialist countries and how everyday urban consumption culture is changing as we enter the 21st century.

Russian sociologists and their foreign counterparts from the USA, the UK, Poland, Hungary, and China presented their papers and ongoing research in a setting where ideas and suggestions could be solicited and exchanged freely in open-floor discussions. As noted by the lead moderator of the workshop, Sandy Ross, the main themes connecting the presentations are those of the moral economy, of moral boundaries in the economic process of exchanges, of rapidly changing consumption practices, consumption ethics and aesthetics. While the two-day workshop provoked deep and thoughtful discussion, participants agreed that these important and overarching issues deserve deeper investigation and expressed the hope that they will be developed by other researchers in the nearest future within the framework of economic sociology.

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