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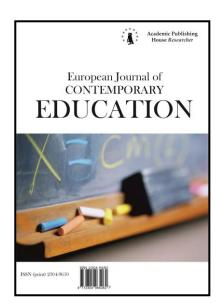
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## **INCFAR:** Characteristics and Challenges (A Fifth Anniversary Tribute)

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#### **Abstract**

This paper examines the diverse activity of the International Network Center for Fundamental and Applied Research (INCFAR) in conjunction with the institution's fifth anniversary. The authors describe the process of creation and reorganization of the INCFAR Laboratories and discuss the Center's cooperation with other research-and-education establishments around the world. The paper includes an analysis of the key areas of research the Center is currently focused on.

The work's materials are grounded in some specialized literature and a body of research literature, as well as certain resources available on the Center's website. In working on this paper, the authors made wide use of the descriptive, statistical, and problem-historical methods, which helped put together a comprehensive picture of the relevant events in their historical sequence.

The authors conclude by stating that today the five-year-old INCFAR is a well-ramified research establishment. In addition to its efficient labs and spectacular publication activity, the Center is distinguished by considerable collaboration activity, possesses resources of its own in the area of dissemination of scholarly information, and runs a resource for indexing scholarly periodicals. All this helps make the outcomes of the Center's scholarly work as visible to the potential reader as possible, which, in turn, helps boost the possibility that these works will be known to wider scholarly and pedagogical communities.

**Keywords:** International Network Center for Fundamental and Applied Research (INCFAR), international scholarly collaboration, science studies, history, pedagogics, military sciences, intellectual capital, pedagogical innovations.

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#### 1. Introduction

Today's increasingly global world is changing at a fast pace, which, naturally, is causing change in science and its forms as well. Truly, what just recently seemed immutable can easily change and take on a new form these days. As commonly known, networked collaboration is a practice that has been in wide use worldwide for decades. Yet, creating a networked scientific establishment may well look like something totally novel, as an institution of this kind does not require substantial funding that may be needed to maintain a campus. Let us explore this experience through the example of the International Network Center for Fundamental and Applied Research (INCFAR), a successful establishment which has been in operation for five years now.

#### 2. Materials and methods

The work's materials are grounded in the company's business documentation, certain resources available on its website (http://incfar.net), a set of international scientometric databases, a set of journals run by Academic Publishing House Researcher s.r.o., some specialized literature, and a body of research literature.

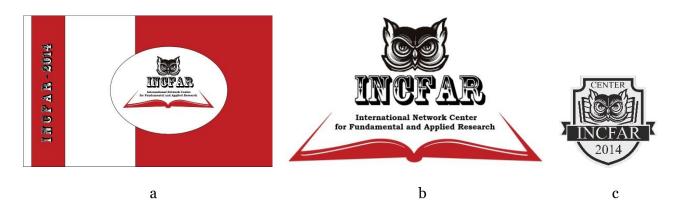
In working on this paper, the authors made wide use of the descriptive, statistical, and problem-historical methods, which helped put together a comprehensive picture of the relevant events in their historical sequence.

## 3. Results

# 3.1. INCFAR's history and symbology

The International Network Center for Fundamental and Applied Research (INCFAR) was founded on July 27, 2014. The objective behind setting up the INCFAR was to bring together researchers based on networked collaboration among those who are united by a single research topic but reside in different regions or countries (networked cooperation), rather than do so based on a territorial principle (e.g., researchers from the same region gathered on one campus).

In the fall of 2014, the Center comprised three labs: (1) Laboratory for World Civilizations (headed by A.A. Cherkasov); (2) Laboratory for Military Research (headed by N.V. Mityukov); (3) Laboratory for Economic and Social Interaction (headed by T.E. Gvarliani). In 2017, the last two labs were joined into a single entity to form the Laboratory for Professional and Pedagogical Training (headed by N.V. Mityukov). As of October of 2019, the Center, formally registered in the US, employs 20 researchers from seven different countries (Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Spain, Ghana, Ukraine, and Israel). Two of the Center's members are also members of the American Historical Association (USA) (A.A. Cherkasov and A.Yu. Peretyatko). One of its members is also a member of the History of Education Society (UK) (T.A. Magsumov) (Tarakanov, Ludwig, 2019: 915). Another of its members is also a member of the Royal Naval League of Spain (Spain) (N.V. Mityukov). Based on data for October of 2019, the Center has 197 publications in Scopus and 159 publications in WoS. Its h-index in Scopus is 12.



**Fig. 1.** INCFAR's symbology (a - flag, b - logo, c - badge).

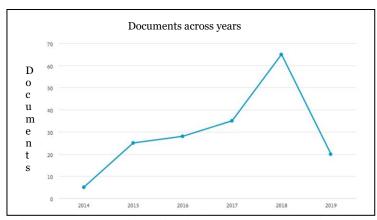


Fig. 2. Number of publications by the INCFAR based on Scopus data (as of September of 2019).

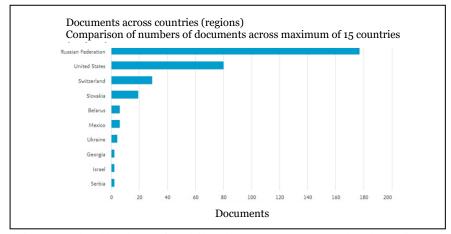


Fig. 3. Distribution of publications across countries based on Scopus data (as of September of 2019).

During the period 2016–2019, Head of the INCFAR Alexander Cherkasov, Doctor of Historical Sciences, took part in four Arctic expeditions organized as part of the Arctic Floating University program (2016 – Novaya Zemlya's western coast; 2017 – Franz Josef Land; 2018 – Novaya Zemlya's eastern and western coasts; 2019 – Spitsbergen). As a result of these expeditions, scholarly ties were successfully established with researchers from Switzerland, Canada, and China.



**Fig. 4.** A group of researchers holding an American flag and an INCFAR flag in Ny-Ålesund on the island of Spitsbergen (Norway) in July of 2019 (A.A. Cherkasov second right).

# 3.2. INCFAR's publication activity

One of the key indicators of the Center's performance is its publication activity. During the period 2015–2017, reports on the Center's research activity included all of its publications released in journals indexed in a variety of scientometric and bibliometric systems, monographs, and

collections of scholarly works. Starting in 2018, the research activity report has covered only works published in journals that are indexed in Scopus and WoS.

Given that the Center currently runs two different labs (Laboratory for World Civilizations and Laboratory for Professional and Pedagogical Training), most of its publication activity, accordingly, is associated with the following two major research areas – history and pedagogics (including the history of pedagogics).

The INCFAR is not just a collaboration effort that brings together 20 researchers from Europe, Asia, and Africa. Most of its staff members are also experienced teacher practitioners engaged in the development and implementation of various innovations in their professional instructing activity. In this regard, the scholarly interests of staff at both of the INCFAR Labs cover relevant issues in pedagogics such as developing new methodologies on teaching various disciplines in secondary school and college and enhancing teachers' skill levels (Neskoromnykh et al., 2017), implementing a value-based approach in the educational process (Degtyarev et al., 2019), developing media education, and many others.

The Laboratory for World Civilizations is mainly focused on exploring issues related to the history of the Caucasus, the history of slavery and slave trade in the Black Sea region, military history (e.g., the Caucasus theater of military action in the period from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries), and some other subjects. The other lab, the Laboratory for Professional and Pedagogical Training, is chiefly concerned with investigating issues of present-day education, as well as the history of development of the education system in the Russian Empire, the USSR, and the countries of Europe, including issues of comparative pedagogics.

Since it may be rather time-consuming trying to examine the Center's entire publication activity in a single paper, it makes sense to just focus on the top 25 most cited INCFAR papers based on Scopus and those based on WoS data. It is worth remembering that far from all of the peer-reviewed journals are indexed concurrently in both of those databases, which leaves room for discrepancies in interpretation.

The Center's most cited papers can be divided into three major groups.

The first group is focused on issues related to the Caucasus War (1801–1864) and the way of life and traditions of the mountaineer community in the Caucasus (with a separate focus on slave trade) (Cherkasov et al., 2013; Cherkasov et al., 2014; Cherkasov et al., 2014a; Cherkasov et al., 2015; Cherkasov et al., 2015; Cherkasov et al., 2016; Cherkasov et al., 2016; Cherkasov et al., 2016a; Cherkasov et al., 2016b; Cherkasov et al., 2017; Cherkasov et al., 2017a; Cherkasov et al., 2017b; Cherkasov et al., 2018a; Cherkasov et al., 2018a; Cherkasov et al., 2018b; Ermachkov et al., 2018; Ermachkov et al., 2018; Cherkasov et al., 2017; Ivantsov et al., 2015; Karataev et al., 2016; Magsumov, 2016; Smigel, Cherkasov, 2016).

The second group of papers covers issues related to public education in the Russian Empire, both at its center and on its periphery (Aminov et al., 2018; Cherkasov et al., 2019; Cherkasov, Smigel, 2016; Magsumov, 2014; Magsumov, 2015; Shevchenko et al., 2016; Shevchenko et al., 2018; Magsumov, 2018; Magsumov, 2018; Magsumov, 2018; Magsumov, Nizamova, 2015; Magsumov, Nizamova, 2016; Molchanova et al., 2013).

The third group incorporates papers that are focused on the social history of the Don Cossack Host (Peretyatko, 2016; Peretyatko, 2017; Peretyatko, Zulfugarzade, 2017; Peretyatko, Zulfugarzade, 2017a), as well as those dealing with a wide and diverse range of issues, from networked activity (Mingaleva et al., 2017) and cinematography (Fedorov et al., 2017) to historiography (Polyakova, 2015).

Many of the works by the Center's staff members are of an interdisciplinary nature. This, above all, is the case with historical research. In essence, this is vivid testimony to effective interaction between historian researchers and members of other scholarly areas, including economics, law, pedagogics, linguistics, etc. In its scholarly activity the Center actively engages specialists from institutions of higher learning and research organizations in the US, Canada, Switzerland, Ukraine, Russia, Ghana, Slovakia, Belarus, Moldova, and some other countries. Among the institutions partnered with the INCFAR are Geneva University (Switzerland) and Tel Aviv University (Israel). This kind of cooperation has helped take work on many of the scholarly issues within the sphere of the INCFAR's professional interests to a whole new level.

**3.3. The Labs' staff members and their scientometric performance** Tables 1 and 2 list the staff at the INCFAR Labs and data on their publication activity (data as at October 1, 2019).

**Table 1.** Laboratory for World Civilizations

			Scopus		WoS			
No.	Name	Position	Total	Total	h-	Total	Total	h-
			papers	citations	index	papers	citations	index
1	Cherkasov, A.A.	Head of the Lab	45	220	9	92	170	7
2	Smigel, M.	Deputy Head of the Lab	27	136	8	26	72	5
3	Lysenko, Yu.A.	Leading Researcher	14	12	2	12	8	1
4	Ter-Oganov, N.K.	Leading Researcher	6	5	2	6	6	2
5	Degtyarev, S.I.	Leading Researcher	19	13	2	20	12	2
6	Natolochnaya, O.V.	Senior Researcher	13	39	4	18	15	2
7	Mamadaliev, A.M.	Senior Researcher	16	10	2	20	18	3
8	Taran, K.V.	Senior Researcher	12	21	3	13	14	3
9	Ermachkov, I.A.	Senior Researcher	10	23	3	15	25	3
10	Polyakova, L.G.	Junior Researcher	12	13	2	12	9	2
Overall value for the Lab			174	492	37	234	349	30
Average value per single staff member			17.4	49.2	3.7	23.4	34.9	3

Table 2. Laboratory for Professional and Pedagogical Training

			Scopus			WoS		
No.	Name	Position	Total	Total	h-	Total	Total	h-
			papers	citations	index	papers	citations	index
1	Mityukov, N.V.	Head of the	23	23	3	25	26	3
		Lab						
2	Magsumov, T.A.	Deputy	28	168	9	24	20	2
		Head of the						
		Lab						
3	Gvarliani, T.E.	Leading	11	24	3	15	20	3
		Researcher						
4	Rajović, G.	Leading	17	18	3	19	22	2
		Researcher						
5	Peretyatko, A.Yu.	Senior	17	26	4	19	38	4
		Researcher						
6	Nizamova, M.S.	Senior	3	23	2	3	4	1
		Researcher						
7	Sarfo, J.O.	Researcher	4	17	1	2	11	1
8	Mitrofanov, A.F.	Researcher	2	3	1	1	3	1
9	Karataev, V.B.	Junior	12	20	3	12	19	3
		Researcher						

10	Shevchenko, N.A.	Junior	5	19	2	5	18	2
		Researcher						
11	Molchanova, V.S.	Junior	31	151	9	25	109	7
		Researcher						
Overall value for the Lab			153	492	40	150	290	29
Average value per single staff member			13.9	44.7	3.6	13.6	26.3	2.6
	_					•		_
Average value for the INCFAR			15.5	46.8	3.6	18.2	30.4	2.8

The core of the center's team is made up of several former instructors of the Department of National History at Sochi State University (A.A. Cherkasov, O.V. Natolochnaya, A.M. Mamadaliev, and K.V. Taran), as well as several members of the Student Science Club For Regional Studies Through History (Ermachkov et al., 2018), run by that department (I.A. Ermachkov, L.G. Polyakova, V.B. Karataev, and N.A. Shevchenko).

Table 3. INCFAR's Current Scopus and WoS Stats

	Scopus	WoS
Authors	20	20
Papers Citations	197	159
Citations	491	219
h-index	12	7

# 3.4. Present-day state of affairs at the INCFAR

Today, five years later, the Center comprises the following four major functional units:

- Laboratory for World Civilizations;
- Laboratory for Professional and Pedagogical Training;
- Academic Publishing House Researcher s.r.o.;
- Scientific Information Department.

The two labs have already been examined above. As regards Academic Publishing House Researcher s.r.o., the start of the institution's actual publishing experience is credited to Alexander Cherkasov and goes back as early as 1992. The same year is when the publishing house was actually founded (Tarakanov, Ludwig, 2019: 915). At present, the institution runs as many as 52 scholarly journals in Slovakia alone, with two of these indexed in Scopus, three – in WoS, and three – in Chemical Abstracts Service. The publishing house runs several narrowly specialized journals as well, including Propaganda in the World and Local Conflicts (focused on military propaganda), Slavery: Theory and Practice (slavery), and Bylye Gody (the history of modern-era Russia and Europe).

The Scientific Information Department is concerned with the following two major areas:

The first – the technical support of the full-text english-language database Open Academic Journals Index (OAJI). The database indexes open access journals.

Official website: http://oaji.net

The 2nd program – Eastern European Scientific Information Agency. EESIA reviews the results of scientific research in the field of history and archeology.

Official website: https://eesiag.com

The Open Academic Journals Index database was created on June 11, 2013. At present, it incorporates 2,765 scholarly journals from 113 countries. It currently includes over 150,000 peer-reviewed papers, with its number of authors exceeding 280,000. The database is equipped with functionality that helps perform a broad and inclusive search across papers, journals, and authors (http://oaji.net/library-oaji.html). It incorporates a service that automatically calculates the value for a journal based on the CGIJ system. The maximum CGIJ value is 1,000. This value can be achieved if:

The journal, which uploaded more than 10 of its articles, and indexed nowhere -0, 101

The journal, which uploaded over 100 of its articles and indexed nowhere - 0, 201

The journal, which uploaded more than 500 of its articles and indexed nowhere - 0, 350

The journal is indexed in DOAJ + 0, 150 to the CGIJ

The journal is indexed in Scopus + 0, 250 to the CGIJ

The journal is indexed in WoS + 0, 250 to the CGIJ (http://oaji.net/).

The Eastern European Scientific Information Agency project was launched on April 30, 2018. That day saw the publication of the first news item on the information resource. The project aims to familiarize international (above all, English-speaking) audiences with news about Eastern European science. Going forward, the agency's resource is expected to become a resource for national news portals related to issues of science. At present, the agency gathers news only in the area of history, mainly from journals dealing with Eastern European history. In the near future, it may be possible to expand the agency's news feeds to include other sciences as well. The project differs from national news portals in that its resource offers a complete bibliographic description of all news items it carries, styles them in English, and provides an active link to the information source.

## Conclusion

Today, after five years since its foundation, the INCFAR is a well-ramified research establishment. In addition to its efficient labs and spectacular publication activity, the Center is distinguished by considerable collaboration activity, possesses resources of its own in the area of dissemination of scholarly information, and runs a resource for indexing scholarly periodicals. All this helps make the outcomes of the Center's scholarly work as visible to the potential reader as possible, which, in turn, helps boost the possibility that these works will be known to wider scholarly and pedagogical communities.

The implementation of networked research projects has helped bring together a large number of researchers from various countries and regions. This, most importantly, is going to enable researchers from Eastern Europe to finally overcome the state of methodological confusion they have been in for several decades now, with the issue having had a truly negative effect on Russian socio-humanitarian science, resulting in its narrative descriptiveness.

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