Ieva Puzo PhD

Social anthropology, qualitative research and researcher development



Co-supervisor | Faculty of Social Sciences
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Current position	Lead Researcher and Dean
Organisational unit	Faculty of Social Sciences, Rīga Stradiņš University
KEY-RSU role	Co-supervisor
Thematic area	SSRC-1 Food and Nutritional Security of People with Severe Medical Conditions; SSRC-2 Health-Related Information Manipulation, Disinformation and Influence Operations

Host Environment

The Faculty of Social Sciences brings together social-science teaching and research at RSU, while the Social Sciences Research Centre provides a collaborative environment for projects, seminars and interdisciplinary work. View faculty profile | View research centre profile

Supervisor Overview

Ieva Puzo is a Lead Researcher and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Rīga Stradiņš University. As a KEY-RSU co-supervisor, she will support both SSRC postdoctoral researchers through methodological guidance, attention to research ethics, integration into the SSRC research environment and career development towards scientific leadership.

Research Expertise

Her expertise spans social anthropology, knowledge production, mobility studies and academic mobility. She has conducted ethnographic research in Latvia, Japan and Montenegro and has research experience in both Japan and the United States. Her methodological strengths include ethnography, qualitative research design and analysis, comparative inquiry and the development of innovative qualitative approaches.

This background enables her to contribute a strong social-science perspective across both KEY-RSU SSRC themes. She can support postdoctoral researchers in connecting empirical work with internationally relevant theory, designing context-sensitive research and examining how knowledge, institutions, mobility and social relations shape complex societal and health-related questions.

Research Opportunities

Current interests centre on the intersection of democratic resilience and knowledge production, participatory action research, research impact and communication, and the development of leadership and team-building capacity. Within the two SSRC themes, these perspectives can strengthen projects on food and nutritional

security or health-related information manipulation by adding ethnographic, participatory, organisational or comparative dimensions.

The postdoctoral researcher will retain ownership of the project's intellectual direction. Ieva Puzo's role is to help sharpen the originality and theoretical contribution, strengthen the methodological design and connect the work to wider debates and relevant scholarly communities. Postdoctoral researchers may draw on qualitative and mixed-method resources including MAXQDA, audiovisual tools, QuestionPro, ArcGIS, focus-group facilities and media-room infrastructure, subject to the needs and approvals of the individual project.

Research Environment and Collaboration

The postdoctoral researcher will have access to the shared research environment of the Social Sciences Research Centre and the wider Faculty of Social Sciences. Opportunities may include presenting work at international seminars, participating in SSRC and Faculty conferences, developing joint publications or journal special issues, and contributing to international project proposals with administrative support from the host environment.

Ieva Puzo leads the Latvian Council of Science project Caring for Democracy: Life-Making Practices in Geopolitical Uncertainties, which connects research on democratic resilience with international scholarly and institutional networks. Depending on thematic fit and project conditions, this environment may offer opportunities for methodological exchange, collaboration, joint publications and engagement with relevant research materials. Her networks developed through projects, fieldwork and research visits can also help an incoming postdoctoral researcher build relationships beyond RSU and increase international visibility.

Supervision, Mentoring and Career Development

Supervision is designed as a gradual progression towards research independence. Bi-weekly meetings will provide a regular space to discuss the research question, originality, theoretical contribution, methodology, tasks and milestones, including a realistic publication plan. Feedback will combine constructive critique with respect for the postdoctoral researcher's intellectual ownership, and expectations will be made explicit through jointly agreed priorities and deliverables.

Ieva Puzo has mentored early-career researchers at the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Social Sciences Research Centre through research meetings, conferences and open talks with international scholars. As Head of the SSRC, she supported social-science researchers developing applications for postdoctoral grants and international mobility opportunities. Her approach treats collaboration as a way to strengthen individual researchers: she shares professional connections openly, encourages collegial exchange and supports the postdoctoral researcher in progressing towards becoming a principal investigator with an independent team.

As Dean and co-supervisor, Ieva Puzo will provide continuity between the postdoctoral researchers, their main supervisors and the Faculty of Social Sciences. She will help monitor progress across the two SSRC projects, support the main supervisors in addressing cross-cutting supervisory or organisational needs, and mentor the postdoctoral researchers in navigating the Faculty's research and administrative environment. She will oversee and support the implementation of each postdoctoral researcher's Career Development Plan in collaboration with the postdoctoral researcher and main supervisor. This will include monitoring progress towards the agreed research, training, mobility and career-development objectives and providing a regular point of contact for discussing emerging needs, deviations from the plan and appropriate adjustments or additions as the project and career goals evolve.

Career Development Support

Career development will be connected to the postdoctoral researcher's own project and longer-term ambitions. Support can include research-project design and management, publication and research-output strategy, selection of relevant conferences and journals, international networking, research communication and the development of leadership and team-building skills.

The postdoctoral researcher may gain experience in collaborative writing, special-issue development and international proposal preparation while learning how to turn an original idea into a manageable programme of work. Participation in SSRC seminars and wider networks can strengthen visibility and create opportunities for future partnerships. The intended progression is from leading an individual postdoctoral project to being able to assemble collaborations, develop competitive proposals and guide a research team.

Who May Particularly Thrive in This Environment

This environment may particularly suit an independent thinker who also sees colleagues as potential collaborators rather than competitors. A strong fit would be a postdoctoral researcher who can stand behind their ideas while remaining open to critique, communicates directly and respectfully, and contributes to a supportive research culture. It will especially benefit someone who values interdisciplinary exchange, wants to develop leadership capacity and is willing to support doctoral researchers and other colleagues at earlier career stages.

Selected Contributions

Caring at a Distance: Digital Anchors and the Relational Work of Academic Mobility

Cara O and Puzo I. Social Inclusion (2026). Contribution: ethnographic research, data analysis and manuscript development. KEY-RSU relevance: demonstrates collaborative qualitative analysis, theory development and attention to relationships sustained across distance.

Recentring Intimacy in Hopping (Im)mobilities of Academic Precarity

Puzo I and Lulle A. Population, Space and Place (2025). Contribution: lead author; ethnographic data analysis, comparative research, theory development and manuscript development. KEY-RSU relevance: demonstrates leadership in comparative qualitative research and analysis of mobility, precarity and institutional conditions.

Living and Working Research Policies: The Case of International Scholars in Latvia

Puzo I. Suomen Antropologi (2023). Contribution: sole author responsible for research design, ethnographic data collection, analysis and article development. KEY-RSU relevance: demonstrates intellectual independence and the ability to connect institutional policy with researchers' lived experience.

Supervisory Availability

Ieva Puzo plans to provide regular co-supervision to both SSRC postdoctoral researchers throughout the KEY-RSU employment period. Her contribution will complement the main supervisors' thematic expertise, with particular attention to methodology, ethics, integration within the SSRC community, international networking and progression towards independent research leadership.