Higher Education in Russia: History of Complex Transformation

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Post-Soviet transformation in the focus of HE research

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If we know the initial conditions and forces, we can predict an object trajectory. Soviet HE as a starting point.

Comrades, move ahead, towards the top of the knowledge mountain for our people proud being of us.
Initial conditions – Soviet model

1. “Quasi-corporate” higher education
   • Planning agency regulates supply and demand
   • Mandatory job placement
   • Narrow specialization of HEIs and links with industry
   • Research mission is isolated
   • Highly centralized

2. Social and human engineering globally
   • Moral, social and ideological training
   • Restricted access combined with affirmative actions (affirmative action Empire)
   • Russification as the part of modernization
   • Building international community of socialist youth
Four driving forces

• Demand for expanding access: expansion is the change and the driving force (Cantwell et al, 2018; Carnoy et al, 2013)
• Pragmatic modernization (westernization, globalization, not policy borrowing)
• Nation-state (global leader) building
• Further development of the Soviet model

Different layers of the vertically differentiated HE system respond to different drivers and have different logic of changes
Periods of transformation

1990-2000:
• “flush of educational freedom” (Kaser, Phillips, 1992)
• reactive - ’policy of non-policy’
• new stakeholders – households, business, private providers
• crucial role of academic entrepreneurs

2000-2006:
• active government policy - pragmatic westernization (Bologna, National Exam...)

2006-2014
• institutionalization of vertical differentiation,
• Competitive funding
• Internationalization

2015-2021
• Links with industry
• Research mission
• Moral and civic education
• Export of education
Demand for expansion
Demand for Expansion

One demand in higher education policy (State) was joined by two strong demands

The government moved from deficit to wide access:
- In 1992 it permitted public institutions to enroll fee-paying students along with state-funded students
- Allowed opening private higher education institutions
- New language for “educational services” – students as customers
- Increased universities autonomy in enrolling students and use of private money
Higher education – social norm:
66% of respondents think that HE is a key for life success

Which opinion do you rather agree with?

- HE opens the way (leads) to success
- You don't need HE to succeed
Number of universities and branches in Russia in 1991-2017 (at the beginning of the academic year)

*for branches data until 2003 are not available

In 2006, stricter requirements for the activities of branches
Since 2012 – Monitoring the effectiveness of higher education organizations

Source: UIS of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia and Rosstat
The Development of Private Higher Education Sector

A vast majority of private universities has been providing education in socioeconomics and humanities and concentrated more on part-time education in comparison with public universities.

Private HE institutions (2010/2011)
- Full-time education: 74%
- Evening education: 18%
- Part-time education: 6%
- External studies: 2%

Public HE institutions (2010/2011)
- Full-time education: 47%
- Evening education: 4%
- Part-time education: 2%
- External studies: 47%

Private universities (with a few exceptions) failed to become central players in the market of higher education.
High participation system
Did the expansion lead to greater equality of educational opportunities?

Elite universities remain extremely unequal

General access has risen

Admission to the university of children from various social groups, %, 1963-2013 (Novosibirsk region)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social groups by social and professional status of parents and place of residence</th>
<th>1963</th>
<th>1983</th>
<th>1994</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workers, peasants</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small entrepreneurs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialists</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leaders</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional centers</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-sized cities</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small towns</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villages</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pragmatic Globalization (westernization) – adaptation to “normal” market economy
Main “pragmatic” reforms

• National entrance exam
• Bologna process
• Doctoral education reform
• Growing vertical stratification and decreasing horizontal differentiation
• Research mission returned to universities
• Liberal reform of higher education financing (per capita, competitive funding)
Impact of Bologna - Student admission structure in universities of the Russian Federation in 2013-2020

Bologna process

- Bachelors
- Specialty
- Masters
Growing vertical stratification and creation of elite sector

- Federal universities
- National research universities
- Project 5/100
- Project “Priority 2030”
The role of HE in research production

- Share of universities in the total number of Russian publications in scientific journals indexed by Web of Science, %
- Share of higher education sector in R&D, %
Example of “cargo-cult” in pragmatic westernization – new doctoral education
Make Russia great again – the role of higher education in international positioning
Russia as a global leader in science and technology, in geopolitics

• Global positioning (including ranking)
• International students (talents and soft power)
• International researchers
“Excellence Initiative” (Competitiveness initiative) – May 2012

Russian President’s Decree “To implement the program aimed at increasing the international competitiveness of Russian universities.”

The performance indicator – 5 Russian universities in top 100 of major international university rankings by 2020”

Allocation of funding –$30 million annually per university (15 universities in total) for institutional strategy implementation in 2013-2015 (expected increase in 2016-2020)
Russian universities in international rankings (by subjects)

Number of universities in top-100 QS, THE, ARWU*

Universities 5-100

Other universities in Russia

2013

2017/18

Number of positions in top 100 QS, THE, ARWU*

2013

2017/18
Export of education – government efforts

Number of international students grew twofold in 10 years

Source: IIE, Project Atlas, 2017
70% of international students – from post-Soviet countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Kazakhstan</td>
<td>13 848</td>
<td>43 318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. China</td>
<td>17 046</td>
<td>36 466</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Turkmenistan</td>
<td>2 377</td>
<td>30 090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Uzbekistan</td>
<td>3 722</td>
<td>18 557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tajikistan</td>
<td>2 239</td>
<td>17 241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. India</td>
<td>5 146</td>
<td>15 166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Ukraine</td>
<td>4 300</td>
<td>11 248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>1 391</td>
<td>6 668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Egypt</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>5 880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Belarus</td>
<td>3 554</td>
<td>5 673</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
International branch campuses in post-Soviet countries (Chankseliani, 2020)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Number of IBCs</th>
<th>Home institution located in (number of IBCs)</th>
<th>Years of establishment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Russia (6)</td>
<td>1996–2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Russia (2)</td>
<td>2008–2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Russia (2)</td>
<td>1998–2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>United States (1)</td>
<td>2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Russia (7)</td>
<td>1993–2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Russia (6)</td>
<td>1996–2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Russia (1), Vatican City (1)</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Poland (1)</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Russia (4)</td>
<td>1997–2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sweden (1), United States (1)</td>
<td>1991–1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Russia (3)</td>
<td>2009–2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Russia (3)</td>
<td>1999–2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Russia (4), India (1), Italy (1), Singapore (1), South Korea (1), United Kingdom (1)</td>
<td>2001–2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Soviet model restoration and development
New Links Between Universities and Industry

The Idea:
Possibility for financing projects (the amount of 100 million roubles per year + enterprise investing its own funds to the project in the amount not less than the full amount of the subsidy)

Results:
• in 2012 2488 new jobs were created, including jobs for young people - 1484.
• students and postgraduates involved in the research activities of the project amounted to 4319, among them young scientists – 1733; students – 1868; graduates - 718.
• the involvement of the employers in mobilization of curriculum
Employability in a new context

• Targeted enrollment - students enter university on condition that they will work in particular industry or even in particular organization after graduation
• Regulation of practical training
• Incentives for joint department and research groups
• Career services
Moral and civic (patriotic) education

• Vice-rectors in charge of moral and civic education
• Government programs and funding to support civic and broad extracurricular engagement
• Control students’ political activism
• Selection and nurturing of future leaders
• Nation-wide students’ organizations
Current conflicts between “tradition” and “western influence”

• Replace national exam with university-based exams
• Restore mandatory job-placement
• Replace dual degree system with traditional “specialist diploma”
• Reduce university autonomy in curriculum and assessment
• Replace structured “taught doctorate” with traditional apprenticeship approach
• Replace international ranking and publication with national systems
Conclusions

Inevitable conflicts between pragmatic modernization (westernization), new nationalism and traditions

Modernization based on new slogans and regulations without sufficient resources and attention to the path dependence could become fruitless cargo cult

Expansion without a focus on equality could create public distrust in the quality and impact of higher education