The post-socialist transition in Russian higher education

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Imperial Russia

- First Russian universities (1724 and 1755)
- 6 classical universities – centers of liberal arts education and civil service (1802-1814)
- Growth of specialized higher education institutions from 1856 (mainly under the Ministry of Industry)
- Very few private institutions
The Soviet higher education

• A quasi-corporate system, influenced by the Bonapartist model
• Vertical control of industries over specialized institutions (transport, oil, mining, etc.)
• Most research is removed from universities to the Academy of Sciences
• Similar regional systems for mass professions (regional infrastructure institutions)
• Classical universities in urban centers
How did the system work?

• Complete state control model, no market
• Restricted access (no more than 20% of high school graduates enter universities)
• Mandatory job placement and regulated labor market
• Part-time evening programs and correspondence programs for working adults
• State-mandated curriculum
• High status of the academic profession (high wages, prestige)
The structure changed little from 1940 to 1990
The Collapse of the Soviet system in 1990s

- Decline of manufacturing economy
- Elimination of mandatory job placement
- 30% decrease of HE funding (with the same number of state subsidized student seats)
- New stakeholders: private business, households
- New rules for higher education institutions:
  - Relative autonomy in opening new education programs
  - Right to enroll fee-paying students into public universities
  - Establishing private universities (rapid growth of private institutions in 90-s)
Change in Educational Preferences

Admission by Major

- Technical
- Economics and Law
- Health Care
- Education, Culture
- Agricultural

Share of the overall admission (%) 1980
Share of the overall admission (%) 1997
Massification of higher education

Student population in Russia

And: huge growth of universities local branches
Growth of part-time and by correspondence/distant education
Federal spending on higher education (Billions RUB)
Latest reforms

Institutional mechanisms

• 2001-2009: Unified state examination – both for high school graduation and university admission
• 2003-2010: introduction of Bologna (bachelor+master) education model

System segmentation

• 2006-2011: Nine federal universities – building strong regional universities
• 2008-2012: 29 national research universities
• 2013 – 2020: 15 global research universities
• 2012: HEIs effectiveness monitoring
  – aimed to eliminate “low-quality” sector

Differentiation and increased competition
NATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES PROJECT

1. 18 technical universities, 10 comprehensive universities, 1 medical school received the designation

2. Each received a development grant around $45 million

3. Average size – 15 thousand students, 1300 faculty, 1500 doctoral students

4. Innovations in education aimed at the integration of education and research

5. Creation of the centers of excellence in research

6. Academic mobility and internationalization as a priority

7. IT infrastructure for education and research
NRUs Achievements in 2009-2012

• Volume of R&D increased **3.5** times

• Number of articles in indexed journals: **15%** increase annually

• The share of PhDs increased up to **74%**

• The number of professors and students trained in the world's leading research universities increased by **3.6** times

• **127** laboratories were modernized

• Number of international students doubled (now 4% of global)

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Unsatisfactory progress as global research universities
THE “EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE” – MAY 2012

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

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

Allocation of funding –$30 million annually per university for institutional strategy implementation in 2013-2015 (expected increase in 2016-2020)
Institutional diversity in 2010s

**Public HEIs**

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<th>Research universities:</th>
<th>Share of overall enrolment (estimated values)</th>
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<td>- high research potential, national leaders</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<th>Infrastructural regional universities:</th>
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<td>- serve regional labor markets</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<th>Specialized HEIs:</th>
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<td>- train students for particular sectors of the labor market (industrial, tertiary sector),</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<td>- have ties with firms</td>
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<th>Mass HEIs:</th>
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<td>- broad access for the wider population</td>
<td>38%</td>
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<td>- &quot;social safety guarantors”</td>
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<td>- students often attend part-time</td>
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**Private HEIs:**
- Mass HEIs
- “Boutique” HEI
Population with HE

Chart A1.1. Population that has attained tertiary education (2011)
Percentage, by age group

Countries are ranked in descending order of the percentage of 25-34 year-olds who have attained tertiary education.
Source: OECD. Table A1.3a. See Annex 3 for notes (www.oecd.org/edu/eag.htm).
StatLink   http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932846215
What is the nature of the post-socialist transition?

• It is a regional version of global trends:
  – From selective to mass higher education
  – Aspirations for global research universities
  – From more homogeneous to stratified system
  – From state-funded to mixed-source funded
The governance dilemmas

Quality
- The value of accreditation is in reverse proportion to the level of massification (The compliance disease); direct measurements of learning outcomes are not yet available
- The labor market is unpredictable; key skills are uncertain. Massification of HE may have little to do with labor markets, but with social aspirations (Froumin hypothesis)

Cost
- Indefinite increases of state funding is impossible (Baumol’s cost disease); tuition fees politically difficult, student loans are dangerous
- The global rankings race is expensive and exacerbates inequality among institutions

Identity
- Globalization vs. national identity
Innovating our way out of trouble

• Along with quality assurance agenda, establish a systematic innovation agenda

• Innovation by design: things that must be invented (not all innovations) for example:
  – Platform for individual universal record of verified education and achievements (digital badges?).
  – Embedding quality online instruction in F2F education
  – Framework for a global learning platform(s)
  – Transitional structures from university to work (E.g. business and social incubators, subsidized internships)