

## CAPITALISM IN RUSSIAN EDUCATION

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## КАПИТАЛИЗМ В РОССИЙСКОМ ОБРАЗОВАНИИ

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**Abstract:** Education at any level remains the basis of society, being the core for a personality's development. Yet it seems to be undergoing structural and notional changes since the USSR collapse and a new era of capitalism taking its turn. The author is aiming at critical analysis of two aspects in Russian education: first, how abrupt and dysfunctional the changes were in terms of post-soviet education; second, whether the current trends in high education show any positive alteration for scholars.

**Аннотация.** Образование на любом уровне остается основой общества, являясь стержнем развития личности. Однако после распада СССР и наступления новой эры капитализма оно, по-видимому, претерпевает структурные и концептуальные изменения. Автор стремится критически проанализировать два аспекта российского образования: во-первых, насколько резкими и дисфункциональными были изменения в постсоветском образовании; во-вторых, свидетельствуют ли современные тенденции в высшем образовании о каких-либо позитивных изменениях для ученых.

**Keywords:** Academic capitalism, education system, high education, capitalistic society, bureaucratization, economy of production, educational minimum.

**Ключевые слова:** академический капитализм, система образования, высшее образование, капиталистическое общество, бюрократизация, экономика производства, образовательный минимум.

### Russian Education in Retrospective

Referring to the preamble of the Law on the Approval of the fundamentals of legislation of the USSR and the Union Republics on public education dated 07/19/1973 No. 4536-USH are ideologically driven, yet concrete aims benefitting for each member of society [3]. Such a homogeneous approach created an institution of education which forced each and every soviet person to meet the demands of the government in such fields as law, politics, citizenship and international relationships at a unified level. This, consequently, resulted in a system where the

practitioners were valued the most, resulting in decreased universities' prestige and theory diminution. Current Federal Law *On Education in the Russian Federation* No. 273-F3 dated 12/29/2012 does not specify the goals of education at all. It only defines it as a "purposeful process" needed for "human development, satisfaction of his educational needs and interests" [1]. However, one has various interests and needs, which may not always match the needs of the government. A former minister of education, A.A Fursenko, pinpointed that to educate a qualified consumer is the main goal [5]. This idea reflects the core of capitalistic society, where each and every action should maximize the profit. Education in its essence rarely brings profit in short-terms, thus those ruling elites have to decide between national interests of progress in technology or an immediate economic output.

**New Reality of Education.** At first, the changes in the educational system were not so apparent, but since 2010-s more and more transformations have occurred. A preliminary problem to mention is extreme bureaucratization. Many educators complain on excessive amounts of paperwork, leaving them little to no time for teaching [5]. Next, the destruction of unified educational space led to diversification of school curriculum and "chaotic" knowledge. It is worth mentioning, in post-industrial society consumer education does not matter much, for automatization, robotization and informatization allowed to significantly decrease the quantity of skilled workers. Therefore, we may presume, education may become a two-sided process, in which public schools would provide masses with general literacy and shallow knowledge, whilst elite education would prepare exceptional personnel to control this economy of production. This is noticeable by the growth in the number of students in mid-level specialist training programs, which in recent years has been gradually approaching the number of students in bachelor's, specialist's, and master's degree programs in reference to the statistical research provided by HSE [2]. Such a tendency may result in degradation of the whole institution. The interests of teaching staff, students and their parents have a lower priority compared to corporations' needs. The situation in higher education does not differ much. According to Reprintsev A.V., less than 10% of graduates have an intention to work in the chosen sphere, which reflects the issues with RSE (Russian State Exam), forcing the students to apply on programmes they are able to pay for or may enter with given post-exam scores [4]. High education became a market, not able to meet the needs of society, but promoting the prestige of having a diploma. The revenue pursuit by educational institutions does not guarantee the growth of business and entrepreneurship in whole, for several reasons. First, it is more profitable to attract foreign students who are able to pay significantly higher sums, which subsequently decreases the number of available places for local students and increases the average price for extra-budgetary places [7]. Secondly, the intention to reduce labour costs resulted in decrease of professors and docents in these establishments, attracting more senior lecturers and PhD students to teach [7]. Therefore, the general level of professionalism in high school teaching lacks expertise and experience, affecting the depth of graduate students' competences. The increased share of online-education is seen as a source of extra income from middle-class students, not quite able to make payments for traditional learning, and an opportunity to reduce costs. Online teaching on its accord requires new methods in teaching and assessment, that are yet to be framed and put in practice.

### **Academic Capitalism as the Notion to Define the Whole System**

According to Gary Rhoades and Sheila Slaughter, academic capitalism is a regime, created in neoliberal economy, which frames the students all along with the education institutions [8]. Universities race for revenue-generating goods – starting with grants and government subsidies and ending with university mascots, mugs, t-shirts and other attributes. This case, being more common in Anglo-American concepts, may gradually imprint into Russian realities to some extent. In 2010-s the notion of "educational minimum" emerged in Russia, that allowed anyone to become a founder of an educational organization and legitimised the worsened quality of education in general [7]. An opportunity to start a new establishment flourished the idea of marketable education, increasing the number of non-governmental institutions, and a disproportion of certified specialists and actual personnel [6]. The 2013 New Education Act guarantees the right to education, still the autonomy of education establishments blurs the educational programmes content and disintegrates the assimilation of high education programmes [1]. The social sphere - education, healthcare, culture, and art - has the least attractiveness for the employment of university graduates. Still, these areas are the sources of intellectual and spiritual level of the future citizens, and them being neglected could indicate the possible danger for the society in the whole. This idea is also proved by *Education in numbers: 2024: a brief statistical collection*, where the fields of engineering,

technology and technical sciences show a positive dynamic among bachelor, speciality and master's degree students [2]. The preponderance of technical specialities creates a shortage of personnel in human-to-human areas and oversaturation of the exact sciences market. **Conclusion.** The whole neoliberal policy and academic capitalism affect human capital by "brain drain" and promote taking business abroad. The autonomy of high educational institutions only promotes globalization, failing to reproduce culturally enriched society. In its turn school education fails to provide students with fundamental skills, hardly creating an environment for general knowledge acquisition. Minimization of costs on education results in poor learning conditions: unmotivated, stressed school teachers and inexperienced, expertise-lacking university scholars.

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