MASSIFICATION AND ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN RUSSIA

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The objectives of the presentation

• to highlight theoretical approaches to massification of higher education in relation to expanding educational opportunities;

• to address the issues of measurement of participation in HE;

• to present empirical data on the massification and equity in Russia;

• to discuss the implications of massification and directions for further social inquiry
Conceptual framework: massification and equity (I)

**Three stages of massification** depending on the level of participation (from elite to mass to universal) signifies qualitative changes in the nature and role of higher education in a society (Trow 1973). **HE as an obligation** in the universal access context.

**Higher education as a positional good**: provides its holder with a relative advantage in a competition on the market of labor and social statuses. This concept shows the **social limits of meritocracy**. More investment in education by one person reduces the value of the positional investments of others, positional goods are intrinsically inter-dependent. Competition for a fixed number of positional goods at each level of advantage is a zero-sum game where one individual wins only at the expense of another (Hirsch 1976).
Conceptual framework: massification and equity (II)

The implications of the HE as a positional good:

1. Decline of the value of educational credentials as the number of credential holders increases
   • **Credential inflation** (Collins 1979, 2002) is shaped more by supply than demand and has no direct connection with labor market needs.
   • **Effectively maintained inequality** once at a given level of education saturation has been achieved, quantitative inequalities in the odds are replaced by qualitative inequalities in the odds of getting on the more selective track that pushes forward inequalities at another level/track (Lucas 2001, Ayalon and Shavit 2004).

2. **Institutional differentiation and gap between elite and non-elite sectors**.
   • Positional good concept is helpful in understanding the nature and implications of vertical differentiation of HEIs and widening the gap between elite and non-elite sectors. The invisible hand of market does not work on education markets: normal market rules do not work in elite segment, and lower segment is limited by positional ceiling of any social value of their educational products (Marginson 1997).
   • **Stratification of student body** across different institutional types by motivation for higher education and life chances (Brennan and Patel 2011).
Massification of higher education in Russia: declining demographics and the role of part-time education

Source: Russian statistical committee, gks.ru.
Massification through privatization of costs: fee-paying students in public sector as a major factor of massification, fail of non-state sector

Higher Education Enrollments in Russia, 1991-2010 (thousands)

At present: 63% pay tuition fees; 55% pay tuition in public HEIs

Source: Russian statistical committee
Why massification?

- High participation achieved in Soviet time;
- Higher education market tends to be driven more by supply than by demand;
- Structural transformation of the economy, a need in new skills and knowledge;
- High rate of return on higher education on the labor market (so far in Russia; not the case in Georgia already);
- Social status of non-manual work occupations / social mobility factor.
Massification of higher education in Russia: age cohort participation, various estimations

Source: WB education statistics, gross enrollment ratio, ISCED 5 and 6. Russian statistical committee, gks.ru. OECD data: OECD Education at glance, 2011, p. 317. The proportion of students in the age cohort is calculated by author. In some cases data match for the age cohort number and the students number is +/- one year.
Massification of higher education (5A) in Russia: age cohort participation, various estimations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ratios, age by age census data, 2010</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ratio for 20-24 cohort</td>
<td>28,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ratio for 17-29 cohort</td>
<td>21,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ratio for 17-19 cohort</td>
<td>31,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ratio for 17-25 cohort</td>
<td>26,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ratio for 18-25 cohort</td>
<td>25,5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of students by age /the age cohort (census data) / * 100%

Source: Russian statistical committee, gks.ru. The ratios are calculated by author.
Inequalities in Access to Higher Education by Parental Education in Russia (students’ parents with higher education, 2011, %)

Average in survey
- Fathers with HE: 45.8%
- Mothers with HE: 54.2%

1st tier public HEIs
- Fathers with HE: 57.5%
- Mothers with HE: 66.5%

2nd tier public HEIs
- Fathers with HE: 43.2%
- Mothers with HE: 53.5%

3rd tier public HEIs
- Fathers with HE: 29.9%
- Mothers with HE: 45.6%

Elite public HEI (Moscow State U-2004 survey)
- Fathers with HE: 83%
- Mothers with HE: 85%

Elite public HEI (Higher School of Economics-2009 survey)
- Fathers with HE: 88%
- Mothers with HE: 87%

Population with higher education in 40-60 age cohort (men, women)
- Fathers with HE: 19.1%
- Mothers with HE: 24.8%

# Inequalities in Access to Higher Education by Parents' Education and Social Background: Analysis of EUROSTUDENT 2008 Data* + Russia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Fathers' Higher Education</th>
<th>Mothers' Higher Education</th>
<th>Fathers' Social Class</th>
<th>Mothers' Social Class</th>
<th>Composite Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>1.65(2)</td>
<td>1.37(3)</td>
<td>1.68(3)</td>
<td>0.79(3)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>1.73(4)</td>
<td>1.19(1)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>1.75(5)</td>
<td>1.47(5)</td>
<td>1.17(1)</td>
<td>1.04(4)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>1.33(1)</td>
<td>1.22(2)</td>
<td>1.68(4)</td>
<td>1.69(9)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>1.71 (3)</td>
<td>1.59(6)</td>
<td>1.58(2)</td>
<td>1.38(6)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1.75(6)</td>
<td>1.38(4)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>1.65(7)</td>
<td>1.50(7)</td>
<td>2.04(7)</td>
<td>0.49(2)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>1.93(8)</td>
<td>1.84(8)</td>
<td>1.97(6)</td>
<td>0.40(1)</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>...</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latvia</td>
<td>2.89(15)</td>
<td>2.93(15)</td>
<td>6.78(19)</td>
<td>3.29(15)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>3.24(16)</td>
<td>3.15(16)</td>
<td>2.92(16)</td>
<td>6.14(18)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>3.78(20)</td>
<td>3.51 (19)</td>
<td>2.74(13)</td>
<td>4.99(17)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>3.62(18)</td>
<td>3.43(18)</td>
<td>2.04(17)</td>
<td>7.43(19)</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>5.41 (22)</td>
<td>5.47(21)</td>
<td>12.77(20)</td>
<td>4.95(16)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia (survey data for 40-60 population)</td>
<td>3.6 (18)</td>
<td>3.7 (19)</td>
<td>15 (21)</td>
<td>2.7 (13)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia (census 2010 data for 40-59 population)</td>
<td>2.9 (16)</td>
<td>3.35 (18)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Relative odds of accessing higher education where parents have HE versus those without HE and where parents are from 'other' occupational groups versus parents from 'blue collar' occupational groups. Figures in parenthesis refer to country ranking on each of the indicators. Data on Russia: author’s calculations on 2010 surveys (Smolentseva 2012). Russia is included as an addition to the original ranking (no change in original order).
Typology of social inclusiveness of higher education systems (EUROSTUDENT data + Russia, by fathers’ education)

Does massification bring more equity?

• Access and equity are not high on the policy agenda as it is believed Russia reached the stage of “universal higher education” and “overeducation” of population.

• Lack of research on access and equity in higher education in Russia (above).

• Most recent major research project was published as early as in 2004: traditional factors of inequality observed by Soviet sociologists since 1960s persist - income, social and cultural capital of the family, place of residence, type of secondary school (correlated with the family social capital) (Shishkin 2004)

• High participation level does not mean more equitable access, but how can we develop finer instruments to analyse it?

• The social make-up of current students studying for free and paying for education does not significantly differ by parental education and social status (workers, specialists, etc.). Partly that could be associated with the inaccuracy of the instrument measuring social status, as well as with ambiguity of social structure of a Post-Soviet society.

• Free higher education in a public sector, more prestigious in general, serves an incentive for higher mobility of students: among students studying for free the share of those who came from other regions is higher than among those who pay for education (43.3% vs. 29.0% study at other region)
Preliminary conclusions and further questions (I)

• Massification + Declined demographics + Quality

• Positional good concept provides two policy solutions in the situation of massification: to restrict access to this level of education and to develop a vertical hierarchy to enhance relative advantage for more prestigious institutions. Russian policy-makers tend to do both. But there are downsides

• Evidence that lower level HE degrees are not competitive/popular (Kember 2010, Parry 2012); can be explained by positional competition and other above mentioned concepts. But needs more research.

• The notion of merit and admission systems (who can get higher education), Policies regarding recruitment, engagement and retention of students.
Preliminary conclusions and further questions (II)

Search for a new conceptual framework to look at higher education. HE as a market/quasi-market and human capital theory (which finds more counter-arguments in recent economic research) embrace only economic dimension of education and thus:

- reduces educational mission to mostly instrumental function as skills demanded by a labor market/employability;
- fosters privatization of education and commodification of knowledge and intrinsically undermine the public/common good essence of higher education;
- can not catch the essence of education as a developmental process of learning, gaining knowledge, experiences, skills.

The design of a HE system with a universal access and discussion of a new model of a society, the purposes of higher education in a society (Higher education for all? An obligation? A social norm? LLL?) and its content