

The Eastern European University: Governance and Reform in the Post- Socialist Period

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The Eastern European Context: A Challenge to Education Researchers and Policy Makers

European Union -

- The EU member states
- Post-soviet EU member states

Bologna Process Only (The European Dimension?)

- Western post-soviet states
- Former Yugoslavia
- Albania

Three Forces at Work

- The influence of the USSR or 'Russian variant'
- The 1990s financial and legal crisis
- New policy discourses (Global and in the European form)

The Russian Variant

The German model (1st stage modernity [Habermas] + 2nd stage modernity + modernisation): the university as the environment in which a social contract is played out between state and academia (Nybom, 2006)

Marxism as a modernist discourse vs

State Modernisation (development) vs State Autocracy

The rhetoric of modernity + reorganisation of HEIs to serve modernisation in an autocratic state

Russian variant university governance

- 'One man rule' (the Rector)
- State appoints rector
- State determines budget including every budget line (no university financial office required)
- State determines curriculum including topics in each course (the state standards) and textbooks
- State determines quality and acts as guarantor of quality to the rest of society
- State determines admissions
- State determines employment
- State appoints senior faculty and can be involved all the way down the faculty hierarchy
- State determines degree programmes and awards degrees

Etc

The Bureaucratic Model of State/University Relations to Post-Bureaucratic

The Bureaucratic Model (Burke 2005):

- The Levers are Rules
- The Agents are Bureaucrats
- The Goals are Efficiency
- The Indicators are Inputs and Processes
- The Condition required is Stability
- The technique is regulation
- The consequences of failure are sanctions
- The governance is centralized

Moving to the Post-Bureaucratic:

- 'Steering at a distance' (Marceau, 1993)

The East European Dimension: The Autocratic State as the Guarantor of Quality

Post-Bureaucratic Dimensions in a still partial Bureaucratic governance model

- Attempt to control inputs (curriculum, degrees, students) – accreditation based on individual degrees
- Control inputs as quality standards are based on inputs – how good is the curriculum? Is it the right curriculum? Which textbooks? Are they ‘officially approved’?
- State partial control of academic elites
- Response to crises – tighten the rules, change the regulations
- Underlying approach to the production and promulgation of knowledge – the concept of authoritative knowledge
- Potentially inhibits bottom up innovation

Post-Bureaucratic Quality Control in a Bureaucratic System

- The Post-Bureaucratic approach is particularly problematic in sectors that need more fundamental (intrinsic) change
- It is particularly problematic in sectors that do not provide much autonomy: it was invented for the 'steering at a distance' approach
- The 'double bind' of input/output – double regulatory - governance
- Standardisation required for a more outcomes/performance indicator approach comes when diversification might be more appropriate
- In a post-transition or transition society, quality becomes highly problematic - the growth of hierarchical structures and the mixture of bureaucratic and post-bureaucratic policy inputs may inhibit academic development – may not allow the unexpected/innovative to emerge.

Grey Entrepreneurialism

- Uneven and unstrategic massification of student numbers leading to a potential collapse of quality:
 - Use of students to earn money
 - Unstrategic increase in student numbers
 - The unlegislated introduction of tuition
 - Admissions and earning money
- Mixing of private and public interest within the institution instead of clear structures and flows of ownership/gain
- Management structures developing opportunistically – development of feudal systems

Grey Entrepreneurialism 2

- Unstrategic diversification of funding: Large scale development of external grants portfolio – even for core elements of the university
 - Lack of protection of the university's core – core disappearing:
 - Use of marketable disciplines
 - (In societies where all degrees are 'professional')
 - Opening of certain disciplines in any type of HEI
 - Lack of qualified faculty
 - Quasi-private faculties
 - Grey practices in utilisation of university's commodities – no legal power to utilise commodities
 - Maintenance of academia/university/state traditional relations
- Using the Western European approach of legislating to increase autonomy and then pushing to change funding structures through reduced state funding etc accentuates these problems rather than solves them.

Building change: is our present approach the right one?

Accepting the need to re-think:

- The East is the 'foreign country': the two speed Europe is rather more complicated than we want to imagine. Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union challenges contemporary global higher education solutions

Because a new situation needs new approaches:

- Using the Western European approach of legislating to increase autonomy and then pushing to change funding structures through reduced state funding etc accentuates these problems rather than solves them.

'Selling change':

- How to reduce state autocracy at a time when state autocracy appears to be increasing in Western Europe?
- The pursuit of higher education as a private good speaks against the modernist rhetoric of the Russian variant.