УДК 378.014.15

Forthcoming Plans
for Institutional Transformation
of Russian Higher Education

Alexandr G. Kislov* and Ol'ga V. Shmurygina

Institute of Sociology and Law,
Russian State Professional Pedagogical University
11 Mashinostroiteley Str., Ekaterinburg, 620012 Russia

The article is devoted to the identification (and self-identification) crisis that has been suffered lately in the sphere of higher education, and the prospects for overcoming it. In comparison with some developed countries, in Russia the crisis is more distinctive due to the traditional administrative limitation of higher education system autonomy, and of academic freedom of its employees and students. Firstly, understanding the crisis lead to the necessity to get back to the basics, which is, the history of university education. Secondly, it required to carry out comparative analysis of the philosophical reflection of this situation. Thirdly, a compilation of the research of current state of higher education in various countries and Russia in particular was necessary. As a result, the article demonstrates the exhaustion of higher education institutional capacity, and its increasing non-conformance to the needs and trends of modern society.

The obtained results can be applied in the research works dealing with the evolution and development forecasts for higher education, its institutional perspectives, and in the practice of developing education policies at various levels. They can be useful to those who are trying to find their own path in the world of education.

Consequently, we may conclude that currently in the world and in Russia in particular, processes of de-institutionalization of higher education are being launched; it is accompanied by the replacement of existing organization forms by the network, interpersonal, mobile and flexible ones. The network organisation of higher education is the power, which can lead it out of the crisis it has been facing.

Keywords: high school, university, social institution, social networks.

Introduction. The system of Russian higher education has been formed under the influence of European universities, and it is still trying to catch up with them today, which is proved by its official joining the Bologna process in the year 2003. Since the one thousand years of its existence, European higher education system, which is, first of all, a university network, has become a special social institution, the scope and impact of which is enormous and can be compared to that of the state, church, family, mass media etc. Numerous multidiscipline researches have been devoted to it. An important role in understanding the function the higher education performs in the society

*   Corresponding author E-mail address: akislov2005@yandex.ru

development is played by historical analysis of universities' origin and development, which has been brilliantly carried out by J. Le Goff, J. Verger and others. They are the authors who determined the most essential features of a university: first of all, its institutional autonomy and academic freedom of the university corporation members, its teachers and students. In these works, special attention is paid to the interaction between the universities, the state, municipal (town, community) and religious authorities: the inter-institutional relations of the higher education establishments.

Together with the historical research, a philosophic discussion concerning the mission (idea, meaning) of a university has been gaining momentum. It was defined by some authors as conduction of scientific research (W. Von Humboldt, K. Jaspers), and by others as reproduction of the social elite (J. Newman, M. Weber), creation of healthy society (E. Durkheim, N.I. Pirogov), or creation and reproduction of culture (J. Ortega y Gasset), entrepreneurial functions performance (B. Clark), reproduction of the social structure of the community (P. Bourdieu) etc.

Theoretical framework. Let us assume that search for the mission (idea, meaning) and further comparison of the higher education realities with its (mission, idea, meaning) various formulations (depends on which term one prefers), is a methodological rudiment of Platonism, which is more useful in conditional theoretical classifications, not in practice-oriented research. We prefer the Anti-Platonism position which is represented by numerous thinkers (S. Kierkegaard, K. Marx, F. Nietzsche, L. Shestov, K. Popper, E. Levinas, G. Deleuze, M. Foucault, J.-L. Nancy), who could be referred back to the Medieval nominalism.

Based on the works of such authors as R. Barnett, J. Derrida, B. Readings, J. Habermas, the analytics and forecasts presented by Russian researchers, and analysis of the process that is going on in the higher education system at the present moment, we come to conclusion that the higher education system is going through a crisis as an institute that does not have any "super-historical" integral mission (idea or meaning), which would be true everywhere and every time. The search for such mission (idea, meaning) itself is a symptom of identification and self-identification crisis. And the way out of the crisis is not about formulating the mission. This is the reason why we are interested not in the Platonic, not idealistic or essencialistic approach, but a historical and relativistic one, which claims that higher education is a flexible historical phenomenon able to adjust for the requirements of a certain epoch; consequently, the declared (not determined by imaginary super-historical eternity) mission (idea, meaning) of the university or any other higher education establishment varies depending on the current demands of the society. Considering these requirements along with constructing and re-constructing a functional answer of the higher education to the arising questions appear to be a more efficient direction of research than Platonist meditations and speculations on the idea (mission, meaning) of the higher education "itself", in the style of, for example, E. Husserl phenomenology, which also tendentiously organizes the historical retrospective.

All searches for the mission (idea, meaning) of the university bring up one of the numerous socially significant functions of the higher education to the forefront. That is why the theoretical and methodological framework of the research is composed by a combination of structural functional and institutional analysis principle with the network paradigm of a social structure, so the network paradigm is regarded not only as a synchronic accomplishment to the functional paradigm, but also as a dominant that

replaces it in the diachronic dimension. The need of turning to the network paradigm as to the dominating one reflects the actual social process but does not cancel the importance of structural functional analysis, including that of the modern social processes.

We find it significant that T. Veblen has already made the emphasis on the backlog of the higher education from the present requirements. It is typical for every social institution, especially in the context of increasing social dynamics. Veblen came up with the ideal model for the higher education system, the "academic aristocracy corporation", based on the idea of "extra-academic organizations", which means universities united into one network of international organizations. T. Veblen was one of the first people who spoke of the necessity to find a new organizational structure for the higher education which is already falling outside the scope of a social institution and, perhaps, is already forming an alternative to the institutions; basically, he spoke of the network interaction between universities, scientists, teachers and students, that will probably form a new social institution in the future.

This offer is logically accompanied by the education revolution conception by T. Parson, who claims that higher education will become one of the most important social institutions influencing the social development as a whole, but for this it should, first of all, conform to the time requirements. R. Merton enriched this picture, having pointed out some latent functions of the higher education, which are primarily aimed at the preservation of the social status quo; this way he gave us a hint on where the mechanisms of the real, not just declared impact of the education on the society, are hidden.

M. Foucault paid attention to the fact that all social institutions are bound with various types of interdependence and numerous relations of power (different in the content, intensiveness,

the proportion of discountinuity-continuity and other characteristics). M. Foucault put the largest load on the "power-knowledge" concept, noticing that these two terms, usually regarded separately, should be studied together, as they form the base for disciplinary institutions, and the higher education is one of them (here it is much wider that the "knowledge-power" concept" by B. Bacon).

A.I. Sosland, following the ideas by M.Foucault, presented the power as something totalitarian, incorporated into not only all social, but also the existential locus, and suggested that it is better use the "potestarity" term for this, as it denotes the capacity of power objects to make the opposite impact on its bearers. A.I. Sosland applied this term in conceptual reflection of psychotherapeutic practice; however, the development of M. Foucault's ideas produced by him cannot be applied far beyond the borders of psychotherapy.

The institutional characteristics of the higher education's influence on the social reproduction were discovered and described by P. Bourdieu and J.-C. Passeron; moreover, they also operated the terms of symbolic power and symbolic violence. After that, P. Bourdieu paid attention to the extra-institutional mechanisms of education influence made on social processes. He was immediately close to the analysis of the network interaction, which is currently spreading around along with the institutional ones, and are already dominating in many cases. It is typical on the all-world level, too. In Russia and in the countries with similar historical and political fate it looks more complicated, as the processes are less smooth and gradual, often with harsh jerks; they flow under the conditions of a forced slowdown that aggravate and hypertrophy the outdated, and prolongs its life in a sort of "laboratory conditions". The only thing the researchers can do is to take advantage of it to see the connection between the social

processes in various conditions, countries, and their conceptual understanding.

The founders of the "Network society" conception, J. Barnes and M. Castelles, paid a lot of attention to the kinds of human interaction that they described as "new": the kind of interaction that is carried out with the information technologies (IT), due to the domination of information in the society, as its main recourse. They deliberately did not regard higher education as one of the possible net nodes. However, R. Collins conducted a large research of intellectual networks and proved that they had existed since the times of Ancient Greek and Chinese philosophers' groups.

Statement of the problem. So, the existence of the higher education institution has been of special interest and even of some concern, especially in the context of its enormous popularization, that has already leaded to the evident lowering the bar of academic standards ("people from the street came to the university"), harsh differentiating between elite and mass education establishments, which, perhaps, is only proving the ineradicable elitism of the university, as long as this phenomenon exists. But is its further existence guaranteed under the conditions of total pragmatization and commercialization? Does the higher education possess the institutional capacity to neutralize the negative consequences of ultimate popularization and the fall of academic standards, caused by it? Or is this capacity of extra-institutional origin? Or there is no capacity at all? If so, what is the higher education system going to transform into in the nearest future? Can it preserve its succession with the medieval university as a unique creation of the European civilization? After all, why did the higher education system appear at all? What was it like, what will it be like, what was it supposed to be, and why cannot it be another? Speaking of Russian higher education, we cannot and we must not isolate it from the all-European and

world history and from the other similar, though not so acute problems of the higher education in the countries with the best economic, political and other indicators.

Methods. The methods of our research are all connected to the interpretation and comparative analysis of the works written by those, who, in our opinion, succeeded in "grasping the Zeitgeist" (term by G. Hegel), express its intentions and trends, and also to the attempt of summarizing them in such a way that it would define the tendencies and prospects of the higher education system development. Our own evaluation plays not the last role in the process, due to the participants and experts with officially confirmed qualification who engaged themselves in the research.

Discussion. As soon as its isolation within the pattern of social labour division started getting more and more distinct, the education sphere manifested itself as a hierarchized system. The separation of the higher education started back in the ancient times, when only the chosen representatives of the society (as a rule, the social elite) were allowed to acquire the sacral wisdom. This stage of education was the one reproducing the elite of the society and the state, the presence of such education endued – or it is even better to say, confirmed – the high social status. The sacral knowledge had its bearers, the keepers and teachers, whose authority was as undeniable as the sacral wisdom itself. But all this is quite far from the phenomenon the modern humankind called the higher education, and a university in particular.

We can speak of its actual emergence after the creation of the medieval universities that were autonomous in the way that they were clearly independent from the external social factors that influenced many kinds of social relations, including the authority relations. After the Middle Ages the higher education got institutionalized

and became one of the constituent parts of the institution system that had been complete by that time (consisting of the state, church, family, commune-cities, professional workshops etc.), integrated into it but did not dissolve in it. The interaction between the institutions actualized the need for legal regulation mechanisms, which also covered the sphere on inter-institutional relations.

Speaking of social institutions, we traditionally mean the high organized transpersonal unions of people, that are characterized by stable structure, deep integration of its elements, diversity, flexibility and dynamism of its functions, the main purpose of which is to satisfy the main needs of the society in this or that sphere of its activity. This purpose is often declared in a pompous way and formulated with (frequently taken as sacral) rituals, symbols, and signs.

Satisfaction of a series of social needs and the performance of some socially significant functions were the purpose for the first universities to appear. Their emergence was spontaneous, and only some time ago their status was officially recognized. The base for the special status of the university is the isolation of intellectuals as a social group, so much demanded by the European community: "If we try to define a European kind of an intellectual, it would be the following: "A person who is not just engaged in mostly intellectual work, but also a person who owes their special social status to this kind of activity". The society officially issued a certificate confirming the person's abilities and rights for intellectual work that they can carry out under the conditions of relative freedom. The combination of these features determines the European specificity of this kind of activity. Moreover, the authority issuing the certificate (an academic degree or a diploma) is a community of equals, a corporation of equals (a corporation of scientists) that works in an autonomous regime, though under supervision and with the approval of state authorities. This was the system that formed itself during the Middle Ages, and it became the university system: changeable, but at the same time surprisingly stable" (P. IU. Uvarov, 2010).

The history of European universities at the early stages of their formation and development did not compose itself as a long-term project of some declared eternal mission. The ideas that were imagined to be in the base of the social institutions and their missions are already a projective result of historical retrospection. We can try revealing the reasons for universities' emergence, and finding the explanation of the enormous interest shown to them by the state, church and European society as a whole, and only after that formulate the responsive influence of the universities on everything or on those many things that happen in the society.

The first universities appeared as international corporations of teachers and students that formed around some school centres (Bologna, Paris, Montpellier, Oxford, Salamanca etc.) as a result of spontaneous pilgrimage of young people from the strata of city dwellers, knights and the lowest clergy ranks. The mentioned corporations became a special kind of guild (similarly to other craft guilds of a medieval town) which was different from the others with its openness and absence of monopoly. The open corporation of the university animated the life of the city where teachers and students started to gather; it raised the city's significance by raising the average level of education and, therefore, attracted more foreigners, and increased the available goods' range, developed and stimulated the market relations. That is why it did not take long before the universities acquired their official status. Attracting the attention of local authorities, they started concluding agreements on the price and amount of apartments for the

university members, on meal prices, professor salaries, rector jurisdiction etc.

Inside the corporation, a special university lifestyle was developing; among its attributive features, there were strive for knowledge and free communication, which opened the students and teachers' community to other institutions and personalities, and brought the general cultural significance to the university. The ancient acquisition of the sacral wisdom by the chosen ones assumed only transmission of the wisdom, blocking any free, unlimited interaction with it. M.K. Petrov (1991) connected this fact to the peculiarities of the historically formed European sociality, which, back in antique times, had started to "approve deviations from the norm, made such terms as "talent", "uniqueness", "originality", "author", "plagiarism" etc. socially significant and transmissible".

M.K. Petrov "extracted" the science and the university institutionally devoted to it from the atomic structure of the archaic European society: the community is losing its totalitarian power over the individuals. The communality began to show the signs of strain, and from the strain new individuals appeared, the creative individuals capable of taking advantage of their liberty… but it is not the sense! The European community (society) eagerly replied the new ideas of these creative upstarts!!! Appearing here and there… Revenging, haunting, destroying them… but still, it replied (because it matched the new trend of social atomization, individualization, overwhelming it), and we can see how the creative upstart conquered almost the whole world!!! Until this time our society has been looking for legal limits and mechanisms to harmonize its interests with the interests of the unique ones, for the benefits of the society itself!!! This is the main peculiarity of our society, the roots of which go back to the antiquity and the middle Ages.

R. Nisbet (1970) qualified the modern university as a splinter of the Middle Ages that has remained until today and that is still working not because it managed to adjust itself to the new rules of the total modern corruption of Gesellschaft (the university is able to live only according to the corporate norms and the equality of Gemeinschaft), but because the modern capitalistic society has nothing to do but adjust itself, as it has not succeeded to develop its own "transmutation transmission interior" (term by M.K. Petrov); for having no better alterative and no organic capacity to invent anything else, it is forced to tolerate this Medieval social institution. Under the attempts to subdue the higher education to some speculative models, driving the medieval university spirit out of it, the proposal that was articulated at the Conference of Social Responsibility of Scientists in London back in 1970 does not sound that scary as it first seemed: "It is time to think how to do the dissociation, maybe even total dissociation between the science and the governments of all countries… Separation the science from the state is similar to the process when the church was separated from the state and gained its status of an independent institution… It could have been an efficient measure, and the governments would take it under the threat of total termination of research" (M.K. Petrov, 1991).

It is worth noticing that the medieval church and university inherited the antique rhetoric traditions developed by the polis democracy originated from the common gatherings (like "veche" for medieval Russia etc.). But, at such common gatherings not only logic was taken as the main argument; but the power of voice, suggestiveness, and the mystified authority of the speaker could be more relevant. Polis democracy, on the opposite, accustomed the citizens to calm judgement. Reasonable discussion following the rules of logic, without regard to the power

of voice, suggestiveness or even the speaker's authority was considered to be an important method of cognition: and this must be the roots of vitality (relevance) of free intellectuals and the university as their union! Even though it all started from monotonous recording of dictated antique texts, the necessity to comment them emerged quite soon. That is when the dissonance began! Moreover, at different universities the same text could be dictated from various re-writings of the original… And the "original" itself could be not the only one. They competed with each other just like the "originals" of the "unique" sanctities (numerous "heads of John the Baptist", torn relicts of this or that saint, that, if put together, could form more than dozens or even hundreds of normal human bodies, etc.). So, it required using the intellect and polemic talents again! But the thing needed the most, was the logic.

Even though in the Middle Ages authority was the main criterion for the truth (first of all, it was the authority of the Scripture and the Holy Tradition, and later, the authority of Aristotle, Plato, Roman lawyers and some others), the main method used was not the incantation (repeating after the authority), but the logical proof of the conformity of your own thought to the thoughts of the indisputable authority. The habit to provide logical proofs was polished and engrained there. After that the "only" thing left to do was to rain it down the indisputability, which, as you may know, inevitably happened.

Why did this habit appear? Why was it necessary in Medieval Europe? – Probably, the military powers of disputing polities and their institutions were frequently equal (and there were many polities at that time!), so it was necessary to search for compromise as an alternative to mutual exhaustion and elimination. Discussion as a method of transferring a battle into the world of words and speculation, and reaching a practical compromise: it is not this or that party

who is the winner, but the proved fact (it is not that important who proved it! – the truth is gradually depersonalized, deified and inevitably forced the God out, as an unnecessary alternate). This mind-set is very close to tolerance and freedom of speech, especially within a university auditorium.

Despite the department differentiation, the first universities bred a person who would be more than just a professional, but an active bearer, subject of culture, a person with certain social objectives and a corresponding world outlook; a person who is not dissolved in their clan, parish, even the university corporation, but remaining an independent intellectual. That is why they naturally become education establishments "not for everyone", but for the elite, for the people who in the future will take the highest governmental or church positions, or will take active part in the state administration in any other way. "The knowledge embodied in the Universities very soon transformed into the Strength, the Order itself. It was the Wisdom that ascended equally with Holiness and Power. The university members were striving to define themselves as intellectual aristocracy, possessing their own special ethics and their very own system of values" (J. Le Goff, 1977).

But this institutionally independent and free position of the universities, first of all, did not please the church, which was trying to control the whole system of medieval education, starting from the elementary monastery schools and the municipal cathedral schools. It was customary to think that only communion to the church sacraments can educate and breed a person. The church could not get along with the competitor, and independent spiritual authority that the universities finally became. For this reason, the church started enforcing its impact on the universities. But even in such situation it was possible to find a small share of mutual

profit, as in case of frequent legal disputes with the local authorities who usually turned to the university for intellectual support, and then, in its turn, provided the teachers with material, psychological and administrative assistance. Moreover, the church itself was interested in having some educated people within its hierarchy. The Popes were expecting the universities to create an integrative rational theological doctrine to help them fight against heresy and enforce the Pope's power against the kings and the feudal lords.

The dilemma faced by the medieval university teacher could be formulated as follows: students' fee or beneficium. The first could make him comparatively free in relation to various forms of secular or spiritual authority, but at the same time extremely sensitive to the demands of the surrounding urban environment. To be demanded, the teacher had to be active in the social life, understand the changeable requirements and moods of the society. On the contrary, the beneficium would relieve the teacher from the necessity to make a living with work: basically, he would live the life of a beneficiary. In the XIII century the university teachers tended to live for the student fees. But gradually the situation started to change. Its reason was not only the desire of the teachers to choose the most reliable and stable income source. Choosing the beneficium as a way to make a living is the urging of the Catholic church, which required some free education, as any knowledge is the Gift of God, and, consequently, selling knowledge is the same as selling sacred things, or a type of simony. Therefore, the university could not avoid the beneficium, the role of which was usually played by the church itself. All in all, the result of the religious patronage is that the only person who can become a university professor is the one who also agrees to be materially dependent on the church.

The further development of the university can be described with the words by J. Le Goff who spoke of it as of a long-lasting standstill caused by gradual transformation of the university corporation into a privileged cast living on the expense of a beneficium (or the church, as a rule) and taking less part in the city life. As a result, the universities started losing their role of intellectual centres. Many of them ceased to exist.

On the border of the middle ages and the modern age, the universities went through significant changes connected to reinforcement of the national state authorities and the Reformation. Universities did not appear spontaneously any more, they were established by kings and after that they would began their work. The influence of the Catholic church was dramatically decreasing. Licentia docendi was eliminated along with praebenda, and the cleric professoriate was gone.

But the state was cutting the autonomy of the university corporation more and more by issuing university and faculty statutes, interfering into the teaching process; governmental commissars strictly criticized and reviewed the curriculum, controlling the behaviour of teachers and students. Professor were turning into government officials.

During the modern age, the idea of higher education accountability to the state became complete when, due to the industrial development the society began to feel more and more urge for workers of various professions and qualifications. The education system became oriented at creation and provision of human resources to the professional structures, satisfying the needs of various branches of production and industry. The society and the labour market needed military men, doctors, and technicians educated at the corresponding higher education establishments. The universities regained their status of privileged education establishments accessible only to the

chosen representatives of the society, whose future profession is to rule the state.

This was the time when, in conformance with the Zeitgeist, the idea that the education contributed a rational element into the state administration, first emerged. This rationality was regarded in various ways. On one hand, the state administration bodies structure and control the education system. On the other hand, the education system (and the higher education in particular) breeds the people who deal with state construction and management, develop the principles, basics and ideologies of state administration. That is how the interdependence of the education system and the state bodies appeared.

The universities which were initially created as relatively independent organizations were expected to produce scientific knowledge for bringing rationality into the state administration. However, the state authority structures gradually began to use the university in their own purposes, including their current business interests. Basically speaking, it was not the university forming the state authority, but the authority creating the "university" it needed to produce the knowledge required by the state, on behalf of which the officials, looking out for themselves, usually like to speak. All this leaded to another crisis that manifested itself in oblivion of science, domination of practical knowledge and affordability of the higher education to the people who have no capacity to learn, but some financial capacity and good relations in the society.

It was in the modern age, when, due to the reflection on universality or practicality of the knowledge provided by universities, on its capacity and influence made on them by various external (state, church and other) powers, the first research works appeared that dealt with the search or approval of the university idea, which is still being disputed even during the present time,

considering that any ideas or missions are always declarative and impossible to verify. The talks and the disputes about them usually bear speculative character but also have a socio-mobilizing significance: idea is an objective, code, password for the chosen ones, connected to a certain social institution. But sometimes conditional things are taken for unconditional.

In the beginning of the XX century higher education system was a complete, complicated social institution, the demand for which had been proved, besides many other factors, by considerable increase in the number of students, and, therefore, of universities, too. And the universities themselves began to transform from compact establishments into large organisations with numerous branches and representatives. It seemed like higher education reached the peak of its institutional success. However, the growth of the system leaded to a series of organizational difficulties, which made their impact on many aspects of university life and other life spheres as well.

Due to the growing popularity of the higher education, the state began to involve the money paid by the students (their parents, guardians, target funds working on repayable basis, potential employers etc.) into financing the university. This rapid commercialization aggravated the popularization, and lead to the situation of endless egalitarisation of the higher education: the quality of students and colleges could not help decreasing, and the decrease was quite evident.

The victims of student quality decrease that the universities were volens nolens adjusting to, were the traditional academic standards (values, norms, rituals), (A.G. Kislov, 2008) and the impact was so big that they required strong administrative assistance, like, for example, state education standards (in Russia, for example). But they did not prevent the frequent replacement

of scientists with born accountants in the administration of higher or any other sphere of education (E.A. Yamburg, 2012): commercial interests could not but gained the advantage of the academic once, especially in the cases when the state regularly did not carry out its financial obligations, as it was, for example, in Russia in the 1990s. It means that the academic level of the administrators and the higher education management also decreased. The number of teaching personnel was inevitably growing together with the number of students, was dragging behind the required; they turned into mere "class givers", with a large share of copycat researchers, which means that the academic level of the teachers and teaching, the scientists (by profession), and the researches carried out by the "scientists" including the research results also dropped. Human resources departments of the universities also lowered the hiring bar; it could not be prevented either by the administrative measures or the certification and accreditation requirements, though regularly toughened, but still dramatically dragging behind the actual situation and bringing nothing but useless complications.

It is also proved by the research carried out by the Siberian experts in the years 2010-2012: "The attempts to "fight" all symptoms of crisis in the higher education using only administrative measures without the deep system modifications (that would change the functions performed by the higher education in the society, its connection and interaction with the other institutions, super-tasks of its activity, actual positions and mind-sets of the students, teachers, researchers, administrators) leaded only to the emergence of an additional "layer", the "layer" of falsification and imitation. It is imitation of reforms and development management: "administrators pretend to be ruling the modernization, research and education processes" (V.S. Efimov,

A.V. Lapteva, V.A. Dadasheva, A.V. Efimov, 2012).

The struggle of the Russian state, its education authorities and university administrators for the academic degree quality is also prominent: the measures are numerous and diverse, the procedures are complicated, up to video recording of the Thesis Board work during the thesis defence process, which was taken by the Board member as a humiliation: turning public and regulated instead of remaining autonomous and preserving the academic freedom of the expert communities, aggravated by the complains of the "fighters for improvement" and of the dissertation research level decrease.

You can also have a look at the story about implementation of the professional and social expertise ("management system") of quality management systems into the higher education system. The fact that it was initiated by the state (in such a way that the universities could not decline it), not by the universities or by any university organisations (voluntarily), contradicts the meaning of the quality management system itself, and speaks of distrust shown to the higher education as an institution, unable to control its activities on its own. The specialists have been warning us: "The main peculiarity of implementing ISO standards is inefficiency and inexperience of implementing them by directive methods. The base for them is the principle of voluntariness and economic interest" (V.N. Spitsnadel', 2000). However, the resolution of the Federal Education and Science Supervision Agency dated 30.09.2005 No.1938 "On Introduction of Activity Indicators and Criteria for State Certification Determining the Status of Russian Education Establishments as a "Higher Education Establishment", and "1.2. Education Quality" Indicator Including "Efficiency of the Inter-University Education Quality Assurance System" in Particular". The presence of such system became almost

obligatory for all the universities willing to be certified by the state. Since the year 2007, even those universities of Russia that did not hurry to implement the innovation, created some structural departments to do the work they had never done before, as they used to follow those clauses on the education quality that were included into the federal and regional legislation, and the bylaws resulting directly from them (like Education Control and Supervision Rules, Clauses for the Federal Education and Science Supervision Agency etc.).

Higher education system has institutionally included this strange, foreign control system repeating the state quality management control and supervision systems, which is, honestly speaking, quite expensive for the universities, and not only because it requires providing salaries to the quality control department employees. It is not that much. Payment for the regular external expertise is much higher. As for the additional time and effort required by the QC departments from all the university workers, it is better to describe the situation not with figures, but with a quotation created by the people, and speaking much more of the higher education system problems: "School is gradually turning into a place where students are preventing the administration and the teachers from doing their paperwork" (E. A. Iamburg, 2012). The university situation is more transparent: a student paying the education fee is interesting for the university and its administration as a paying customer, but the teachers have less and less time and capacity for providing this customer with high quality service! Because, first of all, they have to do file and paper work that may be reviewed by experts and inspectors. The review reports will be used for making conclusion on the quality of the service provided by the teacher and the university as a whole. This conclusion (in the form of State Certificate, ISO Certificate or Quality Contest Winner Certificate) will be accessible to the potential clients. Looking at this, the future clients may or may not choose the university. It can be only corrected with "the word of mouth" and rumours, the only source of the information on how the university works with its direct customers (students). That is why the universities also open PR Departments: the social institution only reacts to other institutions (the state as a customer and, first of all, as a supervising authority, and to the families as their main customers).

The question that arises is: who gets the profit of such situation in the Russian higher education system? Who needs the double control and reports? For sure, it is not the students, as the teachers sometimes do not have the time to deal with them due to the necessity to write a heap of reports. It is not the professors as well, as according to their education and mission they are teachers, not clerks (managers, administrators, bureaucrats, writers of long self-audition reports, corrective and preventive action plans, and other "masterpieces"). Besides the reports, the modern Russian university teachers have to produce numerous texts of education programs, working programs and their courseware, besides normal pedagogical, methodological and research activity. Multiply it by enforced search for additional work, as the salary paid to the teachers does not let them have any free time (which is the major condition for creation, scientific and pedagogical research). The word "quality" sounds like mockery in such a situation.

However, the frequency of mentioning "education quality" is stunning. This word combination is being recited like a mantra in numerous scientific articles, administrative documents and mass media. We get the feeling that the word itself, as a spell, can inspire the educational space of the county with its magic power, improving the universities, students,

professors and even administrators. Considering our traditions, it is possible that there are many people who do believe that. But for the others this abusing recitation looks like an euphemism that is aimed at concealing the real words that truly describe what is going on in the higher education system: having imposed the QMC systems on the universities, the state expressed its distrust towards themselves, their customers and the society as a whole.

While education is a trust-based service, the main difference of which from the other goods and services is that "it is impossible to measure the quality of the service for them who order, purchase, buy them; when it is possible to measure it, it is usually too late… the consumers of such goods can only trust the evaluations provided by experts… So, the best expert for the education is a person integrated into the academic community (IA.I. Kuz'minov, 2007). But the trust-based relations between the student, university, applicants, academic community experts united by a certification organization or a quality supervision commission, is brazenly interfered by the state: it cannot have enough of the education standards, of the headstrong accreditation requirements; it needs to implement the quality management: as the university and its customers have not matured for this, it is condemned to remain nothing but a paper chase, accompanied by replacing real reports with eyewash.

Recently some changes concerning the Russian state attitude towards the higher education QMC were introduced: a clause obliging the universities to have a Quality Management system within their structure was removed from the Resolution of the Russian Federation Ministry of Education and Science dated 02.09.2011 No.2253 "On Approval of Higher Education, Secondary Vocational and Elementary Vocational Education Establishment Activity Criteria for Setting Their

Official Status". Russian Education and Science Supervision Agency issued Resolution dated 25.10.2011 No.2267 "On Setting the Criteria for Defining the Type and Kind of a Higher Professional and Secondary Vocational Education Establishment", which also did not mention the quality management system. On February 20, 2012, the Resolution No.123 "On Introduction of the Administrative Regulation for the State Certification Service for the Educational Establishment and Scientific Organizations Provided by the Federal Education and Science Supervision Agency" describes the procedure of the state certification procedure for education establishments and scientific organisations carried out by the Russian Education and Science Supervision Agency. Its Paragraph 12 h) goes as follows: "The Organisation can attach some data on the public (social and professional) certification of the organization in Russian, foreign, international educational, scientific, social and other organisations to their application. The data is reviewed during the certification expertise".

So, the social and professional certification of the university in Russian, foreign and international educational, scientific, social and other organisations, and, therefore, the inter-university quality management system is not obligatory anymore. The justice was finally served, though it was quite late. But still, from the Regulation we arrive at the conclusion that public and professional certification, along with the inter-university quality management system are still advisable by the state. And any decision on the methods and consideration of the public and professional certification results is still up to the Russian Education and Science Supervision Agency (which is not regulated in any way), and then, as the experience shows, any bureaucratic surprises can be expected.

But the surprises made by the state are not only bureaucratic. For example, the re-elected

President V.V. Putin also did not neglect the problem of the higher education quality. May 9, 2012, he issued the Resolution dated May 7, 2012, No.599 "On the Measures on Implementation of State Policy Concerning Education and Science" which says: "in order to improve the state policy concerning education, science and preparing qualified specialists considering the requirements of innovative economy, I decree: … 4. The Government of the Russian Federation in cooperation with the all-Russian employer unions and the leading universities, with the assistance of the representatives of the Russian Academy of Sciences and international experts, present their suggestion concerning the public professional accreditation of the higher professional education programs, first of all, the programs for educating specialists in the sphere of economy, law, management and sociology", which means, that public professional certification of the higher professional education is not among the priority activities of the President. But it is not the surprise.

The paragraph 1 a) of the same Decree delegates the Government of the Russian Federation "till the end of December 2012, to complete the monitoring of the state education establishments in order to assess the efficiency of their work, reorganize the inefficient state education establishments and in such case provide the students of such education establishments with the opportunity to finish their studies at another education facility". Today the criteria for the higher education system "comb-out" are ready and its parameters have been determined: 20% of the existing higher education establishments and 30% of higher education establishments' branches are to be eliminated. What is the reason of setting such a share, no one knows.

However, a little earlier the state pointed out several higher education establishments – the best of the kind, according to the opinion of their administration, – and granted them the status of Federal Universities. The status of National Research University is granted not forever, but to the best. The best are promised to get the best funding from the state.

All the mentioned governmental measures taken by the Russian Federation indicate the mistrust of the state to the higher education institution, and the reasons of this are evident; it is not just one more reflection of state arbitrariness. It is better to say that the reaction of the state to the existing reasons is arbitrary. And these reasons are of institutional origin. They brought to the loss of the face and decrease of the prestige of the higher education system, including the university symbols and even the graduation documents (diplomas are sometimes rather "bought on the hire-purchase system" than deserved by hard work). In such a situation the neurasthenic presentiments of soon "university collapse", expressed by especially sensitive personalities, are quite understandable. However, we should dot neglect the presentiments of the same kind of "collapse" of the theatre, cinema, and starting from the recent times, religion as well.

Moreover, the distinctive way the information and computer technologies push the impoverished elements of the university education out aggravating the depersonalization of university education, cannot be left without attention. But due to this fact, a way out was found; though it was not organized by anyone, and administrative reaction was quite helpless, ridiculous and inappropriate.

Higher education has always born a research element in it. It is also unthinkable without active, spontaneous and free communication between its employees. That is why the researches of all times, which means, long ago before the computer technologies emerged, had been bound by the phenomenon which is now called "social network". The information and computer

technologies, especially those created on the Internet base, are amazingly efficient in providing network communication. Scientists, including the university ones, began to use them actively, and now everyone who is in any way related to the higher education is involved into the network. So, the future, when "the technologies of personality-oriented education… will be implemented outside the higher education institution, in the environmental forms of education" (V.S. Efimov, A.V. Lapteva, V.A. Dadasheva, A.V. Efimov, 2012), which is in the place where the extra-institutional, network interaction forms, is not that far away.

"Network Society", as M. Castells described it, is a complex of interconnected nods, among which M. Castells lists television channels and studios that make programs and develop computer graphics, journalist groups, transportable technical apparatus etc. But he did not consider such powerful network nods as higher education establishments that, in the person of teachers and students, also include representatives of extremely diverse networks.

The functions of the social networks are never limited to mere communication and transfer of existing information. Communication node here is a social subject that is able to process, store, and create information, like a computer inside a computer network; moreover, this subject possesses the freedom of action and will. It can be a network structure of a group of individuals (including groups of revolutionaries or terrorists), a network of branches, organizations, and institutions. Every mesh of a social network can both clone the one it originated from and make its individual element. Modern communication facilities provide the opportunity to make networks both of the similar and the different, to create both clones and individuals able to perform both linear and complex operations. These are not

only the networks that unite social subjects, but also the subjects themselves entering various networks, able to unite them. Modern networks can expand and contract, open and close, form exquisite geometry of coverage, quickly include new members and get rid of them. All these mean a new stage of the social structure that has little in common with the "mechanistic solidarity" of E. Durkheim (A.V. Nazarchuk, 2008).

The base for the network interaction is information exchange harshly intensified due to the information and computer technologies; its intensiveness has become so strong that its main element now is not reaching some certain aims (even if they are reached, it is a by-product of the main process), but the presence of some common, interesting element that is significant for many people and binds them together. Unlike hierarchy structures, a network can easily bind both like-minded people and those who stick to opposite opinions, but like to gather due to a common interest in solving a problem, implementing a project etc.

It may sound surprising, but one of the brightest examples of this are the medieval universities that were created as independent unions of students and teachers, based, primarily, on the interest to the antique heritage, and secondarily on the other interests. The first universities were network associations, as they did not possess any institutional features that appeared later as a result of interaction with other social institutions (city, state, church etc.).

It is worth noticing that the concepts of a social institution also evolve in the way vividly illustrated by, for example, so-called "new institutional theory" by O. Williamson. He considerably reduces the significance of the pre-requisites of subject rationality, and, therefore, confirms the impossibility to conclude complete (considering all possible circumstances and

consequences) contracts (including education contracts). "Relational Contracts" are the category which appears to be in the centre of attention; such contracts set general rules for bargain parties' interaction to adjust the structure of their relationship to the changing circumstances. The inevitable gap between the contract clauses at the stage of contract conclusion and at the stage of its performance conditions the need to study the process of contraction as an integral process flowing within some time limits and continuously going beyond the limits foreseen by any rules, as a live process accompanied by some urgent informal extra-institutional agreements, their active dialogue.

Once, the ideologists of Pan-Clericalism and Pan-Etatism hit the limits of institutional capacities. Life has never confirmed this institutional maximalism. Today we observe the exhaustion of the institutional capacities of the higher education.

Having lost touch with the more or less autonomous institution of the higher education, the academic freedom spirit moved to the extra-institutional sphere of the social networks, where there is no formal hierarchy, but, the most important, there is a non-regulated and intriguing one with new opportunities of intellectual self-fulfilment for those, who are just the same as the university creators and for whom the universities were revived; an artistic model of this can be, for example, Castalia from "Das Glasperlenspiel" by von H. Hesse.

Today we observe the processes of active, spontaneous and, for now, elemental deinstitutionalization of the higher education, especially the activity of those involved or, literally speaking, attached researchers, whose activity is mostly focused on the theory sphere. As practice and experiment require more financial support, which in a much more distinctive way foresees institutionalized interaction, e.g. not

only the network one. Networks have the capacity to relieve from various kinds of responsibility. And only few enthusiast grantors can afford risking their money. However, temporary scientific and research groups have already proved their competitive ability in comparison with bureaucratized research institutes or universities. It is remarkable that the universities themselves strive for creating new network forms of interaction (Anatoliy V. Bucharov, Vladimir I. Kirko, Vladimir G. Zinov, 2008), including interaction on the international level (Natalya P. Koptseva, 2010).

But higher education includes not only research, but also the teaching activity which is often very restricted, in some universities and even countries they keep strangling even the smallest academic liberties. In such situation, the alternative network form of interaction between the students and teachers replaces, not accomplishes, the traditional one, and it may also cover students and teachers from other education establishments. The role of the teachers, consultants, experts can be also played by volunteers, on a remuneration basis as well. Technologically, there is everything for deinstitutionalization of the education process itself, except for the stage of final examination, granting a qualification, handing the graduation documents. But even here some innovations can be introduced.

The Siberian experts quoted above declare: "In the higher education system, the mass imitation and falsification of education is taking place" (V.S. Efimov, A.V. Lapteva, V.A. Dadasheva, A.V. Efimov, 2012). But it is not because "the higher education crisis in Russia is determined by the "jam up" on the industrial development phase and block of further movement to post-industrial perspective" (Ibid.). Today a new, institutional-network model of higher education organization is developing in Russia; this system is radically

widening the sphere of academic liberties, tearing it off the institutional autonomy of the university, violated by the state, eliminating it as an obligatory condition. The models of institutional, organizational and legal structure of higher education system can be different, while from the content and technological point of view the prevalence of networks and horizontal bonds is inevitable, which corresponds to the dominating outlook context of the present time: it does not need any absolute, any ultimate perfection, a prevailing vertical, an authority beyond exception, the only way, final judgments

and full guarantees; the world appears dynamic, pulsing, undetermined, unpredictable. In such a world "higher" education is the same convention as the "universality" of a university.

Conclusion / Results. In Russia and in the world as a whole the processes of deinstitutionalizing the higher education system are being unwind, the existing organizational forms are replaced by the network relations which are more direct, interpersonal, mobile and flexible; such networks forms of organization the higher education life can lead it out the crisis it is suffering now.

References

1. Uvarov P.IU. *U istokov universitetskoy korporatsii* [At the origins of university corporativeness], public lecture, available at: http://www.polit.ru/lectures/2010/02/04/university/

2. Petrov M.K. *Yazyk, znak, kul'tura* [Language, sign, culture]. Moscow, 1991, 328 p., available at: http://www.gramotey.com/?open_file=1269058127

3. Nisbet R. *The Degradation of the Academic Dogma: The University in America, 1945–1970*. N.Y., 1970. 252 p.

4. Le Goff J. *Pour un autre Moyen Âge: temps, travail et culture en occident.* 18 essais, Paris, Gallimard (Bibliothèque des histoires, 31), 1977 [réimpr.: 1979; 1991], 627 p.

5. Kislov A.G. O postakademicheskikh perspektivakh universitetov. *Pravo i obrazovanie, 2008, No. 1, p.34-46* [On post-academic prospects of the universities], available at: http://www.lexed.ru/pravo/notes/conf/?kislov.html

6. Spitsnadel' V.N. *Sistema kachestva (v sootvetstvii s mezhdunarodnym standartom ISO semeystva 9000): razrabotka, sertifikatsiia, vnedrenie i dal'neyshee razvitie: Uchebnoe posobie* [Quality management systems (in conformance with the international ISO 9000 standards): development, certification, implementation and further improvement: Textbook], Saint Petersburg, Business-pressa, 2000, 336 p.

7. Yamburg E.A. Blizorukiy bukhgalter prishël na smenu uchiteliu [A short-sighted accountant replaced the teacher] *Novaia gazeta.* (New Newspaper) 11.05.2012, No.No.50-51, available at: http://www.novayagazeta.ru/society/52529.html

8. Kuz'minov IA.I. Nashi universitety [Our universities] *Universitetskoe upravlenie: praktika i analiz* (University management: practice and analysis), 2007, No.3 (48), p. 8-17, available at: http://ecsocman.hse.ru/text/33476118/

9. Nazarchuk A.V. Setevoe obshchestvo i ego filosofskoe osmyslenie [Network community and its philosophic understanding] *Voprosy filosofii* (Philosophy issues), 2008, No.7, p. 61-75

10. Efimov V.S., Lapteva A.V., Dadasheva V.A., Efimov A.V. *Budushchee vysshey shkoly v Rossii: ėkspertnyy vzgliad. Forsayt-issledovanie-2030: analiticheskiy doklad* [The future of the higher education in Russian: expert opinion. Foresight research-2030: analytical

report] Krasnoyarsk, 2012, available at: http://www.kspu.ru/upload/documents/2012/06/14/d690dbbc6dedeb190b6a84d73983cb43/prezentatsiya-doklada.pdf

Перспектива институциональной трансформации российской высшей школы

А.Г. Кислов, О.В. Шмурыгина
*Институт социологии и права,
Российский государственный
профессионально-педагогический университет
Россия 620012, Екатеринбург, Машиностроителей, 11*

Статья посвящена идентификации (и самоидентификации) кризиса, который возник в последнее время в сфере высшего образования, и перспективам его преодоления. По сравнению с некоторыми развитыми странами в России кризис более значителен из-за традиционных административных ограничений высшей автономии системы образования и академической свободы сотрудников и студентов. Во-первых, понимание кризиса приводит к необходимости вернуться к основам университетского образования. Во-вторых, следует провести сравнительный анализ философской рефлексии этой ситуации. В-третьих, исследование текущего состояния высшего образования в различных странах и России, в частности, было необходимо. В результате статья демонстрирует истощение институционального потенциала и увеличение его несоответствия потребностям и тенденциям современного общества.

Полученные результаты могут быть использованы в исследовательских работах, связанных с эволюцией и прогнозами развития высшего образования, его институциональной точкой зрения, а также в практике разработки политики в области образования на различных уровнях. Они могут быть полезны для тех, кто пытается найти собственный путь в мире образования.

Следовательно, мы можем заключить, что в настоящее время в мире и в России, в частности, процесс деинституционализации высшего образования запущен, он сопровождается заменой существующих форм организацией в сети, межличностной, мобильной и гибкой. Сеть организации высшего образования есть сила, которая может вывести его из кризиса.

Ключевые слова: высшая школа, университет, социальные институты, социальные сети.