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Business Schools' Positioning in Eastern Europe and the CIS: a Conceptual Framework

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Abstract. The business education market in several Eastern European and CIS countries appeared much later than in Western Europe and the United States because its formation was a consequence of the transition from a centrally planned economy to a new economic formation at the end of the 20th century. In this article, the author analyzes the features of the formation and development of business education markets in Eastern Europe and the CIS, which transpired through creating their own business schools and expanding Western educational institutions. The author demonstrates that the analysis of the business schools' positioning in these countries, using direct borrowing of Western approaches, is limited. Therefore, a conceptual framework is proposed and substantiated, considering the peculiarities of business schools of former countries with non-market economies based on the exploration/exploitation dichotomies (by J. March) and universalism/particularism (by T. Parsons). From a research point of view, the results of the analysis will be useful as a basis for further empirical research, and, from a practical point of view as a basis for benchmarking business schools in former non-market economies.

Keywords: strategic positioning, business education, business schools, strategic choice.

Research area: economics.

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Позиционирование бизнес-школ в Восточной Европе и СНГ: концептуальная рамка

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Высшая школа бизнеса

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Аннотация. Рынок бизнес-образования в ряде стран Восточной Европы и СНГ возник значительно позже, чем в Западной Европе и США, поскольку его формирование явилось следствием перехода от плановой экономики к новой экономической формации в конце XX века. В данной статье автор анализирует особенности формирования и развития рынков бизнес-образования в странах Восточной Европы и СНГ, которые происходили через создание собственных бизнес-школ и расширение западных учебных заведений. Автор демонстрирует ограниченность возможностей анализа позиционирования бизнес-школ в этих странах с использованием прямого заимствования западных подходов, предлагает и обосновывает концептуальную рамку, учитывающую особенности бизнес-школ бывших стран с нерыночной экономикой, основанную на дихотомиях эксплорация / эксплуатация (Дж. Марч) и универсализм / партикуляризм (Т. Парсонс). С исследовательской точки зрения результаты анализа будут полезны как основа для дальнейших эмпирических исследований, а с практической – как основа для бенчмаркинга бизнес-школ в бывших странах с нерыночной экономикой.

Ключевые слова: стратегическое позиционирование, бизнес-образование, бизнес-школы, стратегический выбор.

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Introduction

In Eastern European countries and the CIS, the development of the business education market (BE) began later than in the West, where the concept of BE in its modern sense was born in the economic environment of liberal capitalism and Anglo-Saxon cultural traditions, and it became the result of the transition from a centrally planned economy to a new economic formation since the development of capitalism depended on the ability of company management to work in the new economic system (Evans, Birch, 1993a).

Independent business/management schools, structural subdivisions of higher educational

institutions, corporate universities were created, offering both individual short-term advanced training courses and full-fledged programs at all levels of education. All these players can be united by a wide subject field in which they work. These are various educational programs in the field of business management, management, marketing, financial and personnel management, etc., aimed either at those who work / plan to work in business, or (in the case of the so-called university business schools) for those who choose for themselves an academic career in the relevant subject areas. In this study, to refer to all these educational organizations

(both independent and subsidiaries of larger universities) offering various types of programs, the term “business school” (BS) is used in the broadest sense, following the definition of BS as educational institutions that teach business (Simons, 2013). The legitimization of BS, that is, their recognition as such, is a complex problem, the solution of which is sought in different ways. In this paper, the author proceeds from the fact that the organization is present in the market of educational services in the subject spectrum of programs of basic and additional education in managerial functions in business.

The first business schools (BS) in the CIS and Eastern Europe faced a dilemma: whether to focus on the Anglo-Saxon system as a model or to find their own way. Time has shown that despite the possibility of following the example of BSs of developed countries, BE in these countries developed along a slightly different trajectory, forming some peculiarities that persevered and evolved over the thirty-year period. (Rosi et al., 2018).

Western BE market is heterogeneous. There are significant differences between the countries and within them:

- at the international level, there are differences in the language of instruction, in the duration of training programs, etc.
- at the national level, we see that the ways of emergence and development of educational institutions were different, i.e., there was a multitude of their strategic choices (Navarro, 2008; Adam, 2016).

The existing studies analysed the BSs' positioning and the variety of strategic behaviour in both higher education in general (e.g. (Labianca et al., 2001)) and BE (e.g. (Adam, 2016; Dameron, Durand, 2018) using the concept of “strategic groups “ (or similar approaches) is used. However, this approach was not used for the analysis of the BE market for the countries of Eastern Europe and the CIS.

In this paper, we propose a conceptual framework for the further analysis of the heterogeneity of the BSs' positioning in Eastern Europe and the CIS focusing the peculiarity of the strategic behaviour of BSs in these countries related to their historical and cultural characteristics. The results of this work are a

step for analyzing the strategic groups in the BE market in Eastern Europe and the CIS and can be useful for both regulators and BS managers as a basis for structuring their strategy and benchmarking.

Theoretical framework

Market reforms in Eastern Europe and the CIS at the end of the 20th century led to a unique phenomenon that has no analogues in the historical perspective, the transition from a planned economy to a market economy after decades of socialism (Dakowska, Harmsen, 2015). There is no single term for defining such countries: the terms “transition economies” (Crotty, Crane, 2004), “post-socialist countries” (Fejfarová, Urbancová, 2016), “former socialist countries” (Zsótér et al., 2020)), “developing economies” (Rogers et al., 2019)) are used. In the United States Tariff Act of 1930 (the amendment of 1988), the term “countries with non-market economies” were used since the economy did not operate on market principles of cost and pricing and, therefore, the prices of goods did not reflect their actual value (Deryabina, 2002). For our purposes, the most important component in the definition of these countries is the previous experience of operating in a non-market economy, so it seems appropriate to use the broadest term such as “former countries with non-market economies” (FNME countries, FNMECs), referring to the countries of Eastern Europe and the CIS.

The rapidly changing needs of a transition economy (Saginova & Belyansky, 2008), the emergence and gradual development of the institution of private property (Estrin et al., 2009) in the FNMECs required the formation of managerial personnel capable of leading companies in market conditions. However, the existing programs of higher education and advanced training / professional retraining were based on Marxist theory and focused on the command economy. Textbooks (e.g. (Kozlova, Kuznetsov, 1970)) considered neither the concept of marketing nor a description of market pricing mechanisms but instead “democratic centralism”, “the unity of political and economic leadership”. Even when using the word “management” in the names train-

ing programs was significantly different from the educational programs of Western BS, and could not meet the needs of the emerging market economy. The response to this need was the creation of diversified BE-market in FMNECS in the context of the education system inclusion in a comprehensive political, economic, and social transformation (Rosi et al., 2018) that led to an increase in the availability of educational choices and information (Ministr, Pitner, 2015).

Statement of the problem

Analysis of BE market and the diversity in the BSs' positioning on it is necessary as a prerequisite for building rankings and ratings of

educational institutions that are significant for the management practice, as well as for benchmarking of BE market.

The heterogeneity of BE markets and the diversity of BSs' positioning in the developed Western countries has been analyzed by various authors since 90s. The authors focused on different aspects (Fig. 1):

However, to date heterogeneity analysis of BE markets and BSs' positioning has been carried out only in relation to the BE-markets of the developed Western countries.

Thus, the problem of this theoretical research is to clarify whether it is possible to directly borrow the existing approaches for the analysis of the BE market in FNMEC and, if

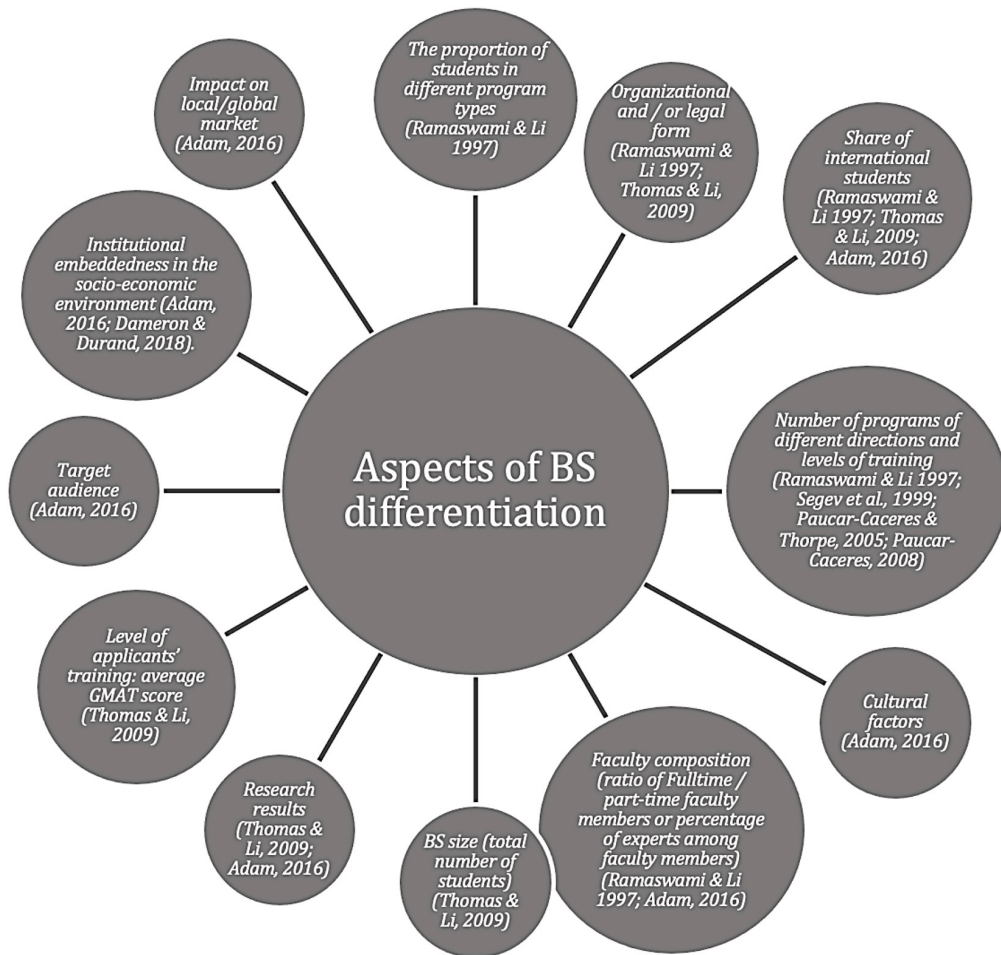


Fig. 1. Aspects of BS differentiation
Source: Compiled by the author

not, suggest additional dimensions could be offered to reflect the specifics of these markets?

To investigate the possibility of directly borrowing Western approaches to the analysis of the FNMECs BE market, it is necessary to consider its formation context represented by two parallel processes – the expansion of Western BS and the creation of endogenous BSs.

Expansion of Western BS. FNMECs represented new, potentially significant markets for educational services¹, and some Western BS began to look for ways to enter them.

There were polar positions differing in the assessment of the uniformity of demand for BE in the world and consequently about the need to adapt programs when entering developing countries markets: some researchers recognized significant differences between countries (e.g. (Pendergast, 2009)) and the need for significant adaptation, while the others (e.g. (Hawawini, 2005)) argued significant adaptation is not required when scaling the educational model. Empirical studies of BSs created in emerging markets (e.g. (Cremer, 2010)) and global BSs (mainly American) entering new markets (e.g. (Bevelander, 2012)) were primarily based on the first position, demonstrating varying degrees of programs' adaptation.

In terms of the international business theory, the options for Western BSs to enter the markets of FNMECs can be considered as export, franchise (license), partnership, or a subsidiary creation (Zahra et al., 2000) (Table 1):

Global BSs that entered markets of the FNMECs in different modalities had significant advantages in experience and resources, but they did not completely fill the markets and did not even become key players in them. They left space for emerging local BS (Filonovich, Kuzminov, 2004).

Creation of endogenous BSs in FNMECs. The creation of local BE institutions of

various formats has become another response to the growing demand for BE, from new management training departments in universities to independent schools of business and management, whose autonomy, as well as that of education in general, has been historically limited (Bleiklie, Michelsen, 2013).

The possibility of considering the BE institutions that appeared in FNMECs as BS is sometimes challenged, considering the meaning that this term is endowed with, in the traditional “Western” sense. Is it possible to consider as a BS a typical Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences or Faculty of Management offering managerial programs? How to consider the uncharacteristic for Western markets situation of creating more than one management education unit within the structure of a university – as a single business school or several separate ones? For example, there was created a Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences offering bachelor's and master's programs in management and the Institute of Business and Business Administration with a similar portfolio of management programs from bachelor's to MBA and EMBA at RANEPA.

Although for BS creating the strategic goals merely was often making a profit and improving the financial situation, in this paper, we proceed from a broad understanding of BS, considering all the institutions described above as BSs in correspondence to the position of the leading BE associations: AACSB uses the term BS to describe any organization that offers BE programs without implying any specific organizational structure. Similarly, EFMD regards BS as any stand-alone organizational unit or part of a larger institution that primarily deals with management education and management development. In this logic, BE institutions that were created in FNMECs can be defined as BS.

More than 1,000 new BSs had already appeared by 1997 in FNME (Bollag, 1997). The rapid growth of BS in these countries can be illustrated by the statistics on the Central and East European Management Development Association membership CEEMAN (Fig. 2):

The FNMECs BSs created program portfolios and educational resources, as well as trained teachers almost from scratch since

¹ According to Rosstat, just in the Russian Federation in 1991–2000 the number of newly formed enterprises (not counting enterprises that started economic activity earlier) amounted to more than 40,000 people. Assuming that at least one employee (the head of the organization) needs management education in each organization, it can be argued that on average, at least 4,000 potential students needed management education https://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/business/prom/rasp_nach2005.htm

Table 1. The modalities of entry in the BE market

Source: Compiled by the authors

Modality	Specifics in relation to the BE market	Examples
"export"	implies no adaptation of programs and represents training students from FNMECs on the main campuses' programs of the global Western BSs	Most Western higher education institutions accepted students from FNMEs, but the number of the students was limited (e.g. the number of GMAT applicants from Russia, the largest FNMEC with a non – market economy – was less than 2000 people per year).
"franchise (license)"	means offering the local markets the original Western programs with a minimal adaptation, often by directly translating materials into the local language (global strategy), using FNME educational institutions as intermediaries.	The UK Open University, which runs its program in Russia, Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, Latvia, Estonia (as in other countries) through the LINK BS ¹ without any significant adaptation.
"partnership"	involves a significant degree of adaptation and an implementation of "two-degree programs" in cooperation with local educational institutions based on the partner's positioning in the local market and its expertise.	ESCP ² BS (joint program with Higher School of Economics ³ (Moscow) "Marketing communications and advertising in a modern business"), Nord University BS ⁴ (joint program with MGIMO ⁵ (Moscow) "International Oil and Gas Business"), and SRH Berlin University of Applied Sciences ⁶ (joint program with Metropolitan University ⁷ (Prague) "Regional Studies and International Business").
"creating a subsidiary"	is the most flexible and represents the creation of self-contained BSs in FNME, usually with the hiring of local faculty and focusing on both local and global markets.	The University of New York in Prague ⁸ , the Geneva BS in Kazakhstan ⁹ , and the Stockholm School of Economics in St. Petersburg ¹⁰ .
"acquisition"	Was not used in BE markets of FNME	

¹ <https://www.ou-link.ru/>² <https://escp.eu/>³ <https://hse.ru>⁴ <https://www.nord.no/en/about/faculties-and-centres/business-school>⁵ <https://mgimo.ru/>⁶ <https://www.srh-hochschule-berlin.de/en/homepage/>⁷ <https://www.mup.cz/en/study-programmes/double-degree/>⁸ <https://www.unyp.cz/>⁹ <https://kz.gbsge.com/>¹⁰ <https://www.sserussia.org/>

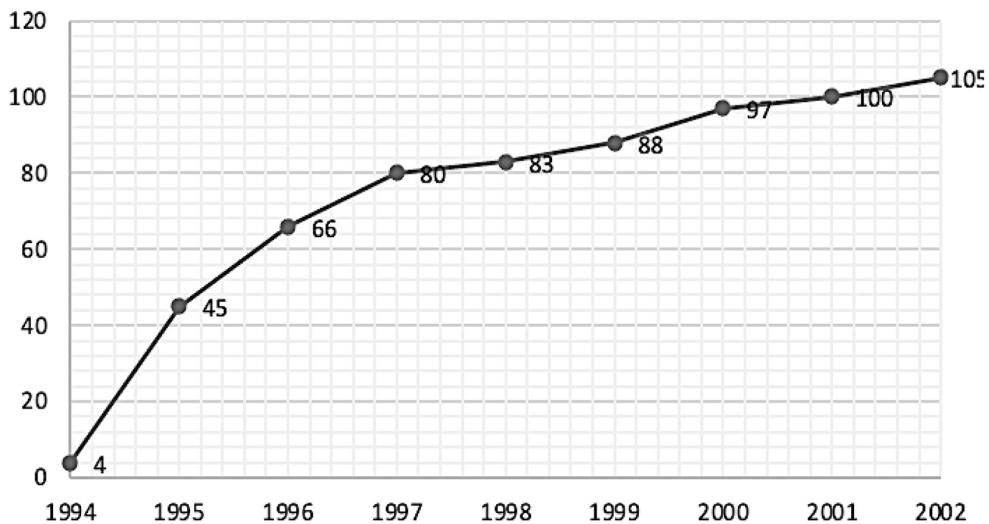


Fig. 2. Dynamics of CEEMAN members quantity change
Source: Compiled by the author from data provided by CEEMAN

there were no previous programs of this kind. It meant the formation of a body of knowledge about management as a new research area. It also made it necessary to gain recognition in the educational community, business environment, and society.

By analogy with the classic managerial choice “make or buy” the formation of the content of the educational program and the practice of scientific research on management in FNMECs was possible through two processes:

- use of materials of Western educational market leaders (programs of academic disciplines, textbooks), due to the lack of teachers’ experience and knowledge necessary for the development of their own programs, courses, and textbooks.

Note that such borrowing/unification is also widespread in countries with developed market economies. The formats of programs often offered by non-Anglo-Saxon universities, denominations of degrees and diplomas, programs’ content and even the language of teaching are largely the same as in Anglo-Saxon universities, as the very concept of BE in its modern sense was born in Anglo-Saxon cultural traditions.

- self-development of materials in BSs of FNMECs, associated with the complexity/

impossibility of copying (due to cross-cultural differences, differences in the economic development of countries, legislation, approaches to accounting, and, most importantly, the complete lack of experience of life in a market economy for potential applicants, which made it difficult to understand many details that seem obvious to Western students).

The self-development and borrowing processes are opposite but not mutually exclusive. BSs use them to various extents, combining their own developments and use of materials from other BS in different proportions. The shares ratio of original courses and training materials developed by BS on local material and training courses and materials borrowed from the conditional West; a different degree of orientation towards international accreditation and including into the ratings and rankings; inclusion of such topics as environmental awareness and social responsibility of business in the management training systems are the results of the independent strategic decisions (Fig. 3):

The integration into the global community of BSs is a goal for some BSs (e.g. Graduate School of Management of St. Petersburg State University², Graduate School of Busi-

² <https://www.gsom.spbu.ru/>

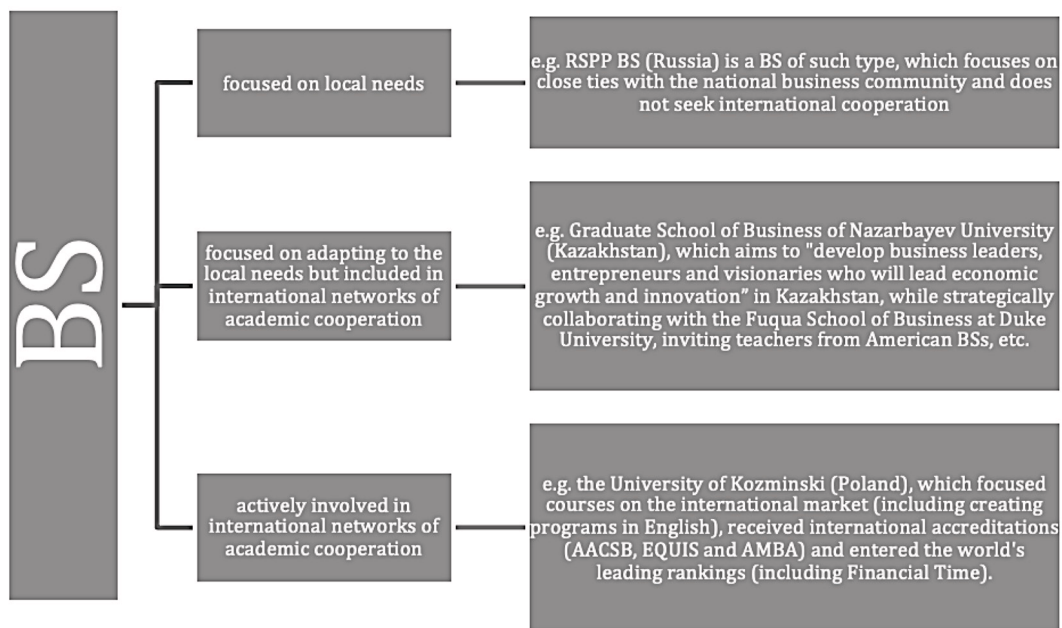


Fig. 3. Types of BSs in FNMECs
Source: Compiled by the author

ness AlmaU³, Moscow School of Management “Skolkovo”⁴), while for others (e.g. IPM BS⁵, Kyiv-Mohyla BS⁶, the Higher School of Business of Nazarbayev University⁷) a niche strategy with a focus on the needs of the local business community is relevant. Similarly, the differences in self-development of programs, courses, etc., or their borrowing remain relevant today.

Western BSs by analogy with the concept of “snakelike procession” (Riesman, 1958), described in relation to the markets of educational institutions (Stensaker et al., 2019), are the “head of the snake”, setting the general direction of movement. The much later formed BE market in FNMECs is a “tail” that has an ability to see the direction of the “head’s” educational institutions and follow their example or try to find alternative directions, including differentiating its educational services by concentrating on local markets.

³ <https://gsb.almau.edu.kz/>

⁴ <https://www.skolkovo.ru/>

⁵ <https://www.ipm.by/>

⁶ <https://kmbs.ua/>

⁷ <https://gsb.almau.edu.kz/>

Simultaneously authenticity is often proposed as a BS strategic differentiation mechanism in developed economies (i.e., considering the uniqueness of local conditions) too, developing a competitive advantages (Guillotin & Mangematin, 2018).

That essentially means differentiation occurs simultaneously in the “head of the snake”, which increases differentiation in the “tail”, which can be oriented to a heterogeneous “head”.

However, serious resource constraints and some differences in the external conditions (despite switch to the capitalism of the described countries) hinder the development of Western BSs’ strategy imitation.

This is also affected by the ‘varieties of capitalism’ (Hall, Soskice, 2001), since BE arises and develops in response to its needs, which, from this point of view, differ. While traditional BE was born and developed in Liberal Market Economy (LME) and Coordinated Market Economy (CME) are represented in the United States and Germany respectively, the FNMECs BSs developed under conditions of a “third main class” capitalism – “dependent market econo-

my” (DME) (Nölke, Vliegenthart, 2009) that is characterized by a hierarchy within multinational corporations as a central coordinating mechanism associated with comparative advantages in the collection and production of relatively complex and durable goods.

Moreover, the lack of resources also stimulates many BSs to borrow (full or partial) courses, programs, etc. instead of developing them independently, and thereby reduce costs.

In addition, some strategic goals of the BSs are traditionally different in developed countries and FNMECs. So, while getting into the professional ratings in most cases corresponds to the goals of BSs in developed countries, this becomes difficult soon for BSs of FNMECs (because of a significant backlog in the working experience) and, accordingly, it has been for a long time not included in the strategic plans of BSs (and it is still not included in many cases).

Thus, the factors described above have spurred the strategic differentiation of BS. Will these differences persist in the future considering the digital revolution in education (stimulated as well by the COVID-19 pandemic)? Will digitalization lead to convergence of BE systems, or will some features remain? These issues are debatable but when analyzing of FNMECs BSs' strategic choice, it is still necessary to consider the described features of their BE market. Such a difference in strategies between FMNEC and developed countries BSs is typical not only for the period of market formation but remains relevant to this day.

However, existing classifications do not fully reflect the described diversity of the strategic choice of BSs in FNMECs and, therefore, to reflect the described diversity of the strategic choice of BSs, it is needed to create a conceptual framework, considering the peculiarities of the FNMECs BE-market.

A proposed extension of classification criteria for BSs of FNMECs

The described differences in strategic choice of BSs of the FNMECs correspond to the classic for social sciences dichotomies of exploitation/exploration (March, 1991) and universalism/particularism (Parsons, 2000).

One of the main dilemmas that individuals and organizations face is a balance between exploring new opportunities and exploiting existing knowledge (Uotila, 2009), and this dimension can be described with the exploitation/exploration dichotomy (March, 1991). The dilemma arises from collection of information and its use are two mutually exclusive actions in many cases and can be considered as two extreme strategies (Berger-Tal, 2014).

To date, management studies have used both the universalism/particularism dichotomy (e.g. (Ma, Parks, 2007)) and the exploitation/exploration dichotomy at the firm level (e.g. (Uotila et al., 2009)) and at the strategic business unit (SBU) level (e.g. (Gibson, Birkinshaw, 2004)). However, BE has not been considered from this point of view yet.

Exploitation is associated with refinement, alignment, constraints, efficiency, and short-term orientation. The exploration is associated with search, diversity, adaptability, risk, experimentation, flexibility, innovation, and long-term orientation (Eriksson, 2013; Gibson and Birkinshaw, 2004).

As applied to BE market, this dichotomy may reflect choice patterns in the field of training associated with a predominant use of borrowed (developed either in the West or by local market leaders) training programs, formats and techniques of training, as well as a usually limited and stable portfolio of programs (exploitation), and patterns associated with a large and dynamic portfolio of programs, experimentation and development of new educational products, training tools and formats based on strong feedback from research and consulting (exploration). Such differences are significant, since revising the curriculum and encouraging teachers to conduct researches useful for practitioners is an important element of BS strategy (Thomas et al., 2013).

An example of exploration in training is the Higher School of Financial Management⁸. According to the information on the official website, its activities are generally “characterized by flexibility and adaptability, innovation, strategic vision”, and study of specific cases taken from real practice is a basis of educa-

⁸ <http://www.shfm.ranepa.ru/>

tion (the country's first collection of cases on corporate finance was created for educational purposes). Many programs of Higher School of Financial Management were the first in the country in their field (master's program "Financial Manager", program "Financial Analyst", etc.).

In turn, borrowing of existing training programs developed either in the West or by local market leaders, as well as a portfolio of programs that are limited in scope and stable over time evidence the exploitation. For example, KBTU BS⁹ (Kazakhstan) uses the Bloomberg platform in teaching as a source of training cases. It teaches according to international (mainly British) textbooks and has a license to read a course for undergraduates developed by the Harvard Institute of Strategy and Competitiveness. Note that these differences are not fixed by the existing Western classifications of BSs.

The manifestation of the exploration/exploitation dichotomy in consulting is as follows: prone to the exploration BSs are oriented to a highly diversified market that does not allow standardized approaches, and results of consulting projects implementation are associated with teaching; prone to the exploitation BSs provide standardized offers to business partners and usually target a limited, niche market.

In scientific activities the exploration/exploitation dichotomy supposes the exploitation shows itself in a focus on replication, comparative research, and testing of Western theories, where the creation of new theories is replaced by the empirical establishment/expansion of the contextual boundaries of existing theories, and the exploration, in turn, is the development of new theories (Almahendra, 2015).

The second classical sociological dichotomies reflecting the diversity of the strategic choice of BSs in FNMECs is the universalism / particularism (Parsons, 2000). The universalism/particularism dilemma represents reference variables – "... dichotomies, where the actor must choose one side before the meaning of situation becomes clear for him, and therefore before he can act with this situation in mind the Universalism is a focus on generally accepted norms, and particularism is a devia-

tion from general standards to greater consideration of the activity's context.

The universalism/particularism dilemma lets to separate BSs that focus mainly on the universal (primarily Western) model, and BSs that focus on local (national) features.

BE's exit from the world of Anglo-American liberal capitalism and its spread in countries with a completely different economic and socio-cultural landscape gave rise to another degree of freedom (and therefore another strategic choice) for the actors of these processes, both in developed Western countries and in FNMECs, as well as in other parts of the world (Latin America, Africa, etc.). We are talking about understanding management in a broad sense, either as a universal phenomenon that obeys the same laws in the United States, Ukraine and China and generates similar practices that become the subject of research and teaching in BSs, or as a phenomenon caused by the economic and socio-cultural conditions of relevant countries. There is nothing inherent only in management as a field of practice and research in such a dichotomy. It is well known that, for example, school mathematics is taught in the same way in different countries, maybe better or worse, but school history is taught in almost every country in its own way. It is hardly possible to consider such a choice as binary.

Management, as a field of training for students, includes both disciplines that, like mathematics, are taught mostly similarly in different countries of the world (for example, financial analysis), and disciplines that largely depend on the context (for example, human resource management). There is a wide range of possibilities here, and each player in this market chooses their position in this spectrum. Despite the considerable time since the appearance of the first BSs in these new BE countries, public consensus on an adequate positioning in this spectrum has not been reached. Although relevant discussions are less noticeable here than in the field of history teaching, where they often relate to the current foreign policy of states, a certain tension remains here.

This choice is not necessarily explicitly declared and recorded in the mission of the BS,

⁹ <https://www.kbtu.kz/ru/faculties/school-of-business>

but it affects the formation of teaching staff, the subject of scientific research, and the structure of a program portfolio. It is made by BSs created outside the area of genesis and the original existence of BE. They form the structure and content of the portfolio of programs and research.

Global BE players also do such a choice, when entering markets of new countries and adapt their offers in terms of educational programs and research. Though the FNMECs can be considered as importers of BE concepts and technologies and the latter as exporters.

In the field of teaching, the universalism finds expression in the borrowing Western management textbooks, active participation of Western professors in teaching, and use of English as a language of instruction. All things equal, it facilitates the transfer of knowledge and is therefore preferred. For example, Moscow School of Management "Skolkovo"¹⁰, being a member of international organizations (GNAM, EFMD, CEEMAN, GBSN, etc.), implements almost half of its educational programs in English or Russian and English, including with simultaneous translation (several more programs in Chinese). It strives to get into international ratings (in 2020, it took first place in Eastern Europe in the quality of corporate programs in the Financial Times 2020 rating), accredits programs (in 2019, it received EQUIS EFMD accreditation).

In turn, particularism manifests itself in the fact that Western management textbooks used at the initial stages of development are gradually replaced by local ones. Western professors act as temporary guest speakers, and the use of English as the language of instruction is limited. For example, VSU BS¹¹, established in 1995, is a member-only of the national association of BE (RABE) and implements programs in Russian without the participation of foreign teachers, otherwise, representatives of local companies and expert communities are most often involved as guest lecturers, and

most of the graduates are employees of Russian companies.

In addition, the universalism and the particularism manifest in scientific activities and consulting too. In research, the universalism finds expression in focusing on global trends and phenomena, rather than on the specifics of national (regional) management practices. Particularism in research is characterized by focusing on national (regional) management practices features, rather than on universal trends and phenomena. From the point of view of consulting, the universalism is in the global companies' and sponsors' dominance among clients of consulting services, while particularism – in local ones'.

It seems that the use of exploration-exploitation and universalism-particularism dichotomies for analysis of a strategic choice in BE market in the FNMECs will complement the existing approaches to display present polymorphism and representative conditions of these countries. These dichotomies can, among other things, be used as variables for the axes when constructing maps of strategic groups, which will increase the significance of displaying strategic differences in BS, and that, in turn, will be useful in benchmarking and studying the BE market in general.

Conclusion. This article enlightens some of the features of BSs' strategic choice and positioning in the CIS and Eastern Europe as a whole and shows that current BSs classifications do not reflect the differences in the strategies of BSs in the markets of FNMECs and, therefore, require some additions.

As a result, we propose and justify the addition of the dichotomies universalism/particularism and exploration/exploitation, which are classical for social sciences but were not used for the classification of BSs. It is assumed that the practical application of the proposed conceptual framework will allow for a more complete reflection of the diversity of FNMECs BSs' strategic positioning and, therefore, will become the starting point for further theoretical and applied research on the analysis of diversification in the BE market.

¹⁰ <https://www.skolkovo.ru/>

¹¹ <http://econ.vsu.ru/bs/>

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