DO IDEAS MATTER? THE OFFICIAL DISCOURSES ON HIGHER EDUCATION POLICIES IN RUSSIA UNDER PUTIN'S PRESIDENCY

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Abstract

The main goal of the thesis is to explore the discourses underlying higher education policies in Russia from 2000 until nowadays. 20 normative documents including recommendations and action plans were used as the dataset of the study. Discursive new institutionalism (Schmidt 2008) works as a theoretical framework of the research together with the hierarchy of beliefs from the advocacy coalition framework (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1999; Sabatier & Weible 2007) which was used for operationalization of the explored patterns. Computer-assisted discourse analysis, including both deductive literature-based and inductive coding procedures, was conducted for investigation of the selected issue. The findings present how knowledge-economy discourse frames all the relevant policies in higher education field and show the path-dependent patterns of the modern university system in Russia and the Soviet system of higher education and research.

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Introduction

Knowledge is considered crucial for the future development of practically every country in the twenty first century. No wonder then, that the relations among the three main actors in the knowledge arena – state, industry and academia – which form a triangle of interconnected entities (Etzkovitz, Leydesdorff 2000), need to be balanced and regulated, so that each one could perform well for the common benefit of all.

The dominant view on the functioning of academia in relation to the state, with a particular focus on the role and nature of the political regime, assumes that freedom of universities including both academic freedom and institutional autonomy, is one of democracy's cornerstones and a condition for the efficient production, transmission, and use of knowledge (Bergan 2003; Karran 2009; Rochford 2003; Turner 1998). This is true not only in the realm of the economic development but, under the contemporary conditions of massification of higher education, the university also plays a vital role in educating the citizenry. Most often, it is expected that university education promotes the values of pluralism and diversity, fairness and equity for people of different genders, cultures and beliefs (Englund 2002). However, pure democracies can be seldom met. Moreover, modern autocracies demonstrate that universities can also work under conditions of restricted democracy, and in ways different from the ideal model outlined above (China – Yang 2004; Singapore – Mok 2000, Russia – Verbitskaya & Nosova & Rodina 2002). Therefore, recognizing a widespread reality on the ground rather than focusing on ideal types, it is important to see in what ways universities work in non-democratic political regimes in this alleged age of the knowledge society. A particular perspective that is proposed in this thesis is to investigate how the politicians' discourses on the institutional organization and performance of

academia impact the higher education policy discourse and actual reforms that may follow. Russia under Vladimir Putin's rule is taken as a case for analysis.

What are the official discourses behind higher education policies in Russia? In order to answer this question, the official ideas behind the organization of the academia in a particular country, Russia, are explored. The research contributes to the field of policy studies. The analysis of the way. how political ideas are constructed and work vis-à-vis higher education in Russia, provides a better understanding of the policy process at its first stages in non-democratic, or authoritarian regimes, as opposed to well established or working democracies. The outcome of the research is creation of conceptual networks[1] elaborated in social, political and economic dimensions.

The performance of academia is highly dependent on the role that the state assigns to it (Bleiklie, Byrkjeflot 2002). The main thrust of the thesis is to analyze the discourses of political leaders of a given country with restricted democracy, Russia, on the role of academia and to study the framing of higher education policies that is ensuing.

The Russian Federation has been chosen as it combines the gradual development of the academia in accordance with world practices (Fedotova 2015, ICEF Monitor 2014), formal democratic norms fixed in the Constitution (Const. Art.1-3) and violation of democtatic principles in real practice (Human Rights Watch 2014), thus, representing the opposite ideas at the same time. The analysis concerns Russia under Putin's presidency. The time frame is from 2000 till nowadays. The four years of Medvedev's presidency are not counted separately because his presidency can be considered as a temporary and only apparent replacement of Putin for his legal coming back to power (Kryshtanovskaya 2008, Sakwa 2008), which he in reality continued to exercise as a prime minister during this time. The possible effect of earlier education policies is

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[1] In this thesis 'conceptual network' or 'conceptual map' means the complex of the categories, explored in the process of coding, thematically united into a group which allows to see the relationship among the categories.

also included into the research in order to provide the continuity of policy narrative. However, deeper historical analysis lies outside the scope of the paper.

The reasons underlying the formulation of the paradigm of higher education in Russia during the post-soviet period are discussed from two main perspectives: the goal to achieve international standards (Golunko, Smale 2007; Smolentseva 2011, 2015, Heyneman 2010) and changes in the economics of higher education (Johnstone, Marcucci 2010). Significant part of the existing studies on these topics analyze the implementation level and particular reform implications, whereas the aim of my research is to pay attention to the official discourse formulation stage, to the level of ideas, without getting to the level of adoption or implementation.

The theoretical framework of this study focuses on the influence of ideas on the institutional landscape described in terms of Schmidt's discursive new institutionalism (2008). She argues that in comparison to three other types of new institutionalisms (historical, rational choice and sociological) the discursive one assumes that norms are dynamic and subjective, therefore, ideas need to be studied in order to see how the context frames actual policies or norms (Schmidt 2008).

The thesis analyzes the programmatic documents touching on issues of higher education, including action plans and official documents consisting of recommendations (for the full list of items see Fig.3). On the one hand, all of them reflect the ideas of top officials involved in their creation and from this perspective the thesis aims to explore and classify these ideas. On the other hand, dividing normative documents into these two groups allows to see whether discourses produced in more abstract and theoretical papers have a framing effect on action plans and whether the latter produce their own meanings in the process of instrumentalization of wider concepts. The sample of texts that serve as units of analysis comprises 20 items: 10 action plans and 10 documents of a recommendatory character dated since 2000. The texts were selected

based on their content: if the item implies description of problems or goals of the higher education system, it is included into the sample.

The themes or particular discourses on the role of higher education are defined both deductively with the help of the analytic conceptualization and existing studies about higher education in Russia (based on scholarly and public policy literature) and inductively from the selected units of text in the process of a discourse analysis. The research is conducted in the inductive manner, i.e. no preliminary hypothesis is made, but gradual exploring of the connections (where applicable) among discourses on the role of academia and its goals in the official formulations of higher education policies is conducted and reported. The analysis of the implementation of every single reform lies outside the scope of this paper. The scope is on the ideas around the process of policy making.

After conducting the analysis of the data three groups of higher education policies were found. Universities playing the role of industrial units or education services represent the economic focus of the documents from the dataset, social and political dimensions of ideas are represented respectively. The keynote idea underlying all the groups is creating the infrastructure for knowledge-based economy according to postindustrial standards of technological development. The idea pervades all the spheres of higher education starting from framing universities' strategies of development to making recommendations what and how should be taught. Further investigation of an issue with more concrete examples and possible effects on the existing sociopolitical environment are presented in the third chapter of this thesis.

The first chapter outlines the analytical framework of the study. The details about the context of the research and literature review are provided in the second chapter. The third chapter details the methods used for data collection and analysis. The analysis itself as well as the findings and their interpretations are presented in the fourth chapter. In the conclusion I summarize the research and open a window for future academic discussion on the issue dealt with in the thesis.

1. Theoretical approaches to studying higher education discourses

The chapter shows outlines the theoretical foundations and practical implication of studying discourses, particularly the ones on higher education, and then provides the model of creating new discourses. The first section explains the relevance of studying discourses as parts of the policy making process making references to the theories applicable to policy studies in general. In the second one the way to investigate higher education discourses and to apply them in a wider policy perspective is shown. In the final section the conceptual model of creating new discourses in the process of policy-making is proposed.

1.1. Discourse as the engine of policy-making

In this thesis 'policy' is taken to mean a complex of measures that the state undertakes to solve a particular problem. Policy change happens when a particular improvement is required. This understanding of policy and policy change is illustrated and studied by scholars of policy cycles and other theories, that consider policy making as a strictly organized sequence of stages that usually starts with the agenda-setting, goes through identification of possible alternatives, formulation of the recommendations and then proceeds to possible solutions that are gradually investigated and evaluated in the end (Lasswell 1971, Brewer & deLeon 1983).

Whereas policy cycle requires participation of actual political actors who may engage the expert community on the explorative or evaluative stages of the reform, it excludes policy recipients from the process of policy making. According to Almond and Powell policy making cannot be separated from the social environment and people who are the targeted audience of the reform implication (1966). The people involved in the proximate production and consumption of the social goods consider the changes and approve them in the form of positive evaluation, otherwise, they demand rejection of the new policies. This works as a feedback mechanism

which allows to evaluate the quality of policy performance not only with the help of the experts but from the perspective of the policy recipients.

However, Almond and Powell's analytical approach to policy making brings forward two serious assumptions that are hardly present in the real setting. The first one is information awareness of the policy recipients, which means that the people involved in the production and consumption of social goods are informed about all the possible costs and benefits and, therefore, can relatively objectively measure the quality of policy. Another assumption is about the reflexivity of the authorities' response to the signals from the outside, i.e. the motivation of people in power is the desire to contribute to the wellbeing of the citizenry and fulfilling their needs, not just the will to stay in office.

The dichotomous view on politicians' possible motivations underlying their choices implies both: the ideological dimension of decision making and the opportunistic one. According to Downs, who represents opportunistic views, the political parties follow those political courses that will allow them to be re-elected considering the fact that voters have incomplete information about the field (Downs 1957:137). The ideological perspective is presented by Hibbs who found dependency of macroeconomic indicators on the political party in power and, therefore, insisted on the ideological character of decision-making (Hibbs 1977).

The dichotomous division of the public representation and actual motivation of political actors underlies Bacchi's problem-solving approach, which implies that the problem defined in the process of policy investigation and the problem that exists in the field are two separate issues. The author encourages scholars studying policy making to go in depth finding both exogenous (original) and endogenous (shaped) problems. (Bacchi 2009: ix-x). This way of problematization is based on a constructvist perception of political processes, which means that they can be decomposed to the involved actors' intentions, doings, the public presentation of these doings and social processes lying behind.

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The idea of combination of ideology and the will to reserve power is also supported by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith's advocacy coalition framework (ACF) which reflects the idea of appealing to politicians' intentions in the process of policy-making (1999). The scholars claim that the policy changes correspond to actors' values that can be displayed on different levels of perceptions. Whereas deep core beliefs reflect ideological domains supported by the politicians, their secondary beliefs are adjusted to particular situations (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1999:133; Sabatier & Weible 2007:194-195). Having in mind their values and beliefs, politicians form advocacy coalitions with the most appropriate from the ideological perspective groups in order to gain power and take an office or stay there (Sabatier & Weible 2007:196-197). Thus, the authors claim that the dichotomization of the politicians' motivations is not necessary and the opposing ideas can be combined.

Regardless of their original goals, politicians are very likely to depend on voters and, therefore, they have to consider recipients' evaluation of policies. Thus, on the one hand, the politicians affect the targeted audience's perceptions of policies by making particular policy choices. On the other hand, these choices are influenced by signals from the public. Schmidt's discursive new institutionalist framework supports this idea: institutions are dynamic structures that are constructed by the agents involved (2008). The creation of discourses implies communication, in which political actors create signals, or stimuli for reactions, and then take feedback into account, thus forming the discursive platform. (Schmidt 2008).

Studying higher education is possible from any of the perspectives mentioned above. From the ideological point of view the choices in the field of higher education depend on whether the politicians consider it as a social good or highly competitive intellectual industry. The discourse creation starts from defining the ideological scope of the political power and then is further specified in particular policies. From the opportunistic point of view, higher education can be considered as a suitable field for populist policies as, on the one hand, it is in the scope of public attention, considering the mass character of higher education in 21st century, and on the other

hand, it is significantly less vulnerable in comparison to primary education, medicine or other social policies. The analysis of discourses on higher education is conducted according to the same logic as in the ideological scenario but without application to the core values. Thus, regardless of the selected approach, studying discourses on higher education can contribute to our knowledge of policy making in the selected temporal and spatial context.

1.2. Practical implication of higher education discourses

Higher education is a policy field that can be explored from very different policy perspectives. It can be associated with social policy as it provides one of the welfare foundations, with labor policy as it prepares labor force, with policies in the field of science and innovations as it forms a common space for creative individuals. Multiple implications of higher education policies make academia a field with an impressive interpretational potential. Professional education serves as the space of knowledge production and sharing as well as skills development. However, it implies not only a relationship between producers and consumers of educational goods. Apart from universities and students, it involves such actors as the state and industries interconnected with each other on the basis of access to information produced.

The way the state treats its tertiary education allows us to draw conclusions about wider political issues like the regime characteristics or preferences of the current political elite. As it was stated earlier, according to Bacchi's approach to policy analysis the problem which is stated by the politicians and the one that is actually being solved by the proposed measures are two different problems (2009: ix-x). I show how various policy problematizations can be investigated from higher educational issues, following the procedure of deconstruction. (Bacchi 2009: 2).

The following example is chosen as an illustration. In his speech at the congress with delegates of the Union of Rectors which took place 30 October 2014, the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin told that the needs of the employers rather than universities' own needs should be the

landmarks in higher education. The president empathized the role of universities as a source of manpower that should not turn into the factory of academic credentials. That is why in order to increase the quality of their performance universities had been suggested not to enroll students with low graduation exam results[2]. From this brief fragment I conclude that higher education in Russia is seen as a source of labor, rather than a part of social policy or knowledge creation. This conclusion can be made because according to Putin, the performance of university, i.e. its most actual goal, is training effective workers. He does not say anything about the promotion of equality or access to sources for a development of the individuals' capacities. Despite the fact that the procedure of enrollment is originally merit-based according to the existing educational legislature (Art.43.3 Const. Russia), the president advises to introduce further restrictions. This means that higher education which was originally treated as a limited benefit, rather than a common good, will be accessible by even smaller number of citizens.

The underlying goal of the above policy is increasing the quality of the labor market (that was mentioned by the president in the same speech). The first step to the achievement of this goal - not letting universities graduate unqualified specialists. This can be achieved through toughening the enrollment procedure. However, restricted enrollment cannot increase the quality of applicants. The overall quality of secondary graduates will remain the same. Restricting access to higher education means the graduates enter the labor market with the same poor results but without tertiary education. Thus, we see that the quality of the labor force cannot be increased following this strategy. What can be achieved in case of the reduction of enrolled students numbers.

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[2] Davydov D. Putin encourages not enrolling C students (*"Putin prizaval ne brat' v vuzy troechnikov"*) Channel One Russia news. Oct 30, 2014 [Electronic source] URL: https://www.1tv.ru/news/2014/10/30/36217-vladimir_putin_prizval_ne_brat_v_vuzy_troechnikov# (Date of application 17.04.2016).

One of the popular explanations of this tendency is the intention to increase the popularity of secondary professional colleges[3] because when the secondary graduate fails to start tertiary education, she/he would most probably choose intermediate vocational education instead. However, I would argue that neither of the two goals - increasing quality of education or improving labor market - can be achieved through redirecting students with poor results to vocational schools. Thus, the underlying problem which is being solved by reducing the number of students has nothing to do with the popularity of vocational education.

The reason why the state is interested in having fewer students in higher education and the place of vocational schools in the system of educational excellence can be further deconstructed after adding particular contextual details about the whole setting. These conclusions may contribute to the field of economics showing how the knowledge market works, to sociology ─ uncovering the structural effects of the distribution of knowledge as a good and, of course, to the political field investigating ideologies, mechanisms of governance and the protection of power coherency. Further analysis of this issue, together with other discourses, will be presented in the empirical chapter of this thesis.

1.3. How new discourses are created

New discourses as well as any agendas at the top level do not appear by themselves. They are closely interconnected with policy making. In this thesis the advocacy coalition framework (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1999) has been used as the theory on which the analysis is based. The ACF was created to deal with conflicts of interests, multiple actors on more than one level of government (Hoppe & Peterse 1993; Sabatier & Weible 2007:189). It is based on three basic ideas that (1) the behavior of political actors is influenced by a wider socioeconomic context of

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[3] In Russian educational system professional college is not the equivalent for tertiary educational organization but rather is a new name for a vocational school.

the political system; (2) the individual has different levels of beliefs that serve as perceptual filters for the incoming ideas; and (3) the most effective way of promoting particular interests is aggregation to "advocacy coalitions". (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1999; Sabatier & Weible 2007:191-192)

The main focus of the analysis is on the part of the theory about the hierarchization of values. According to Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, the policy changes correspond to actors' perceptions and values that can be displayed on three levels depending on their openness for a change – deep core beliefs, policy core beliefs and secondary beliefs.

The least flexible beliefs are deep core ones reflecting fundamental ideological values. These include: "liberty and equality, the relative priority of the welfare of different groups, the proper role of government vs. markets in general, and about who should participate in governmental decision-making". (Sabatier & Weible 2007:194) These believes have a general ontological character and can be further applied to different policy fields and expressed in more concrete policy values.

Policy core beliefs can be considered as relatively stable preferences in policy-related issues relying on more fundamental values. This level of beliefs implies the assumption according to which the policy actors are knowledgeable enough to be able to transform their fundamental beliefs to particular policy fields. (Sabatier & Weible 2007:194-195) However, policy core beliefs do not always correspond to the deep core values. They are more open towards new experience and potential changes. The *Strategy of Social and Economic Development until 2010* can be used as an illustration of such a gap between deep core and poly core beliefs. Having liberal values implying marketization of the social sphere, the initiators of the social policy package described in the Strategy realized that the infrastructure of the young state after the century of planned economics needed state involvement and financial support of the initiatives.

The last tier of the hierarchy is secondary beliefs. They are the least stable and reflect situational opinions of the involved actors about particular tools that can be used for the implementation of the policy. That is why secondary beliefs are relatively narrow and instrumental. (Sabatier & Weible 2007:196) Here are the recommendations about particular measures like "organization of regional technically equipped research complexes" or "increasing professors' salaries until the level of four average salaries" or even more specific ones tied to localities or time like "introduction of additional examination in Russian language for teaching staff in Dagestan" or "computerization of universities until 2008".

When the model of advocacy coalition framework is applied to the subject of this thesis particular assumptions need to be considered. First of all, having chosen the one particular policy field we already make a step from the deep core beliefs level because among big ontological agendas we choose a specific one. Secondly, the operationalization of the whole model implies heterogeneous political landscape where groups of interests compete for power and make coalitions to gain it. The Russian political environment does not imply political diversity in the state apparatus which consists mostly of the members of one party.

However, despite the homogenous character of the political elite, it has not consisted of the same people during the whole period in the selected time frame. What is more, the social, the political and the economic environment of the country has also been changing, that has influenced higher education agendas over time. Therefore, considering these circumstances, ideologically competing discourses were found in the data. In order to solve this issue on the conceptual level I suggest dividing the policy core level of beliefs into two stages. Policy core beliefs level (I) implies policy-related values but expressed in wider ideological terms like "higher education as a social good" or "higher education as an intellectual industry". It plays the ideologically-orienting role of deep core beliefs but on the policy stage. Policy core beliefs level (II) combines policy values that serve as subcategories for the wider concepts. For example, "increasing accessibility", "developing of human capacity" or "decreasing vulnerability of the youth" are

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examples of the policy core level (II) values for "higher education as a social good" category on the policy core level (I). Secondary beliefs imply particular practical solutions for the policies identified on the earlier stages. "Increasing number of universities in the regions" or "increase of students' stipends" are the measures for "accessibility" policy in the scope of "higher education as a social good" agenda.

Thus, despite the assumptions the model of hierarchization of beliefs proposed in the advocacy coalition framework contributes to the study as it helps to identify the levels of preferences and, thus, conceptualize discourses in a more accurate and logical way.

This thesis investigates discourse creation in the process of the ongoing policy flow on the sample of normative documents allowing us to see all the three levels of discourse creation and their temporal continuity. The analysis will be further developed in the third chapter. But in order to provide a more transparent procedure of discourse substraction, the research should be contextualized from the political, economic and social perspectives. The second chapter introduces the background of the system of higher education in Russia providing the basic context of the policy field for the selected temporal frame.

2. The system of higher education in Russia: an overview

This chapter provides the background for the research paying attention to the architecture of the Russian political system, historical patterns and main changes that happened in the system of higher education after the collapse of the Soviet Union, discussed by the scholars in the field.

2.1. Legal perspective

According to article 10 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation (1993), a classical separation of powers is established in the state with three branches being the legislative, executive and judicial ones. The bicameral Federal Assembly that is divided into the Federation Council, which is the upper chamber, and the Duma, the lower chamber, represents the legislative branch. The executive power includes the government headed by the prime-minister. The president with his administration is treated as a separate source of power (Art. 11 Const.Russia). The Supreme Court is the highest judicial agency "for civil, criminal, administrative and other cases under the jurisdiction of common courts" (Art. 126 Const.Russia), whereas the Constitutional Court has credentials in the sphere of international agreements, treaties, the federal unity and infringements of the Constitution (Art. 125.2 Const.Russia).

Federal laws are the main pieces of legislation that regulate legal relationships in the country. Every piece of legislation goes through the standard procedure described in articles 104-108 of the Constitution (1993). The member of any of the three branches of power as well as the president can initiate legislation (Art. 104.1) that should be submitted to the Duma (Art. 104.2). In case of gaining the majority of votes in the Duma (Art. 105.2), the piece of legislation moves to the Federation Council (Art.105.3) and if passed, it is sent to the president (Art.107.1), who signs the law and makes it public (Art.107.2).

The system of higher education is regulated by the Constitution of the Russian Federation (1993) and the Law on Education (Fed.Law №273 2012). Before passing the new Law on Education in 2012 it was also regulated by the Law on Education (Fed.Law №73 1992) and the Law on

Higher and Postgraduate Education (Fed.Law №125 1996) that lost their legaljudicial power after introduction of the new law.

The Constitution guarantees citizens general access to free pre-school, secondary and higher vocational education (Art.43.1 Const. Russia). Free higher education is accessible on a competitive basis (Art.43.3 Const. Russia). In the new Law on Education (2012) higher education agendas are investigated together with the intermediate vocational education under the umbrella-term 'professional education'. However, the Law includes separate procedures of enrollment and goals for these two stages of education. The aim of higher education is "training of professionals in major fields of public benefit activities and needs of the society and the state as well as satisfying the requirement in individual, intellectual, cultural and moral development" (Art.69 Fed.Law №273).

The Law on Education reflects Russia's participation in the Bologna system. Therefore, according to the 10th article, the system of professional education includes the following stages and degrees:

1) "Intermediate vocational education"

2) "Higher education – Bachelor degree"

3) "Higher education – Specialist or Master degree"

4) "Higher education – training of highly qualified personnel". (Fed.Law №273)

The main governmental priorities in higher education are fixed in the *National Doctrine of Education until 2025*, which provides the fullest overview of state goals in professional education including a combination of historical moral values and progressive scientific ideas, paying attention to local ethnic background and international standards. (The National Doctrine of Education 2000; Starodubtceva & Krivko 2015). The *Strategy of the Social and Economic Development until 2020* continues the initiatives from the *Strategy until 2010* and reflects the

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labor market modernization, investigating agendas of effective higher education from the perspective of knowledge economy (The Strategy-2020, 2008). Federal Principal Programs for Development of Education are 5-year governmental projects taking place from 2000 (the first FPPD lasted 6 years). These are action plans which goal is to modernize the system of Russian Education on all the levels, making it more transparent, efficient, unified and inclusive. Although the *State Program for Development of Education for 2013-2020* sounds very similar, it should not be mixed up with the Federal Principle Programs. The document does not concentrate on the institutional environment of the system of education but on effective youth policies which include university agendas among others (SPDE 2013).

2.2.   *Overcoming the soviet past.*

One can hardly find a sphere of social interactions not deeply affected by Soviet ideology and centralized regulation. Universities are no exception. The introduction of a new economic and political system in the 1990s raised the necessity of universities to adapt to the new environment and requirements. This section investigates the challenges experienced by the Russian academia in 2000s.

During the Soviet era academia worked as an industry that prepared, on a regular basis, the exact number of specialists required by the central planning agency according to the needs of the national economy (Androushchak & Yudkevich 2015). After graduation young people were allocated to enterprises and everybody occupied a niche settled in advance. The modern Russian competitive economy does not restrict students in their professional choices but does not guarantee any jobs either. This means that in order to succeed on the job market, graduates are required to have a wider scope of skills and competencies rather than a particular qualification prescribed by the diploma. (Grebnev 2004). Thus, new academia requires skill-based education and more close cooperation with the labor market.

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Another challenging issue is the financial relations between the state and universities. Under the Soviet regime academia was fully state-funded, which meant the financial stability of universities, fixed salaries of academic staff and free, although merit- and quota-based, education for students with guaranteed stipends and dormitories. At the same time, it meant no real control over the quality of university performance, no opportunities for individual strategies of university development and no equal access. Post-soviet universities had to overcome these patrimonies, experiencing marketization as a completely new issue for the whole system. In the 1990s the first privately funded universities appeared. Even after 20 years the question of balanced regulation private universities stays unsolved as well as the effective resourcing of state universities.

The effective performance of universities inside the borders of a country is insufficient for the successful development of a state in the 21st century. More than half a century of state control in all the spheres of life and soviet propaganda created a gap between Russia and other countries especially in the field of social sciences. The international recognition of Russian universities and their reaching of the world standards is one of the top priorities in Russian educational strategies.

New demands on universities from society have meant not only the necessity of radical change from the inside but a complete change of higher education policies, i.e. the attitude of people in power who are responsible for tertiary education regulation. Studying the discourses produced by these individuals and institutions allows us to see the direction of change and more effectively predict possible outcomes.

2.3. New trends in Russian higher education

Internationalization of higher education in Russia is considered one of the main priorities in educational policies. In order to overcome the gap with the world academic community, a new

mechanism of involvement and integration was needed at the beginning of 2000s. The Bologna process played this role when Russia officially joined it in 2003. Designed as a higher education reform, the policy had implications in different fields. The ambitious administrative and financial goals included not only the tying of universities to world standards but also increasing the competitiveness of Russian specialists and the differentiation of the labor market, the creation of an independent and knowledgeable public sector, the liberalization and deregulation of universities (see Figure 1). (Pursiainen & Medvedev 2005).

The researchers who study the Russian participation in the Bologna process tend to be optimistic considering it as a chance for Russia to become a part of the European and world community (Medvedev 2006) or, the other way round, to introduce Russian practices to European colleagues, thus, increasing the level of trust in the system that already exists (Makarova & Solomennikov 2007). Concerns about particular challenges experienced in the process of transition are supported by the arguments in favor of creating national policies with Russian specificity. (Smirnov 2004; Shadrikov 2004; Zapesotsky 2005). The phenomena of Russian national uniqueness serves not only as a source of inspiration for new reforms but also helps to fill in the gap in failures during the implementation of the Bologna system (Davydov 2005; Dobrenkova 2007).

However, having the same organizational structure as colleagues from other countries is insufficient for complete integration into the world academic community. The important marker of international recognition and achieving the requirements is having high positions in the international ratings. The positions of Russian universities were relatively low during the first decade of the 21st century. This became an impetus for creation of the national methodologies of quality evaluation. They paid a greater attention to teaching and quality of education rather that research achievements (Smolentseva 2015:408) which continued to be attentively monitored.

In 2013 the Russian Academic Excellence Project "5-100" was launched[4]. 21 universities were selected on a competitive basis and received advanced subsidies for development that among other goals necessarily included: (1) improving the education programs; (2) reaching high level of citation in international journals; (3) popularizing science; and (4) carrying out a plan for engagement of at least 10% of foreign lecturers and 15% of foreign students. (Ministry of Education 2015). It is too early to make conclusions about the initiative now. However, it is already clear that apart from positive effects the project will have in case of successful realization, there are also weaknesses that need to be considered. Among the possible challenges are: (1) distortion of long term goals because of short run results orientation; (2) formalization of academic performance and restriction of controversial innovative teaching practices; and (3) distancing from local community in the process of internationalization. (Yudkevich 2015)

Increasing competitiveness of the country and fulfillment of a labor market is impossible without improvements within the system of tertiary education. According to expert evaluation Russian universities have serious problems inside the system of professional education that does not provide the students necessary skills, therefore, decreases the effectiveness of higher education. (Ovsiannikov 2013:38) The gap evolves because the competences required by the knowledge-based economy include adaptation, successful communication, value and will-power whereas universities teach particular professions that is more typical for the industrial stage of economy. (Ovsiannikov 2013:46) It motivates young people to get involved in the process of self-education but ruins the prestige of higher education as the knowledge industry.

The insufficient quality of teaching in professional education is an umbrella term for the whole bunch of problems connected with the organization of working process for universities' employees. It includes problems in various fields, such as the training of future teaching staff and decreasing professional prestige, dealing with old generation of academicians in the context

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[4] In accordance with Presidential Decree №599 «On measures to realize state policy in the sphere of education and science».

of new standards, measuring effectiveness of academic performance and the lack of conditions for it.

There is no unified national academic market in Russia. Rather than being a network of cooperating organizations it works as a number of units on the regional level, relatively independent from each other with their own informal rules (Sivak & Yudkevich 2008:34). That is also the reason which causes low academic mobility. Getting a graduate and postgraduate degree and then finding a job in the same academic unit is common practice in Russia (Kuzminov & Yudkevich 2007:43). Thus, having no channels of refreshing the staff, each university is a closed system inevitably, and this leads to academic exhaustion and decrease in quality. The change in the whole infrastructure is required in order to solve these issues.

The opposition between control over the performance of teaching staff and the formal character of academic freedom, as well as the lack of stimuli for professional creativity, are stumbling blocks related to teaching. Gradual expansion of academic bureaucracy caused by structural reforms like the Bologna process, or creating education complexes on the basis of inclusion of ineffective small units to bigger organizations, increases the formalization of the relationship in the universities. The consumerist attitude of universities towards their employees means not only their exclusion from the procedure of decision making but also the implementation of economizing measures including raising the teaching load without significant changes in salaries and afterwards measuring their performance by published items and citation. (Panfilova 2011:37; Gruzdev & Abramov & Terentev 2016)

This allows us to go back to the beginning of the section about modern trends in Russia where the orientation of the state on reaching high standards of tertiary education was discussed. The basic concern is that advancing demands to universities and even financially encouraging them, the state deprives universities autonomy, which becomes formal in the context of the increasing rationalization and bureaucratization of higher education (Panfilova 2011: 37; Smolentseva 2015:419).

3. Methodology: Design, Data Collection & Analysis

The purpose of this chapter is to show how the data were collected and analyzed, what lies behind the procedure of interpretation and what are the foundations for generalization. The general scope and the approach to the research are described in the first section. Then the choice of data sources and the sampling are discussed. The third section allows to follow how decisions about the research, starting from managing with software and developing codebook to interpretation and reporting findings, were made. In the final section strengths and limitations experienced in the process of data collection and analysis are discussed.

3.1. Research Design

The goal of the research is studying discourses of power that form the field of ideas around higher education. In my thesis higher education policy is viewed as a combination of texts that were produced in the forms of normative documents in particular temporal and spatial contexts, affected by the measures in a wider policy context as well as by the personalities who produced these documents, their personal experiences, competences and obstacles in which they had to do their work. From this perspective, what I study can be called the 'policy narrative' of Russian higher education.

Although I did not find any research in Russian and English absolutely similar to mine, it does not mean that nobody has discussed the issue in their works. I looked through the literature in the field and grouped it according the issues on which the authors focused answering the question about the role of higher education in a wider societal context. I go into more detail in the 'Discourses on Higher Education in Russia' section in the theoretical chapter. These discourses, or themes serve as my preliminary expectations from the data. It means that I will use them in the process of making the deductive topic guide. However, as I do not select my units of analysis

based on one particular policy, I expect to find inductively other themes and thematic connections in the data.

Research is organized in a two-staged process. In the first stage I show the map of themes based on existing texts. It starts from the deductive procedure of placing existing accents into a policy narrative and then widening the network with the help of inductive findings. It shows not only how discourses relate to each other but also their dynamics over time: in what context they appear, how they change throughout time, whether the verbal articulation of the same problems is changed or the same linguistic cliché is used as an umbrella term for different issues. The second stage implies using Bacchi's problem-solving approach, i.e. deconstruction of discourses found in the first stage of the study in order to find the problems that are being solved under the names of something else, i.e. "hidden" agendas, and add this knowledge into the conceptual map of discourses.

3.2.   Data

The dataset used in the study includes 20 normative documents that can be divided into two groups: recommendations and prescriptions. The list of the sources can be found in the table in Figure 3.

I unite the National Doctrine, two Strategies of Socioeconomic Development, five conceptions of education development and two other decrees into one group of 'recommendations' as all the ten of them have a recommendatory character. Some of the issues discussed there found their further implication in federal target programs or new law on education. However, these documents serve more as platforms for the creation of common terminology and articulation of goals for future policy discussions rather than include strict deadlines or financial restrictions. The role of these texts in discourse production makes their inclusion into the sample of the highest importance.

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Two state programs, one federal program, one governmental action plan and six federal target programs are treated as 'prescriptions' in my study. These are action plans restricted by timeframes and money aiming to effectively meet particular policy objectives requiring state support. Each of the nine items that are either dedicated on education or related to higher education fields (informatization and academic staff development) includes justification part with high interpretative potential. Therefore, these units of analysis play an essential part in my sample as they do not only include actual plans of actions but also allow to see whether higher education discourses change when it comes to implementation.

Figure 1 List of the documents from the dataset

recommendations   prescriptions

#	Name of the document	Year
1	Federal Program for Educational Development in 2000-2005	Apr 10, 2000
2	Strategy of social and economic development until 2010	Jun, 2000
3	"Action Plan of the Government of Russian Federation in the Area of Social Policy and Economic Modernization for 2000-2001"	Jul 26, 2000
4	National Doctrine of Education in the Russian Federation up to 2025	Oct 4, 2000
5	Conception of Russian Education Modernization until 2010	Feb 11, 2002
6	Federal Target Programme "Integration of science and higher education of Russian Federation for 2002-2006"	Jul 3, 2003
7	"On Priority Directions for Development of the Education System of Russian Federation" 2004	Dec 9, 2004
8	Federal Target Program of Education Development for 2006–2010	Sent 3, 2005
9	Conception of Federal Target Program of Education Development for 2006–2010	Sent 3, 2005
10	Conception of Federal Target Program "Scientific and educational staff of innovation Russia" 2009-2013	Apr 7, 2008
11	Federal Target Program "Scientific and educational staff of innovation Russia" 2009-2013	Jul 28, 2008
12	Conception of Federal Target Program of Education Development for 2011–2015	Feb 7, 2011
13	Federal Target Program of Education Development for 2011–2015	Feb 7 2011
14	Strategy of social and economic development until 2020	Dec 8, 2011
15	Conception of Federal Target Program "Scientific and educational staff of innovation Russia" 2014-2020	May 8, 2013
16	State Program of the Russian Federation "Education Development" for 2013-2020	May 15, 2013
17	Federal Target Program "Scientific and educational staff of innovation Russia" 2014-2020	May 21, 2013
18	State Program of the Russian Federation "Development of Science and technology" for 2013 – 2020	Apr 15, 2014
19	Conception of Federal Target Program of Education Development for 2016–2020	Dec 29, 2014
20	Federal Target Program of Education Development for 2016–2020	May 23, 2015

3.3.   Data analysis

2.3.1. Data management

All the texts selected as units of analysis were used in their original form, i.e. in Russian, but analyzed using the codebook in English. For code development and further analysis all the texts were imported to QDA Miner Lite. It is a free qualitative software providing basic CAQDAS features allowing to import files, develop codes, writing memos and navigating through units of analysis. Computer-based analysis allows to develop codebook and work with it in a coherent way as well as going through units of analysis in an easier and more systematic way, grouping them differently and easily finding necessary fragments. The opportunity of writing memos in the process allows to stay reflective in the process of interpretation that is essential for a qualitative research.

2.3.2. Code development

The procedure of code development in the analysis has two steps. The first one is deductive and the second one is inductive. During the first step I create a list of expected codes and their families based on the model of hierarchical beliefs described in the theoretical chapter and concepts from the academic literature about higher education policies in Russia. As the authors often do not use the term discourse or write their studies using the different methodological tradition, I summarize materials from several publications grouping them in the 'New trends in Russian higher education' section in the second chapter of the thesis. Placing these categories in my empirical dataset, I create a barebone of further conceptual network. After that following the prepared structure I start coding procedure, adding new inductively explored codes to the scheme as well as splitting and merging deductive codes if necessary. The deductive procedure allows to create a more accurate and systematic network of ideas while the inductive part plays a vital role
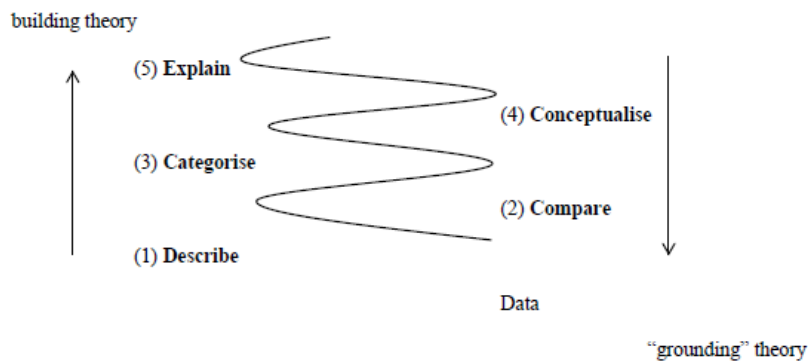
for future analysis as only during the inductive procedure do I find out the discourses that are not only expected but are actually present in the texts. Also inductive work with the texts helps to stay reflective about the analyzed content.

As the sample includes 20 items it was decided to select the most representative ones to start inductive code development. No doubt, in the process of coding, the codebook is revised and changed numerous times. However, starting from the content which includes more categories and then merging too narrow issues into wider ones, if necessary, is the way I did it. The "Conception of Russian Education Modernization until 2010" (Ministry of Education №393, 2002) was chosen. From the preliminary acquaintance with the data it was found out that the Conception was a powerful recommendatory paper applying to a wide scope of issues because of its longitudinal character. Having a deductive draft of a codebook, I started to look for the sentences or pieces that would help me to investigate the discourses on higher education, i.e. its roles, the problems it faces and the possible solutions. What I was looking for were the exact formulations or particular word combinations used by the authors. Feasibility of goals or actual budget calculations stayed out of the scope of my study. That is why methodological pieces of the programs were looked through and excluded from the analysis which concentrated only on the role of higher education, its contextualization in different agendas and problematization around it.

2.3.3. Analysis procedure

For the analysis of data the procedure described by Hennink was chosen (see Hennink et al., 2011: chapter 10). That is the analytic circle implying the procedure of 5 steps in the process of theory building and their constant replication going back to the original data on order to stay reflexive and ground the built theory (p.237).

Figure 2 The analytical circle of theory building. Source: Hennink et al. 2011: 238.

building theory

(5) **Explain**

(4) **Conceptualise**

(3) **Categorise**

(2) **Compare**

(1) **Describe**

Data

"grounding" theory

The analytical procedure starts with the description of what can be seen in the data. It means going through the text and identifying all the themes that are met that helps to get familiar with the data and evaluate its informational potential: what are the phenomena described in the text, what concepts are used to describe them, what are the main arguments of the authors.

The next step, comparison, implies critical rereading of the description of the data trying to see the relationship among the identified concepts. If some of the themes are synonymous or intersect, they are merged. And vice versa, if they are not specific enough, splitting is required. This step works as a preparatory step for categorizing as it allows to develop too laconic codebook or simplify the one which is too vague. Categorizing means finding common patterns among the concepts grouping them to families of codes.

The next step, conceptualization, implies doing practically the same procedure but exploring the relationship not among the concepts but their families. In my thesis the deductive procedure starts from the categorization step following the model of beliefs from advocacy coalition framework that is described in the section '1.3. How new discourses are created' and using the concepts taken from literature review. The inductive analytical procedure starts from the first explorative steps to categorization where the codebook is merged with the deductive one and then an updated number of codes is built in the selected conceptual model.

The last step is explanation of the phenomena observed in the context of their interconnections and constructing a theory that can be used autonomously from the data on which it was built.

3.4. Strengths and limitations

3.4.1. Strengths

The strength of the study is in its novelty. Although there are numerous studies of particular policy issues in the field of tertiary education in Russia this thesis sets a more ambitious goal trying to stretch the conceptual platform on the whole field of higher education trying to make generalizations relying on empirical evidence.

Another strength is the attention to the precise explanation of the analytical procedure which is very important for interpretative studies. It means that despite unalienable researcher's subjectivity my research is replicable and if the one will follow my analytical procedure, she/he will get similar results.

3.4.2. Limitations

The most important limitation of the study is the way how data were sampled. Studying discourses and policy narratives I did not include any of the official speeches although they are surely rich in discursive constructions. Considering all the possible potential of verbal data, the rational of its exclusion is first of all requirements to thesis length and then inability to collect a representative sample of speeches as the official bodies created websites to publish the content related to their activities only in 2006-2008. Before that, especially in early 2000-s the information was probably recorded but there is no way to collect it.

Another consideration is the lack of the authorship of the policy documents that form the sample of the analysis. Each unit of the analysis represents the author who created it. This principle lies in the core of the approach to policy analysis as the analysis of policy narratives. However, in virtue of the formalized structure of the texts, it is possible to study them as presumably homogenous units.

4. The Analysis of Higher Education Discourses in Russia and Their Policy Framing Effect

The purpose of this chapter is to present the empiric research going through all the stages of research cycle described in the methodological part. The exploratory stage including the preliminary description of the data and justifications of the first researcher's decisions is presented in the first section. Then the procedures of creating deductive and inductive codebooks and their merging into one holistic system of codes are described. The third section shows the process of work with the concepts and their families[5] and introduces the first findings. The interpretation of the findings and the discussion around the underlying phenomena are presented in the last section.

4.1. Description and comparison

From the very beginning I decided to draw the line among two groups of documents that form my empirical sample and divide them into 'recommendations' and more concrete 'prescriptions' (or 'action plans'). This might appear as an arbitrary decision, at a first look, because all of these documents (except two ministerial ones) are governmental decrees having equal legal status. The rationale for this division is to point to the continuity between the conception of action plans and the action plans themselves. Considering the fact that these documents were written by different people, finding (or not finding) continuity could show the quality of cooperation inside the institution and the way it affects discourse production.

As it was found during the examination of data, the division into recommendations and prescriptions has a formal character. The number of the discourses in each of the documents and their applicability in real setting are not predisposed by the characters of the papers. However,

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[5] In this thesis 'family', 'thematic family', 'family of codes' or 'family of concepts' means thematically grouped number of categories.

knowledgeability of the authors involved into preparations of the documents in the field influence the coherency of arguments in the papers.

A long list of themes was made after examination of the first texts in order to form a preliminary set of codes. Moving from one unit of analysis to another and comparing the pieces describing similar phenomena it was found out that similar formulations can be used for description of different ideas. This can be cleared up only after examination of other related fragments. Let us look at how it works on the example of a specific theme, 'increasing accessibility'. This way of problematization can be very straightforwardly associated with the idea of welfare provision. However, it would be a mistake not to go deeper specifying what is meant by this concept. For example, in the *Federal Program for Educational Development in 2000-2005* accessibility implies enrollment of students from families with poor social and financial conditions, whereas in the *Federal Target Program of Education Development for 2016–2020* it has nothing to do about poverty but is mentioned exclusively in the context of disabled people and their special needs. Thus the dynamics of meanings through time needs to be considered in the process of analysis.

Another important consideration on this exploratory stage of analysis is that several categories can provide the diversity of meanings by being applied in different policy contexts. For example, 'social development' in the meaning of increasing individual responsibility can be associated with democracy promotion and improvement of civic culture within political package of ideas. At the same time, it can be formulated using the same word constructions and mean the same thing but being applied in economical dimension it gets a connotation of refusing state's patronage and contributing to new liberal forms of human capacity. This example was chosen to show how the same concept can be used in building absolutely independent lines of argumentation. That is why a decision about division of all the issues to three main fields: political, economic and social, was made. Such division is taken not instead of conceptual

scheme proposed in theoretical chapter but in addition to it, as if this scheme was applied inside each of the three fields.

Presumably the authorship can also influence the dynamics of meanings because even the style of these strictly formatted documents differs substantively. In the conditions of unavailable additional information about data it is impossible to verify this guess in this thesis. However, it creates an evident limitation for the study making the sample heterogeneous from the perspective of informativeness of the units of data.

The preliminary exploration of data and its specificities contributes to a better understanding of the nature of codes and their connections with each other that allows to have a more precise codebook on the next stage of analysis.

4.2. Coding

4.2.1. Deductive coding

As it was stated earlier, the deductive codebook of this study is built on the theoretical conceptualization of the model from the advocacy coalition framework and themes investigated by the existing literature.

The model implies studying discourses on three different conceptual levels:

- policy core beliefs (I) including wide ideological perceptions of the role of university in the existing socioeconomic system;

- policy core beliefs (II) including actual policy preferences expressed in definition of goals that should be achieved or problems that should be solved by the higher education system;

- secondary beliefs level which implies practical solutions and instrumentalized suggestions corresponding to the preferable policies.

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Thus, my deductive codebook has the hierarchical structure (see Figure 3) which can also include transversal connections or unlinked elements

Figure 3 Hierarchy of the themes for deductive codebook

| | Ideological views on higher education | | Policy preferences, problems, goals | | Suggestions, tools |
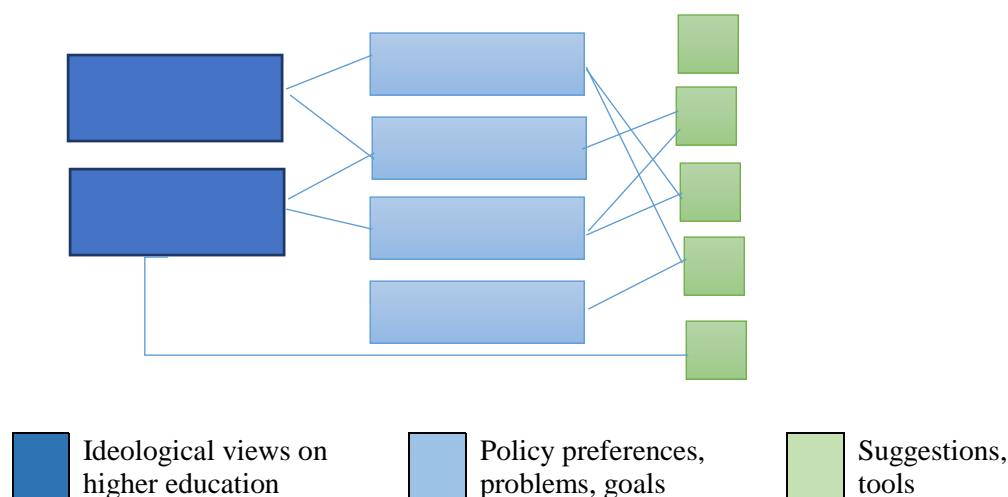
After examination of the existing literature in the field provided in the second chapter about the background of higher education in Russia, 3 main ideological perspectives of thinking about higher education policies on policy core beliefs (I) level were defined: the economic orientation on the needs of the labor market, the political promotion, and a platform for the realization of a postindustrial scenario of development.

Labor market orientation means considering universities as basically fulfilling economic needs by training qualified workers with market-required specializations. The export of the national technologies and values abroad, as well as empathizing of the state's important role in development of science inside the country, are the ways how political promotion can be done. Civil education of the country population, which implies increasing of citizens' knowledgeability in the sphere of their social and political opportunities rather than achieving new professional competences, contributes to intensification of democracy mechanisms in everyday life of citizenry. This allows to associate it with the political family of codes as well as promotion mechanisms.

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Postindustrialization may seem a shaky ground for the forthcoming creation of a code family. However, the rationale of using it in this specific formulation is the opportunity to follow the authors' original stream of ideas with all the conceptual stretches and associations. It is meant that despite the vague character of the concept it is not reframed in a stricter way but grounded with the help of associated codes. I go back to the issue of postindustrial society and knowledge economy in the '4.4. Explaining the patterns' section of this chapter'. In order to make it clear on the current step of analysis I will leap ahead and say that under postindustrial society or knowledge economy, as it is more often used, integration of education and science with the innovation economy requiring skilled-based labor force, high level of informatization and acceleration of the technical progress are meant. Despite the fact that knowledge society can be defined from different perspectives, the definition provided here corresponds to the Russian environment of ideas. To certain extent, 'postindustrialization' works as a meta-category for both 'labor market orientation' and 'political promotion' families. However, it fulfills the requirements of the policy core beliefs (I) level and can be considered as part of it despite its meta-character.

The conceptual map of the themes and their connections can be seen on Figure 4.

Figure 4 Deductive conceptual map.

Postindustrializtion	Labor market orientation	Increasing quality of labor force	• Measurements of effectiveness • Improvements of educational programs • New schemes of university administration • Control over the quality of teaching
		Intensification of academic mobility	• Attracting foreign lecturers • Attracting foreign students
		Improving infrastructure	• Organisational autonomy • Finacial autonomy • New schemes of university administration
		International recognition	• Reaching higher positions in international ratings
		Integration to the world academic community	• Making international educational agreements • Unification with the world

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	Political promotion		educational standards • Reaching high level of citation in international journals • Attracting foreign lecturers
		Independent public sector	Quality measurements
		Knowledgeability	Development of remoted access, opportunities for self-education
		Strategic partnership with Europe	• Making international educational agreements
		Creation of the national education market	• Financial autonomy of universities • National system of quality measurements
		Balancing regions	Advanced subsidies
		Prestige of academia (higher education + profession of academician)	• Popularization of science • Control over the quality of teaching • Inclusion of academicians into decision-making • Provision of better working condition for academicians

4.2.2. Inductive coding

The procedure of inductive coding does not imply using preliminary, pre-prepared categories. That is why the developing of the code system was started from the first stages of the research cycle, i.e. from defining wide groups of themes that are expected to be found in every text. The first group was 'Ideologies of higher education'. That is a family name for all the codes of the fragments where higher education was contextualized by the authors of the documents as part of a wider policy agenda or, applying it to the conceptual model, policy core belief (I). It could be associated with a certain policy field: 'social policy', 'source of labor force', 'educational policy', 'science'; or with the functional role it plays: 'industry', 'political priority', 'building knowledge economy'. These categories work in both ways: as family names and as independent codes for selected fragments of the texts. For example, in the *Federal target program "Scientific and educational staff of innovation Russia" 2009-2013* it is claimed that the research potential of Russian academia should be transformed into a mechanism of sustaining economic and

innovation development provided by the qualified specialists in the prioritized fields. From the context of the statement, it is clear that the authors consider higher education as intellectual industry, although it is not straightforwardly formulated. Here it works as a family name for more specific policy issues like 'innovations priority', 'increasing professionalism' that require specific measures like 'choice of prioritized research fields supported by the state'. In the Conception of this Federal target program industrial character of scientific and educational infrastructure is more explicitly expressed in the goal of the state to create conditions for negotiation of academia and innovation industries in order to create the platform for knowledge-based economy. Thus, it was decided to leave these policy core belief (I) categories with their double functioning as their absorbing function allows to create a barebone for the codebook having in mind that particular links in the chain can be absent. This allows to stay reflective in the process of coding.

Another important group of codes is about the goals of higher education. The fragments including goals were not limited by the ones including specific lists of governmental plans and intentions. All the fragments related to policy prescriptions or recommendations were equally involved into the process of coding. During the first rounds of critical reading, I had the group of goals, separately from the problems. Studying problematization is an important part of the analysis as it helps to see the motivations lying behind the ideological roles of higher education. However, I merged the identified problems into one group with goals because they represent the same policies in the texts. The following pairs of themes are given as an example of reversing of meanings: 'insufficient quality of teaching' and 'improving the quality of teaching', 'underfinancing' and 'increasing of subsidies', 'gap from the world' and 'reaching world standards' and others. Merging them into one category contributes to the simplification of the codebook getting rid of unnecessary replications in different groups,

During the first rounds of critical reading I had the group of goals separately from the problems. Studying problematization is an important part of my analysis as it helps to see the motivations

lying behind the ideological roles of higher education. of universities and also that serve as foundations for grouping suggestions for their solving. However, I merged the identified problems into one group with goals because they represent the same level of ideas and in particular cases are exact mirror reversals. The following pairs of themes are given as an example of reversing and the rationale for merging: 'insufficient quality of teaching' and 'improving the quality of teaching', 'underfinancing' and 'increasing of subsidies', 'gap from the world' and 'reaching world standards' and others.

After several rounds of merging the point of saturation was reached after creating 41 codes for discourses on the policy core beliefs (II) level (see Figure 5). Practically each of them can be further deconstructed to smaller subtopics but the decision to make them sufficiently broad was made purposefully for certain generalization and aplicability for the whole sample instead of single documents with their inner logic of meanings.

Figure 5 List of codes for the policy core beliefs (II) conceptual level

1)   Academic mobility
2)   Accessibility
3)   Attracting investments
4)   Balancing regions (regional development and participation)
5)   Continuity (life learning education)
6)   Competitiveness of Russia
7)   Creation of effective education market
8)   Democracy promotion
9)   Development of innovations and technologies
10)   Development of sciences (hard science, natural science, computer science)
11)   Conducting fundamental research
12)   Continuing traditions
13)   Development of social sciences
14)   Economic development
15)   Effective governing of higher education
16)   Evaluation of quality
17)   Following needs of labor market
18)   Following state priorities
19)   Individualization of the educational process
20)   Improvement of the existing university infrastructure
21)   Increasing of higher education responsibility for the students they train
22)   Increasing the number of researchers
23)   Integration to the world educational space
24)   National promotion
25)   New quality, modernity
26)   Normalizing higher education legislation
27)   Prestige of higher education
28)   Prestige of the academic job
29)   Professionalism
30)   Professional elite
31)   Quality if education and research
32)   Reaching standards
33)   Strategic partnership
34)   Social development
35)   Source of human capacity
36)   Social responsibility
37)   Stable development of higher education
38)   Transparency
39)   Welfare provision
40)   Youth support

Despite the presumably similar structure of documents of the same type the manner of constructing arguments is individual for every unit of text. As I mentioned in the '4.1. Description and comparison' section, impossibility of identification of authorship creates particular limitation for the data analysis. The personality of the author (or group of authors) plays an important role in the analysis of policy narrative. Some of the authors use the strategy of contrasts in order to put the suggested solutions in favorable light. In these documents policy

core beliefs (II) are formulated mostly from the position of problematization. Another approach of writing is trying to convince the reader applying to fundamental values and showing their application in education. Not particular tools and instrumentalized suggestions but rather ideological justifications are presented in these units of analysis. However, with the help of the model of the multilevel system of beliefs, the themes from the texts, written in very different styles, can be smoothly categorized and conceptualized.

Despite the attempt to strictly follow the analytical cycle, it was not always clear where to draw the line between particular suggestions on the level of secondary beliefs and goals of universities. It was important to leave only those suggestions that would contribute to analysis and will not create extra noise in the data analysis, For example, 'increasing salaries' which is one of the themes from the 'Suggestions' list presumably can be merged with 'welfare provision' meaning the improving socioeconomic conditions of citizens' lives. However, in this case it would be a mistake to merge instrumental measure with the more abstract concept because from the context of using this suggestion it gets clear that it is a solution prescribed for a different problem. The salaries are required to be increased not for the reason of improving welfare but for increasing the prestige of the academic job, attract the youth to academia and to create stimuli for professional development of university teaching staff. Excluding this agenda from the scope of analysis can lead to distortion of the network of meanings that were put up in the specific formulations. Thus, making a list of policy tools for reaching the stated goals and solving the settled problems I had to check every suggestion from the perspective of its applicability in more than one policy context. The least of the codes for secondary beliefs level of conceptualization is presented in the Figure 6.

Figure 6 List of codes for the secondary beliefs conceptual level

1. Care about educational consumers
2. Creating research complexes on university basis
3. Increasing of state financial involvment
4. Increasing salaries
5. Informatization
6. Invitation of foreign researchers
7. Financial support of students
8. New financial scheme for higher education
9. New specializations
10. Popularization of science
11. Reconstruction of buildings
12. Restructurization of the higher education network
13. Social support of academic workers
14. System of provision of quality (new apparatus)

The group of higher education goals is the most numerous one. However, this number of categories contributes to the analysis as it allows to see the associations among policy field and see what kind of policies used to be grouped and asserted as packages.

4.3.   Categorization and conceptualization

This section shows the observed patterns and explains the logic of association between the concepts. Codes on all the three conceptual levels 'ideological context' (policy core beliefs (I)); 'priorities' (policy core beliefs (II)); 'solutions' (secondary beliefs) can be associated with each other hierarchically, according to the model of beliefs from the ACF, but also inside the levels and irrespectively of the structure[6]. Wide definitions of higher education - 'ideological contexts' - work as conceptual centers from which I start the development of analytical networks of meanings which consist of policies from 'priorities' group and practical suggestions for achieving settled priorities from the list of 'solutions'.

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[6] For tables showing the interlevel connections see Appendixes 1-3

Despite the transversions of codes the patterns were divided to four thematic groups relatively to the role of higher education: intellectual industry, education service, social policy and political priority. Each group is investigated in of the following subsections.

4.3.1. Higher education as an intellectual industry

Treating higher education as an industry implies effective management and orientation towards a high level of performance measured in production of innovations and technologies. From this perspective the higher education is viewed more as academia, i.e. a consolidated platform for education and science producing unique informational product.

According to the documents from the sample, half of all proposed policies are formulated in terms of treating universities as intellectual industry (see Appendix 1). It means that creation of an effective education market is one of the important goals settled by the authors of the documents. The effectiveness is measured in provision of economic prosperity of the country. This can be achieved through fulfillment the needs of the labor market, development of innovations and conducting of fundamental research in prioritized fields. The development of hard and natural sciences as well as communication and information technologies are meant under the fundamental research.

Being one of the market niches higher education has to increase its competitiveness. This can be done on the two levels: national and international. Inside the country it means competition with other industries for investments, and production of the unique product - knowledge or technologies. Outside it has two implications: competitiveness of the national education system on order to promote the country and also normal competition of Russian researchers on a global education market as private individuals, not as the country's unit.

Following state priorities includes not only normalization of Russian strategic positions abroad, but also solving the problems inside the country. Decreasing the gap among regions and

balancing their stable development based on local specificities is one of the state's goals that are going to be achieved through restructurization of the higher education system including partial amalgamation of the universities with business or industrial units in the process of creation of research complexes. In the process of achieving goals university becomes a state's contractor having unique knowledge resources and thus becoming a special monopoly providing this sort of good. In order to provide sufficient quality and control despite state's financial support it is maximumly organized on market principles of checks and balances.

4.3.2. Higher education as a source of labor force

Despite the fact that this category is close to 'industry' substance-wise, it was worth making it a separate block as different patterns underlie the two themes. It is meant that thinking about university as a knowledge factory we treat the involved individuals as necessary elements of the process of production. However, our attention is concentrated on the outputs of production, whereas the group, investigated in this subsection, focuses on universities not in the role of independent industries but rather organizations supporting the market by providing qualified workers for various enterprises. From this prospective higher education is not an industry but rather a service for training skills required by the labor market.

From a certain perspective university as an educational service functions in the same conditions as the intellectual industry. It means that it works as the state's contractor who serves the purpose of stable development of country's economics and increasing competitiveness of Russian education market on the national and international level solving the problem of isolation from the world education market and the gaps among regions' informational development. The whole idea of provision higher education as a service can be implemented into a more general will of reaching standards of the postindustrial society which according to the Russian officials' perception means high level of usage of innovations by highly professional workers interested in self-development, modernization of the production to the level of the world standards

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An important assumption that is made on this stage is that individuals are interested in the development of their human capacities which highly correspond to the actual needs of the state and the market which are mostly based on hard sciences, engineering and technologies development. Therefore, individualization of the educational process and creating new specializations should contribute to the socioeconomic development of the country.

4.3.3. Higher education as a social policy

Social agenda is the least popular among all the other views on what is the policy field of higher education, there are several policies in the data that reflect this stream of ideas. The most important goal of the social orientation of higher education that nearly represent the whole family of meanings is increasing accessibility. Looking at the way of problematizing the issue we can see that increasing of access is oriented first of all on people from remote or rural areas, then on disabled people and finally on socially vulnerable groups like people in poverty, orphans, lone parents, families with many children. No measures for changing social circumstances that influence the choices of youth and their chances for successful graduation are mentioned.

4.3.4. Higher education as a political priority

Political prioritization cannot be considered as a formally independent separate group because it works as a family including interconnections of other groups. However, that is an important part of conceptualization as it indicates what policies are considered and claimed as policies of major importance. No doubt, if the policy was included to the governmental programs, it already indicates its significance in the existing policy course. Claiming that particular policies have the political priority marks them as the sense-making discourses.

The most important political priority is the national promotion on the world economic arena. Reaching the world standards in higher education requires creation effective national education market which allows to prepare qualified specialists of a high demand and create unique innovative technologies. This can be achieved only through the development of science, through infrastructural change of the research centers that in cooperation with the partners from industrial sector and creation of the platform for effective training of professionals in prioritized fields. The tools for realization of these economic goals are mostly financial (see Appendix 3) and assume increasing of state financial involvement into the sphere of higher education.

Another direction of political priorities in higher education policies is social development of citizens which means increasing the quality of their life, the opportunities for their individual development which goes in line with state goals. Increasing accessibility and support of the youth at their first carrier stages are among them. Both are planned to be achieved through state's

According to the documents from the sample, civil education means preparation of citizens ready to live in postindustrial society, i.e. free, socially responsible, active individuals who are interested in development of their capacities according to the interests of modern economy and labor market. However, no specific tools were proposed in order to achieve these goals. Moreover, social science education that could contribute to the development of these skills is regarded only in the form of improving of managerial practices that aim to contribute to marketization of higher education, or as part of a wider orientation on reaching world standards.

A small but substantively significant policy that is worth separate attention is the will to follow traditions, to preserve old patterns in science. This is based on the belief that the science in the USSR was on the peak of its development and fulfilled the goal of contributing country's competitiveness.

4.4. Explaining the patterns

The main agenda that works as an umbrella theme for all the four groups of codes described above is the strongest will to change existing socioeconomic environment in order to create the knowledge-based economy. This means consolidation of academia and industrial sector for fulfilling the state order of reaching the world quality of innovations and technologies and become a compatible member of the postindustrial block of countries.

This thesis presents a case study of realization of the model of knowledge society in Russia, the country with restricted democracy. Disproportionally distorted in the direction of economy, the idea of knowledge society loses its social dimension in Russian environment having insufficient support by necessary social change. Despite the consistency of the ideas of gradual informatization including creation of national statistics and systems of centralized measurements; technical equipping of the education system on all the levels; creation of the conditions for transition to partnership among academia and industries through joint production of innovations, the final goal of reaching postindustrial standards cannot be achieved in the existing setting. The whole concept does not pass the test on quality unless its main goal is not making lives of the people better, not just from the perspective of financial conditions but giving an opportunity to realize full spectrum of human capacities and creativity. My analysis indicates that under the goal of increasing Russian competitiveness in the world and reaching the national prosperity the actual goal is stabilizing social tension by economic successes and promotion of the existing political system of power by asserting it on the world arena. Even though not all the measures proposed during the last fifteen years are so opportunistic and oriented on gaining power, the dominant agendas imply reserving the political status quo ideologically supported and promoted through the system of higher education. Lack of democratization is hidden above the facade of economic liberalization.

Thus, knowledge based economy or industrialization of academia serves two goals in the Russian context. First of all, it gives justification for gradual instrumentalization of higher education increasing the role of administration controlling the quality of performance and the role of the state who invests more money into knowledge creation and, thus, gets the right to settle the priorities inside academia. What is more, working as the engine of the economy, increasing the prosperity of the citizenry and contributing to the national promotion in the global market, academia becomes a mechanism of the power legitimization because the achievements of academia in this context are unbearable from the existing institutional structure of power.

Prioritizing of technological development and instrumentalization of social relationship under the goal of increasing effectiveness and competitiveness of the national system works as the repetition of the soviet industrialization patterns in the modernized conditions. The authors of the documents connect reaching of postindustrial stage with effective collaboration of science and industry, promotion of the national values and practices and increase of the welfare of every citizen in complete isolation from development of civil culture, reflectivity about shared identities and opportunities to develop human capacity not from the perspective of labor market orientation but for the ability of creative realization. Thus, the scenario of urgent industrialization was changed to postindustrial block of needs but substantively remained very similar. This indicates strong institutional path dependency in the process of authoritarian modernization of socioeconomic system in Russia and allows to get a clearer picture of possible scenarios of country's development and see the gaps.

Conclusion

In this thesis I show that the official discourses on higher education in Russia are framed in terms of reaching the postindustrial standards of economic and social development. I also show how political priorities are concentrated around industrialization of science and higher education and in what way it can affect the political regime of the state. In particular, I argue that first, marketization of science reduces academic freedom, making universities an executive structure of market and state needs. Secondly, the system, fetishizing innovative technologies and not providing proper development of social and political culture of citizenry, is a dangerous, far-reaching, replication of the soviet science scenario in postindustrial setting.

This study also presents the adaptation of the belief hierarchy from the advocacy coalition framework for the purpose of studying specific policies. Such theoretical conceptualization can serve as a backbone for conducting a discourse analysis of any policy narrative, as was the case of higher education in this study.

Altogether, the findings from this thesis shed light into the phenomenon of knowledge society in Russia. They allow to put together elements of a theory in the national policy discourses on the one hand, and on the other hand, may contribute to the study of the paths of development of a knowledge society in the conditions of non-democratic modernization.

Future research can investigate higher education agenda adding the narratives of the officials produced in their speeches or performances to the higher education policy narrative. Such perspective will allow to establish the identities of the authors of different discourses and fill up the gap caused by anonymity of the official documents which do not allow to see the flow of meanings in the process of the officials' interpretations. Conducting several interviews can also help in understanding this interpersonal dynamic.

The results presented above contribute to the scope of existing studies from several perspectives. First of all, the discursive component of higher education policies in Russia is uncovered by the literature in the field. Thus, this thesis contributes to filling the gap in constructivist studies on higher education in Russia. Secondly, the findings are relatable to the research on authoritarian modernization in Russia. The empirical analysis of this thesis can become a starting point for further investigation of the way how market perceptions are created and instrumentalized through academia. Thirdly, the analysis of the state of knowledge society in Russia adds nuances to the existing studies about knowledge society. The thesis shows the pattern of path dependency in Russian higher education system and explains the rationale for building an innovation-based infrastructure using old ways of setting priorities.

There are particular limitations in the conducted research. Firstly, the way of sampling the data can cause concerns about bias in source selection. This limitation is got over through clear framing of the scope of the thesis – only the discourses from recommendations and prescriptions are treated as parts of the dataset. The texts of the official documents are used as sources of more stable formulations of discourses for the policy narrative. Secondly, lack of the documents' authorship creates grey areas in the study as it is not clear how the background of the individuals who participated in creation of the policy narrative could affect the perceptions expressed in the documents. This issue can be solved in future research including speeches and interviews.

Finally, the findings of the research raise questions about the institutional traps in the process of socioeconomic development of the country. Studying discourses in a wider policy context can give a clue about the ideas underlying policy changes and help to see possible challenges.

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Appendix 1 The distribution of policies in the four dominant approaches for higher education

	Industry	Political priority	Social policy	Labor market
Academic mobility	0	1	0	1
Accessibility	0	1	1	0
Attracting investments	1	0	0	1
Balancing regions (regional development and participation)	1	1	1	1
Competitiveness of Russia	1	1	0	1
Conducting fundamental research	1	0	0	0
Continuing traditions	0	1	0	0
Continuity (life learning education)	0	0	1	1
Creation of effective education market	1	1	0	0
Democracy promotion	0	1	0	0
Development of innovations and technologies	1	0	0	1
Development of sciences (hard science, natural science, computer science)	1	0	0	0
Development of social sciences	0	1	0	0
Economic development	1	1	0	1
Effective governing of higher education	1	0	0	0
Evaluation of quality	1	0	0	0
Following needs of labor market	1	0	0	1
Following state priorities	1	1	1	1
Improvement of the existing university infrastructure	1	0	0	0
Increasing of higher education responsibility for the students they train	0	0	0	1
Increasing the number of researchers	1	0	0	1
Individualization of the educational process	0	0	1	1
Integration to the world educational space	1	1	0	1
National promotion	1	1	0	0
New quality, modernity	1	1	0	1
Normalizing higher education legislation	0	0	0	0
Prestige of higher education	0	0	0	0
Prestige of the academic job	0	0	0	1
Professional elite	1	0	0	1
Professionalism	1	1	0	1
Quality of education and research	0	0	0	1
Reaching standards	1	1	0	1
Social development	0	1	1	0
Social responsibility	0	1	0	0
Source of human capacity	1	0	1	1
Stable development of higher education	0	1	0	0
Strategic partnership	1	1	0	0
Transparency	1	0	0	1
Welfare provision	0	0	1	0
Youth support	0	1	1	1

	Care about educational consumers	Creating research complexes on university basis	Increasing of state financial involvment	Increasing salaries	Informa-tization	Invitation of foreign researchers	Financial support of students	New financial scheme for higher education	New specia-lizations	Popularization of science	Restructurization of the higher education network	Social support of academic workers	System of provision of quality (new apparatus)
Academic mobility	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Accessibility	0	0	1	0		0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0
Attracting investments	0	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Balancing regions (regional development and participation)	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Continuity (life learning education)	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Competitiveness of Russia	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Creation of effective education market	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Democracy promotion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Development of innovations and technologies	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0
Development of sciences (hard science, natural science, computer science)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
Conducting fundamental research	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0		0
Continuing traditions	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Development of social sciences	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Economic development	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Effective governing of higher education	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1
Evaluation of quality	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Following needs of labor market	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	0

Following state priorities	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1
Individualization of the educational process	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Improvement of the existing university infrastructure	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Responsibility of higher education for the students they train	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Increasing the number of researchers	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Integration to the world educational space	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
National promotion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
New quality, modernity	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Normalizing higher education legislation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Prestige of higher education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prestige of the academic job	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
Professionalism	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Professional elite	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Quality of education and research	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Reaching standards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	1
Strategic partnership	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Social development	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Source of human capacity	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Social responsibility	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stable development of higher education	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Transparency	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Welfare provision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Youth support	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0

Appendix 3

	Labor market	Industry	Pol.prior	Soc.pol.
Care about educational consumers	0	0	0	1
Creating research complexes on university basis	0	1	0	0
Increasing of state financial involvment	0	1	1	0
Increasing salaries	0	1	0	0
Informatization	0	0	0	0
Invitation of foreign researchers	0	0	0	0
Financial support of students	1	0	0	1
New financial scheme for higher education	1	1	1	0
New specializations	1			0
Popularization of science	0	1	1	0
Reconstruction of buildings	0	0	0	0
Restructurization of the higher education network	1	1	1	0
Social support of academic workers	0	0	1	0
System of provision of quality (new apparatus)	0	0	0	0

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